

August 2007



A Dream Realized!

As friends of the people of Lwala, please celebrate with us! On April 2, 2007, the Erastus Ochieng Lwala Community Memorial Health Clinic welcomed its first patients for treatment! Founders Milton and Fred Ochieng', natives of Lwala, put their medical studies at Vanderbilt on hold for a trip home to attend the much-anticipated opening ceremony. Hundreds of villagers and a number of local dignitaries attended the festivities to hear speeches, witness the cutting of the ribbon, and enjoy a delicious banquet. Milton and Fred awarded members of the Lwala Village Development Committee (LVDC) with certificates from the Lwala Community Alliance (the new name for the U.S. committee – see below!) in appreciation of all their hard work.



The LVDC at the Opening Ceremony

Since that day the clinic has seen over 4000 patients! Our two nurses, Rose and Olivia, have been working hard to keep up with the demand, and we've recently hired a clinical officer, the Kenyan equivalent of a physician's assistant, to offer more advanced clinical care. The provision of quality care for a reasonable price has generated an endless stream of people seeking care, walking as far as ten miles to the clinic. The Lwala Village Development Committee has decided to charge 70 cents for care, but to see children, elderly people, women of childbearing age, and anyone

with a serious illness for free; about 85% of our patients are seen free!

The clinic is presently equipped to provide basic primary care. Solar power provides light in the evenings, and women carry water from a nearby well to a tank on the clinic grounds. The most common illnesses our clinicians treat are malaria, diarrhea, respiratory diseases and skin disorders. Emergencies show up at all hours of the day and night, including snake bites, burns and broken bones. The clinic has attracted a number of patients in need of surgery or complicated treatments, who have been referred to hospitals in the city.



Josh the Pharmacist Gives an Injection.

The clinic has offered several important public health outreaches, including a Mother-Child week in which immunizations and vitamin A were administered to pregnant women and children under five, and a de-worming campaign at local primary schools.

Continued Volunteer Effort

Lwala has continued to host many enthusiastic volunteers who have worked on projects related to the work of the clinic. Johanna Riesel, a first year Vanderbilt medical student, found that 85% of primary school age children in Lwala have some form of intestinal worms, and subsequently led the clinic's treatment of 650 children for worms. Fred Ochieng' introduced laboratory diagnostic techniques for malaria. William Young MD, chair of the LCA board, helped with patient triage and care plus a multitude of administrative activities. Abbie Foust, a recent Vanderbilt graduate, returned to Lwala for the second time, leading four Vanderbilt students. They distributed treated bed nets to prevent malaria and worked with villagers, hydrologist Lindsay Young, and local authorities to protect a fresh water spring.



The Protected Spring

Katie Skelly interviewed the 18 students who receive scholarships to attend high school through the LCA's education committee and the Lwala Village Education Committee. Ian Swan represented the Real Medicine Foundation, a new partner of the LCA.

Coalescing Organizational Structure

The U.S. committee for Lwala is undergoing exciting changes! The Lwala



Women Await Treatment at the Clinic

Community Alliance, as we are now known, welcomes Joel Wickre as the new executive director of the LCA. He brings a background in public health and development, specializing in HIV/AIDS in Africa, as well as experience in the non-profit sector. The LCA's 501c3 status is pending; it will soon be able to accept your tax deductible donations directly but continues to channel funds through Vanderbilt University at present.

Generous U.S. Support

Your generosity has made this tremendous progress possible! We have continued to receive lots of financial help from individual donors – thank you! Several big events have taken place as well, including a fundraiser at Vanderbilt that featured Senator Bill Frist and raised over \$25,000. Undergraduates across the country campaigned hard for Lwala in the “Grab Life Give Life” online contest and won \$5,000 for the clinic. A fundraiser in Tampa, Florida generated \$11,000. Friends continue to invite others to join in supporting people in Lwala, and for this we are grateful.



Fred and Milton with Senator Frist

A number of exciting events are coming up. Our special event coordinators, Danielle Snyder and Alexa Von Tobel, are hosting a black tie event in New York City on November 29th. Barry Simmons, who

has been following Milton for a year and a half, will release his documentary “Sons of Lwala” on February 21st in Nashville.

Jars of Clay wrote the score for the documentary, and will play the music live on a college tour this spring in conjunction with a series of AIDS symposia.

And of course we extend our thanks to Jars of Clay’s Blood:Water Mission, our founding partner who funded 50% of our first year budget and continues to provide its generous support. Blood:Water has drilled deep into relationships in Lwala and made Lwala a key part of the story it shares with its listeners in the U.S.

Leaping Forward

You can imagine all this forward motion hasn’t come without a few challenges! We’ve had difficulties retaining staff in the village due to government recruitment, and struggled to implement systems to support our patient volume! We have a number of important initiatives coming up to improve our existing programs, including building additional staff housing, providing continuing education for our staff, training a handful of local students in nursing and clinical care, and purchasing a vehicle to use as an ambulance for emergency cases.



Onyango and Other Children in Lwala

In spite of the challenges, we’ve been convicted by the enormous needs in Lwala to set our sights ahead, as we prepare to roll out a comprehensive HIV/AIDS program and maternity program. More

information on these initiatives will follow in the coming months.

Get Involved!

To donate, please send a check to: Lwala Kenya Clinic Project
 VU Station B #357727
 2301 Vanderbilt Place
 Nashville, TN 37235-7727
 payable to *Vanderbilt University (Lwala Community Clinic)*. Please add a note telling Vanderbilt that it is OK to release your name, address and donation information to the LCA so we can keep in touch as we transition to our own nonprofit status.

If you’d like to find out more, volunteer, attend the documentary opening in Nashville or the New York City gala, or underwrite our HIV/AIDS or maternal and child health programs, please get in touch!

Our website for now is:

www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/lwala.

The website for the documentary is:

www.hopeforlwala.com.

Call or e-mail our executive director:

Joel.wickre@gmail.com (510) 501-5090

Call or e-mail the chair of our board:

William.young@dartmouth.edu (603) 643-2224

From the people of Lwala, **THANK YOU!**

- \$10 Provides 1 mosquito net to a family
- \$150 Treats 50 people for malaria
- \$250 Pays Nurse Rose for 1 month
- \$500 Sends a child to high school for 1 year
- \$3000 Supplies the clinic with drugs for 1 month
- \$8000 Builds new housing to help us retain excellent staff