



Mulanje Mission Hospital

Newsletter

Volume 13 issue 1

January 2012

**Mulanje Mission Hospital
CCAP Blantyre Synod
PO Box 45 Mulanje
Malawi**

Tel: +265 9922 61569

**E-mail:
director@mmh.mw**

**Hospital account nos:
407275 (\$)
286818 (£)
380873 (€)**

**National Bank of Malawi
P.O. Box 945 Blantyre,
Malawi**

**SWIFT CODE:
NBMAMWMW**



We have been busy planting trees along the new mission road — in 20 years time we hope there will be an avenue of flamboyant trees on both sides of the road. Here matron helps to plant the first tree.

Editorial comment

We welcome you to the first issue of MMH newsletter of 2012, which means Happy New Year!!!! We praise the Lord for this opportunity and if you are reading this it means you are still alive and we thank God for that too. 2011 is finally gone; thankfully, we hope 2012 will be much smoother for our nation as well as the running of our hospital. Last year has been tough for us here, fuel shortages, perpetual electricity blackouts, scarce forex, drug shortages in hospitals among other 'plagues', if you will allow me. Yes, the situation had degenerated to 'plague' proportions. It has been hard for the management team to keep this hospital running amidst all these hardships, however with God's grace we managed to pull through. We are forever grateful to you our partners and donors for all your donations and prayers and for your encouragement during your visits to MMH.

We had a wonderful Christmas festival with gifts to all the members of staff as usual, very exciting to see all the happy faces. We also had visitors from different local churches and individuals who came to cheer the sick and clean the hospital grounds and wards, a true Christmas spirit.

We are happy that our Medical Director is now no longer called 'the new MD' because she has certainly settled in and things are moving in the positive direction. Already good things can be appreciated from the way things are being run around here and good ideas are seen to be bearing fruits. Clinical and nursing care is definitely on the path to great improvement. We thank the Lord for Dr. Shakespeare's work at MMH.

Mulanje Mission College of Nursing is doing a commendable job in teaching the Nursing and Midwifery students. On 17th December 2011 they had a

graduation ceremony of the 2008 class with a 100% pass rate. This is no mean achievement for the graduates and their tutors and we salute them for the job well done. The new college principal, Mrs. Sundu, must be proud to be at the helm of such a reputable college.

The rainy season is here and we are in the thick of it, a lot of healthy green maize fields around - which means plenty of food but unfortunately also plenty of malaria. At the beginning of the season the rain was erratic with long dry spells but later God's grace shone on us and we have enough and even too much if I may be allowed to complain. We still have villages with no protected water source so as the rains are pouring people tend to draw drinking water from puddles, shallow wells and springs. This is a health risk because people end up with all sorts of diarrhoeas and at times cholera. So far we have not received any case of cholera or serious diarrhoea thanks to the PHC department's work of sensitization to our communities. Also we thank the Presbyterian church of Champaign for their donation which enabled the PHC department to maintain and protect some water sources in our catchment area.

Thank you for taking time to read our newsletter and please do send us feedback or comments to director@mmh.mw



Happy faces of MMH ▲

Support our work — sponsor a bed!

Email director@mmh.mw for more information.

From the Medical Director

It's well and truly the wet season here now, torrential rain day after day. Our community is relieved - there had been fears of drought but the mealies are now looking tall and healthy. There is also a lot of malaria, with 53 children in the paediatric ward last weekend. I hope we will be able to put more malaria control measures in place in our catchment area before next year's season begins.

In December we welcomed Mai Susan Sundu to MMH as the new Principal of the College of Nursing. It is very good to have Susan in post and we are already benefiting from her leadership and guidance. Our thanks also go to Keith Lipato for filling the gap as

acting principal during the long interregnum. The college has enrolled 65 new first year students and they are already taking up their role in the life of the community. Graduation Day was a very special event - do read Susan's account below!

My first Christmas at Mulanje was a great pleasure - an afternoon with staff entertainment and gifts for all, many visitors bringing donations for our patients, and packed church services with wonderful singing. No turkey - but mangoes and pineapples in abundance. As I am writing, a container from Belfast has just been unpacked and it is like Christmas again - two resuscitaires for theatre and the labour ward from supporters in Scotland, ten crates of

Dr. Ruth Shakespeare



A nurse sweating while resuscitating a newborn baby on one of the new resuscitaires ▲

supplies for the pharmacy, baby clothes and blankets, chairs, books and pens for our schools, sewing machines, a wheelbarrow..... a huge thank you to everyone involved in donating, collecting items, packing and shipping. Nothing will be wasted! God bless you all.

Mulanje Mission Nursing college Graduation Ceremony

The day when you are told that you have been selected to go to college you are very happy and excited. Walking in the college corridors for the first time when you have just started nursing training, you have a lot of unanswered questions; questions like, 'Am I going to last the three years or I will be weeded?' This is normal for anyone who has been selected to go to college.

As the years go by, you get used to college life. Since there is a lot of work, you find that in no time you are writing your council licensure examinations. Now follows the time of torture when you are waiting for the results. This is made worse by the fact that for the past few years the colleges have not been able to produce good pass rates. The tutors may have done their best. As students, you may have prepared well for this examination, but you can never be sure of the results. I believe this was the scenario for the newly graduated Nursing/Midwifery Technicians of the October 2008 Class.

However, in Chichewa there is a proverb "Kadauluka kadatela" meaning that what goes around comes around. Accordingly, the day of the results came. The brave ones contacted the college to find out how they had performed immediately they heard that the results for the



The graduates preparing for their big day ▲

council licensure examination had been released. On the other hand, there were those who were not brave enough to find out. They waited until their friends told them that the college had achieved a 100% pass rate. 2011 is a year that the Lord decided to reward all the hard workers, those that He has appointed to continue with the healing ministry that Jesus Christ did when He was here on earth.



The college principal with some of the invited guests ▲

by S. Sundu- College Principal

All this came to a climax on 17th December, 2011. This is the day that will be remembered by the students of October 2008 Class together with their parents, guardians, spouses and tutors. The day whose journey started in the year 2008 and ended on 14th October when council licensure examinations were completed. The day that everybody had been looking forward to was here, the graduation day. The graduating group was very happy because they had passed their licensure examinations. They were now qualified Nurse-Midwifery Technicians.

Previous graduation ceremonies were held before the examination results were released. As such, one could not celebrate fully when one was not sure of one's fate. We thank God that He blessed our students and gave us a cause to celebrate. Congratulations!

It is our sincere hope that these graduates will continue to be good ambassadors for Mulanje Mission College of Nursing and Midwifery wherever they go. People around them will be able to see that these are Nurse-Midwifery Technicians that have been trained at a Christian institution. They will reflect the image of Christ as they minister to their patients, clients, community and colleagues.

From the Administrator's office

2011 was a memorable and exciting year in the history of Mulanje Mission Hospital. For the first time since its inception in 1928 Mulanje Mission Hospital won the Infection Prevention award in recognition of the high infection prevention standards adhered to by our hospital. As if that was not enough, the Ministry of Health recognized Mulanje Mission Hospital as a Centre of Excellence in Nursing and Midwifery training. These achievements attest to the unfaltering commitment and dedication of our staff, some of whom have been with the hospital for over 20 years. This dedication amongst our staff has kept MMH going for many years and has been the hallmark of our hospital.

In appreciation of their outstanding achievements and commitment, the hospital management team organised



John Munthali receiving his Christmas gift.

Christmas gifts for all members of staff on 22 December 2011. The gift presentation brought members of staff together with the Head of Station, Reverend Chigwenembe, and Dr Ruth Shakespeare our Medical Director.

The gift presentation ceremony was also a reminder to all of us that the Christmas season is the time when we remember the everlasting and precious gift God gave mankind, by

by Mr. John Munthali

giving us His only beloved Son Jesus Christ that through him we may have eternal life. The hospital was merely appreciating the efforts of members of staff who work in our hospital, but God gave us His Son while we were far from him and sinful.

I would like to thank our partners in America, Canada, Northern Ireland, Scotland, England, Australia, the Netherlands and other parts of the world who have supported the work of Mulanje Mission Hospital in 2011. Our hospital is what it is today because of the support we get from overseas partners and the Government of Malawi. We are highly indebted to you all for your support. Our appeal is please continue to support us. Join hands with us in reaching out to meet the health needs of the poor. Visit our website www.mmh.mw

Water and sanitation issues in our catchment area

Baseline data shows that in 72 villages within our catchment area, there are 65 water wells of which 46 are protected. It also indicates availability of 67 natural springs out of which only 26 are protected. Villagers have been drinking from these water sources whether protected or not, so long as the source is close to them. Mulanje Mission Hospital has been receiving cases of gastroenteritis or diarrhoea which can be traced to unsafe water sources.

In 2008, Ulongwe Hospital had six cholera cases. The Hospital and Primary Health Care Department did its



Women drawing water from a mud hole ▲

best to save these lives and all were discharged. PHC continues to put measures in place to avoid a repeat of registering cholera suspects. We are proud to say since 2008, we have not seen any more cholera cases. Aid from donors has helped us a lot in constructing, protecting and maintaining water sources like shallow wells, springs and boreholes.

Our last projects involved maintenance of two springs at Kadewele and Tambala villages of Traditional Authorities Chikumbu and Mabuka respectively. A spring in Tambala popularly known as Lisanjala was maintained under the auspices of Presbyterian Church of Champaign.

We would like to thank this church because they have saved people of Tambala from drinking unsafe water. These people used to draw water from deep down a cliff as an alternative to a broken down spring. Now Lisanjala community is smiling because of this development.

When we are working on water

by Tikondwe Katumbi



Some villagers scrambling for the only water hole in their area ▲

sources, we make sure that there is a community contribution in terms of labour and raw materials like sand and bricks. In all our projects this works without any problem. It was different with Lisanjala spring as the community misunderstood a member of the Champaign church; they claimed they were to be given money for labour, sand etc. However, this would have been a bad precedent for the other communities we serve, so we continued with the usual agreement, involving the community. Kadewele spring, which was done concurrently with Lisanjala was finished without any problems.

Uchembere Network brings hope to mothers

Malawi is a country with a high maternal mortality rate. Currently it is reported that the rate of maternal deaths is 510 per 100,000 live births. Several measures have been put in place by government to reduce this rate, and following Millennium Development Goal 5, which aims to improve maternal and neonatal health, Malawi is striving to achieve reduction of maternal mortality to 155 per 100,000 by 2015.

Uchembere network is a partnership project that has been initiated by the CCAP to support government in efforts to reduce maternal and neonatal deaths. Mulanje Mission is one of the implementation sites for this project in the southern region of Malawi.

There have been many activities that were conducted under

Uchembere in the past year, amongst them the establishment and training of village safe motherhood committees. These committees were trained to advise community members to adopt early health seeking behaviours; pregnant women to seek antenatal care within the first trimester of pregnancy and deliver at a health facility, men to take part in reproductive health activities. In addition health care workers at the hospital were trained in client focus and customer care in an effort to provide quality health care services. Traditional birth attendants (TBAs) were also trained to adopt new roles, so that they would no longer be conducting deliveries, but referring clients to health facilities for delivery, advising pregnant women to seek antenatal care early, promoting exclusive breast feeding and post natal care and teaching mothers how to take good care of their babies.

On 29th December various community groups and health care workers came together to showcase the reproductive health activities that they carry out in villages and at the hospital, through an open day at Chisitu. Activities were displayed through pavilions, traditional dances, drama per-



Dancing group doing their thing ▲

formances and many more. There were also speeches and awards given to groups that had performed well in the past year. The guest of honour at this function was Traditional Authority Chikumbu who is an influential community leader. She made a powerful speech advocating for hospital deliveries and male involvement in reproductive health services, and discouraging home and TBA deliveries.

To improve the referral system for pregnant women from the community to the hospital, the Uchembere network has also procured an ambulance, based at Mulanje Mission Hospital, to be called by the community whenever there is a reproductive health emergency for medical attention. Uchembere network is supported with financial assistance from Inter Church Christian Organisation (ICCO) the Netherlands.



Jane delivering her presentation at one of the training sessions ▲

Friends of MMH do it again

by Jane Mweziwina

The Primary Care team at Mulanje Mission Hospital tries to bring public health services as close to the community as possible. This has been achieved through setting up of outreach services – currently the hospital operates twelve outreach sites which are visited once a month. During these visits the services provided include under five growth monitoring and immunisation, family planning services and in five sites, antenatal care and HIV testing and counselling

as well. The latter sites are health posts that have been constructed with financial assistance from Foundation Friends for Africa, from the Netherlands. The health posts have a clinic with four furnished rooms providing privacy and a conducive environment, as well as a borehole and sanitation for the community.

On 9th December 2011, a team of visitors from Foundation Friends for Africa graced the handover ceremony of one of the health posts- Msithe which is in Naliya

village. It was a colourful ceremony that was spiced with traditional dances and other performances organised by community members in appreciation of the kind gesture that our partners in the Netherlands have shown. Friends for Africa have also assisted with the construction of Nachiwale, Salamba, Khaya and Ngolowera health posts.

Foundation Friends for Africa Netherlands you are a friend indeed. We always appreciate your good work. *Zikomo kwambiri!!!!*

Festive season hospital visitors

The Christmas season of 2011 was a period of blessings to patients, guardians and Mulanje Mission Hospital. This is the first time in a long period that we have had so many visitors, especially churches, visiting the hospital during Christmas and New Year. The main aim was to cheer the sick, pray with them and give them some gifts.

I would like to give huge thanks to all those who visited us and presented gifts to our patients. Christmas is of course a period that each and everyone would want to spend with their families, but those in hospital are deprived of this. Visiting them and giving them presents brings hope and joy, and makes them feel that somebody out there cares for them. The hospital appreciated all the visits so much, as this shows the love that churches and communities have for our patients.

Some of the visitors did not only visit the sick and present gifts but they even cleaned the wards and the grounds, this was also very commendable. Mulanje Mission Hospital as one of the hospitals that has won the infection prevention award appreciated this kind gesture. When we see the community coming to assist with cleaning, it reinforces our working spirit and encourages us to always keep the hospital clean. It also makes us feel that the community appreciates the work that we are doing.

The first visit was on Christmas day by 70 Nkolokoti CCAP members led by Reverend Nthipera. During their visit they gave each and every patient and guardian gift packs containing maize flour, sugar, washing soap, salt, a packet of small fish and a bottle of vase-line.

The second visit was on 1st Janu-



*Nurses & their patients in Paediatric ward.
They also had a share of the gifts ▲*

ary 2012, by Mrs Gertrude Nankhumwa, the wife of Honourable Kondwani Nankhumwa the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Member of Parliament for Mulanje Central. She came with almost 30 members from this constituency. During her visit she led the members by first cleaning and scrubbing one of the wards before conducting prayers and presenting gifts to the patients. This was very commendable and really shows the support the Minister has for the hospital that is in his constituency. Mrs Nankhumwa and the group gave the sick packs containing a bottle of juice, sugar, biscuits, bathing soap, washing soap and sweets.

On 7th January, church members from Chisitu Parish led by Father V. Kamoto and Father M. Thawani visited us; they started by cleaning the hospital grounds and then conducted prayers. After this they visited all the wards and gave each patient and guardian some sugar, salt, maize flour, cooking oil, fish, mangoes and vegetables, together with some firewood.

Apatsa Miracle Fellowship Centre led by Mr T Sabuni, D Msangaambe and Mrs Mlanga also presented food items of eggs, rice and salt to the sick and conducted prayers. Also a very big thanks to Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust who donated cash to the hospital to buy sugar, salt and soap to distribute to our patients.

By Thoko Lipato

Once again thanks to all for their visits and gifts - these are so much appreciated as our hospital is serving the rural community where most of the people are poor. These are things that most of our patients lack. I wish to appeal to other churches and the community at large to emulate these good gestures. Do not wait for Christmas or the Festive Season for hospital visits but anytime people feel like visiting and cheering the sick that would be appreciated. The visits do not necessarily require expensive gifts; locally sourced items would assist the sick as well.

More blessed is the hand that giveth than the one that receiveth.

**Sponsor a hospital
bed**

email: director@mmh.mw



Training and new programs for the Youth Centre

Mulanje Mission youth centre was privileged to have life skills training from Banja La Tsogolo (BLM), a Non governmental health institution that provides sexual reproductive health services, from 5th- 16th September, 2011. Life skills are talents which enable young people to cope with issues in everyday life. The content of the training comprised of the following areas:

- Importance of life skills
- Self esteem and assertiveness
- Decision making
- Self awareness
- Effective communication.
- Creative and critical thinking
- Planning for the future
- Peaceful conflict resolution
- How to cope with emotion
- Introduction to HIV and AIDS
- How to solve problems.

The training was initiated in conjunction with Uchembere Network, the programme for safe motherhood run by Blantyre Synod. The training was for two weeks. In the first week we had 25 participants, 15 girls and 10 boys. The same system was used in the second week.

We decided to have a larger number of girls as one way of motivating girls in taking part in sexual reproductive health activities. From the experience we have had, girls are always reluctant in taking part in sexual reproductive health activities, so we thought that this could be one of the solutions to promote girl participation.

Out of the 50 participants 40 graduated with Testimonials at the end of the training. We would like to run these life skills trainings three times per year but this has been difficult to achieve due to financial constraints. Our mission statement is still to provide the youth with comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services.

The youth centre has also introduced some new programmes; Organized Children Association for Action (OCAA) and Girls forum for change (GIFOC). OCAA is targeting young people in the age group 8 –10years and 10-15years and the main objective is to promote creativity, childrens' rights and make children have



Participants during Life skills training ▲

passion for school in their journey through life.

The program is being facilitated by youth volunteers and two Japanese volunteers. Girls forum for change has been introduced to mobilize, empower, and motivate girls to take part in sexual reproductive health activities, realize the importance of going to school and reduce teenage pregnancies. The program is targeting girls in the age group of 15 – 25 years. The two programmes have already been implemented.

by Wise Ndawa



One of the OCAA sessions in progress ▲

So far we have 30 girls who are taking part in girl's forum for change. OCAA has 50 registered children, 35 boys and 15 girls. Within the four months of operation OCAA is meeting some challenges. We are needing more indoor and outdoor games, films for intellectual growth, reading books for children and other teaching materials.

In the course of OCAA's activities we were also privileged to meet a group of Japanese volunteers who conducted a science show. The aim of the show was to develop young people's interest in science. The show attracted a number of children from the catchment area. Above is a picture taken during the show.

Finally, Mulanje Mission Youth Centre would be grateful for any donations that can bring change and make its activities more effective in line with its Mission statement and Vision.



MMH Youth football team ▲