

HABARI GANI (“What news” in Swahili)

A Newsletter by Priscilla and Henry Ziegler

June - August 2020

COVID-19 in Tanzania

Because of the coronavirus, Henry will not be able to go back to Tanzania until at least February. The government in Tanzania stopped reporting coronavirus cases and deaths at the end of April and told everyone not to be seen by medical doctors for the virus. After many probable cases and deaths that were not reported, the Tanzanian president declared the country cleared of the coronavirus in June. Few people are now wearing masks and there is minimal social distancing. Essentially, everything is back to normal. If there are coronavirus cases, they are treated as viral illnesses and people are not tested for the coronavirus.

The content of this newsletter is based on information obtained from the team in Tanzania either by email or telephone calls. All the photos were taken by team members and sent to us. We thank Dr. Max, Dr. Chillo, Dr. Obondo, Mr. Barua, and Ms. Faidha Rashid.

Community outreach and screening

The Buguruni Anglican Health Centre (BAHC) staff and SEET held a three-day screening in Vingunguti, one of the very poor neighborhoods near the health center. Tents were put up along the street and near a community church. The staff screened 201 adults (106 women and 95 men). Of these, 26 had newly discovered high blood pressure, 12 had high blood sugars (indicating diabetes), 7 were probably positive for tuberculosis, 4 were HIV positive, and 3 women had infertility problems. All were encouraged to follow up at the health center for further assessment and care. The following photos show some of the people being screened at the two test sites.





Screening in the poor neighborhoods not only helps identify health problems but encourages more of the residents to get health care. The poor people need to know that BAHC is available to them. The government's messages to stay away from health services and be fearful of the virus means that many people do not get care for their non-coronavirus health problems. Just as in the U.S., non-coronavirus problems are being neglected.

An Ambulance

The health program had a used SUV that recently died and so left BAHC with no vehicle. The program has needed an ambulance for a long time for emergencies and to take patients to the regional hospital when they are not improving or need care not available at the health center. Thanks to an anonymous donor and Mr. Shariff Manekia, a Health Tanzania board member, the Health Tanzania Foundation was able to purchase an ambulance to replace the broken hospital car. Below are pictures of the new ambulance and the ceremony to bless it. Raphael Barua, the director of the health center, is shown in the first photo.



Vicar-general and staff at blessing ceremony

Patients at the health center

Below on the left is an HIV positive woman's skin rash. The patient was identified by Faidha, our community coordinator, and had an "opportunistic infection." An opportunistic infection is one that patients with AIDS get when their immunity is low. While the patient's AIDS medicines are paid for by the national AIDS program and its international donors, opportunistic infections and routine medical care are often not paid for. Paying for these expenses is one of the ways Health Tanzania Foundation helps with charity care for the very poor.



Above on the right is a photo of Modrick with Dr. Max. When he was born premature, Modrick weighed just four pounds. Unfortunately, he was found to be HIV positive. Treated with AIDS medications, he achieved a viral load of 20. He is now four years old with a viral load of 15,400. Anything over 1,000 is considered a poor response to the drugs. Dr. Maxwell had a long talk with his mother and found what often happens with poor families – poor adherence to the AIDS medicines. Modrick needs to be visited by a community worker who can bring the AIDS drugs to the home. Paying for this care is another place where charity care from Health Tanzania helps.

Below is a photo of Modrick with his extended family. The child is being held by Dr. Max.





One of our partners, Charles Nkwabi, identified this widow and her child as needing health support. Charles is a leader in TAVICO, a program working to support women and helping them obtain sustainable incomes. The child, who is one year old, has hydrocephaly, a condition in which the cerebral spinal fluid bathing the brain cannot drain, and this puts increasing pressure on the brain. When the father found that his child had this condition, he committed suicide, leaving the mother and baby destitute. The baby has not yet begun to talk or walk. He did have a drain placed but was recently in the hospital when it became infected. Dr. Obondo, the Medical Director at BAHC, and Mr. Nkwabi reviewed the situation together and came up with a plan to help both the baby and mother. TAVICO will train the mother, who likes to cook, so that she can set up her own business to sell food. BAHC will give the family charity care.

SEET

SEET, the multifaith-local community partnership, is working with the 230,000 poor people in the Buguruni-Vingunguti neighborhoods and some of the rural villages in the isolated rural Rufuji District. The volunteers in SEET are trained to go into their communities to assess the health of its inhabitants. Below is Omary Mbombo, a SEET volunteer, who is identifying children with malnutrition by measuring the circumferences of their arms.





SEET volunteers have also been involved in teaching about cervical cancer and the HPV vaccine campaign. HPV helps prevent cervical cancer. Above are children under the age of 14 from a primary school for the deaf who are holding their immunization cards after being vaccinated for HPV.



Above on the left are orphans holding the rice contributed by community members. SEET mobilizes everyone to contribute to their community and its members. International resources complement local person power and money.

The following pictures are from the SEET program, which supports the widows and orphans. They show Faidha with widows and some of the community volunteers. SEET assists the women in the management of their businesses.

Mariam Omary (above on the right) is a chair of one of the widows' groups that is officially registered with the government. The group manufactures liquid soap and sells it to the community. The groups received a loan of 7,000,000 Tsh (\$3,050) from the women's loan scheme of the government. This loan was split equally among all 35 members who are running individual businesses, as is Mariam. The loan has to be repaid within one year with no interest.

Selua Mitti (photo on the next page) is another chair of a widow's group. Her group also received a loan of 7,000,000 Tsh from the government loan scheme. Each of her 35 members is doing a different business. They also have a year to return the loan without interest.



As you know Faidha, I am also a food vendor, but the business is now very challenging – very few people are coming here. Is it because of Covid or what? Even the widows we work with are complaining the same.
(Irene William, project community



It is good that our group got a loan from government. However, doing business was tough especially in the past two to three months, but we still survive. (Nuru Yassin, a widow and orphans care giver)



Pictured are SEET leaders with Pearson Nhayo (second from the right), an Anglican priest and former schoolteacher who spent three years at the Virginia Theological Seminary getting his master's degree.

In addition to his work with a group of churches outside of Dar es Salaam, Father Pearson will serve as Health Tanzania's program coordinator for the faith-based community initiatives. He will help as a connector to U.S. partners and resources. He will also help SEET and the health program link more fully to the churches in the Anglican Diocese of Dar es Salaam.

AIDS Orphan Program

One of the programs that Health Tanzania Foundation supports is the AIDS Orphan program. In the past newsletters we have described the support given to the orphans. The following are two of the successes of the program.



I real thanks from my heart to all people who supported this dream came true. Particularly Dr Ziegler who was key to all that has happened to me. (Wastara Mbajjage)

This is Wastara who lost his parents when he was a child. The AIDS Orphan Program started supporting him when he was in primary school and continued the support when he attended university. He is now employed by Tanzania Port Authority as a civil technician.



This is Sabina Ramadhani, another graduate of the AIDS Orphan Program. With the financial support of the program, she was trained as a seamstress and is now self-employed.

Team Members

Faidha Rashid is SEET's and the Buguruni Anglican Health Centre's community coordinator. In every newsletter, you frequently see her. In addition to her SEET work, she heads the AIDS orphan program and the home-based care program of the BAHC. Despite only having nursing assistant training, Faidha is one of the most effective and strongest Tanzanian partners. Her caring, organizational skills, and untiring hard work are amazing.

Tragically this spring, Faidha lost her husband. She now must take care of her five children while continuing to lead our community efforts. Complicating the situation is a Tanzanian law that gives everything the deceased husband had to his parents. To be sure of housing for her family, Faidha needs to find another place to live. Fortunately, she does have land and the beginnings of a house

in her name. Please help us support her as she works to care for her family and community. We personally have already given her some money to help her. She needs \$2,000 to \$3,000 to finish the house she is building. Faidha is seen below and with her children and the house.



The daughter of Gao John Gao, the long-time director of the MEA Foundation (our earlier foundation) and now administrator/accountant for SEET, has gotten married. Below is the proud father with Hope and the newlyweds at their wedding.



Administration



All health facilities in Tanzania are required to have a board that oversees the program and has community and local government representation. The Health Board for the Anglican health program has just elected new members. This board is particularly strong. From the front left, Dr.

Therapio Temba, medical doctor at Buguruni Health Centre (the nearby government health center), Dr. Cathrine Malika, a radiologist at the Muhimbili National Hospital and Medical School and one of BAHC's ultrasound doctors, the village ward leader of the Buguruni Ward, Reverend Richard Kamenya, the vicar-general, representing the bishop, Mr. Raphael Barua, BAHC Health Director, Prof. Charles Mgone, Vice Chancellor of Kairuki University, and Dr. Elisha Osati, President of the Medical Association of Tanzania.

After the meeting, Prof. Mgone, the new board chair, then visited the health center and met with the leadership. He reviewed both the programs and the finances of the BAHC. Photos are below.



Need for Volunteers

We are constantly looking for volunteers, both short term and long term, to help in the U.S. and in Tanzania. There is always a role. If you or someone you know may be interested, have them call, text, or email Henry to talk about possibilities at hdziegler@yahoo.com or 703-887-1574.

Donations

As we announced in previous newsletters, the Health Tanzania Foundation, our non-profit foundation, has a tax-free status as a public charity - a 501(c)(3). Please look us up on the web at

www.healthtanzania.org. In addition to finding out more about our programs, you can now donate through PayPal at the website. You can designate what the donation is for and this will be honored. We are also on Amazon Smile, which means that 0.5% of any purchase will go to Health Tanzania. Just register on Amazon Smile and designate that the money earned is given to our non-profit.

In addition to making Pay Pal donations at our website, you can send donations to Health Tanzania Foundation, 1300 Crystal Drive, Apt. 605, Arlington, Virginia 22202 (our home address and the address for the foundation). Make any checks out to “Health Tanzania Foundation” and a receipt will be mailed to you. All donations are tax-deductible.

We know that we are always asking for funds but so little can do so much in Tanzania. Especially with the Tanzanian shilling decreasing in value when compared to the dollar, a little goes a long way.

Please continue to pray for the health programs in Tanzania.

May God Bless All of Us,

Henry and Priscilla



A baby leopard (photo taken by volunteer and benefactor Ed Kussy)