

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter. We are pleased to share our latest updates on the positive changes you have helped to achieve in Kenya. We are incredibly grateful to all of our supporters who have continued to give so generously this year despite the pressure of the rising cost of living. Thank you.

We wish all of our friends and supporters a Merry Christmas with very best wishes for the New Year 2023!

Updates from Kenya



In October, hospices marked World Hospice and Palliative Care Day with events to raise awareness of cancer. Women are disproportionately affected by cancer in Kenya, breast and cervical cancers are the most commonly diagnosed. This event (photo below) took place in Laikipia County to raise awareness of cervical cancer screening.



Thanks to a generous response to our request for support for home visits in our last newsletter we have been able to offer this help in eight counties across Kenya.

Photo top left - Nakuru Hospice nurse, Elizabeth, visits a patient at home. Photo top right - Husband and wife under the care of Malindi Palliative Care Unit.



Outreach clinics have taken place in Nairborr and Embao communities of Kajiado West county in southern Kenya, reaching isolated pastoralist Maasai communities. With a lack of health facilities in this remote and inaccessible part of Kenya, chronic health conditions such as diabetes and hypertension often go untreated, leading to serious complications and high demand for medical and palliative care. Our partner is there to provide that care, and advise and refer patients for appropriate treatment.

Developing Paediatric Palliative Care

Paediatric palliative care helps children with life-limiting illness to experience the best possible quality of life, as well as providing support for the family. Children living with a wide range of life-limiting and life-threatening conditions are likely to benefit from children's palliative care services, including congenital and complex chronic conditions, haematological conditions, HIV/Aids, as well as cancer. In Kenya, there remain critical gaps in the current palliative care response for children. Less than 1 in 20 children who could benefit from palliative care are able to access services.

Given this statistic, which is backed-up by feedback regularly received from our partners about the lack of care options for children, we have included paediatric palliative care as a priority in our new strategic plan. As an initial step we are working together with the Kenya Hospice and Palliative Care Association (KEHPCA) to survey the attitudes and practices of palliative care providers, paediatricians and oncologists, to establish the extent of paediatric palliative care provision in Kenya and identify the gaps. By identifying the challenges and barriers, as well as recognizing any achievements, we hope to plan a way forward in developing paediatric palliative care in Kenya that will sustainably improve access to palliative care for more children. We look forward to keeping you up to date on the progress of this work.

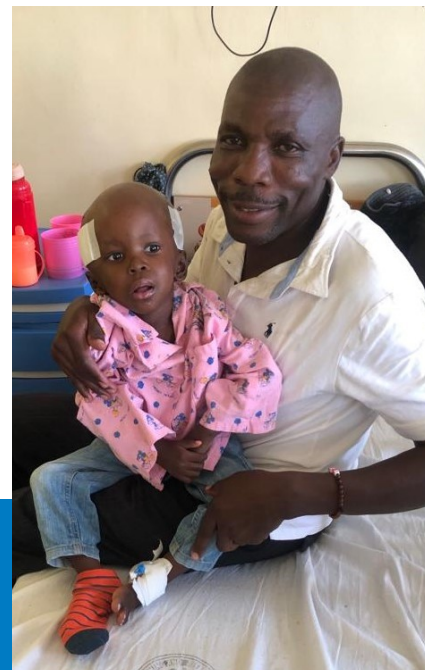


Updates from our current projects supporting children

Photo top left - Parents and children attend our child support group in Malindi and share their experiences with other parents living with the same challenges.

Above right - Nurses from Meru Hospice put smiles on their younger patients' faces by treating them to a party. With our support Meru Hospice currently cares for 12 children between the ages of 3 and 18 living with childhood cancers.

Photo right - Three year old Stacy was diagnosed with a brain tumour this year. With our support to partner Hope for Cancer Kids, the family was able to access free radiotherapy.



"Stacy is continuing with the treatment and is recovering well. Were it not for the help we received we wouldn't have managed to pay for the treatment"

~Stacy's father

Poetry supporting palliative care

Poetry in the Crypt is a popular evening of poetry held quarterly at St Mary Islington in London. The events are organised by friends of Hospice Care Kenya, Nancy Mattson and Mike Bartholomew-Biggs, both church members and writers, each with many published works of poetry. Each event sees acclaimed published poets invited to read their works alongside other fine poets, with regular contributions from poets from the floor and audiences of up to 50 or 60. The evening made a welcome return in October after a three year pause due to the pandemic.



Poet, Rhona McAdam, reads at the October event

The event has been running for over 20 years. Since 2009, all proceeds from the evening have been donated to HCK, with funds raised now totalling an incredible £5,000. Since its inception, over 100 guest poets have read at Poetry in the Crypt and generously forgone a fee to maximise the funds raised to support a good cause. As members of St Mary's Church, former Chair of Hospice Care Kenya, the late Liz Salmon, and current Chair, Sally Hull, have regularly shared updates on our work in Kenya, and this personal link inspires Mike and Nancy to support us.

We would like to thank Mike and Nancy, and the many contributing poets, for choosing to support our work at these events and wish them continued success. Poetry in the Crypt has now been rebranded as Poetry Above the Crypt and will take place in the church which can welcome a larger audience.

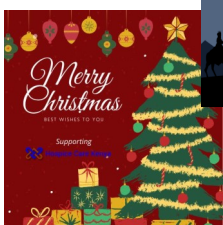
"We know where the money goes and we know how far a pound stretches in Kenya. We really believe in the work because of our personal connection and everything we know the charity has done over the years in Kenya to provide palliative care. We are delighted to support Hospice Care Kenya"

~Nancy Mattson



Simple ways to help raise even more for our work in Kenya this Christmas

DontSendMeACard.com



This Christmas why not send e-cards or a virtual gift to friends and family using **DontSendMeACard.com** and donate the cost of cards and stamps to us! Just visit **DontSendMeACard.com** and search the charity register for Hospice Care Kenya. Simply choose a Christmas card design or our virtual gift, make your donation, then you will receive a set of e-cards to either send in bulk or individually personalise.

smile.amazon.co.uk

Planning to shop with Amazon this Christmas? Don't forget to use your purchases to donate to us at no extra cost to you by shopping through Amazon Smile. Visit smile.amazon.co.uk and select us as your chosen charity for HCK to receive a donation of 0.5% on eligible purchases. Visit smile.amazon.co.uk to qualify.



Elizabeth with Moses

Moses and Elizabeth's story

Moses was a happily married father of eight children, working as a security guard. But five years ago, he noticed a swelling on his head which has led to a journey with cancer that has shattered his life.

After various failed treatments a biopsy was taken at his local hospital and Moses was diagnosed with squamous cell carcinoma, a type of skin cancer. The hospital referred Moses to a major hospital for surgery and radiotherapy, but at 200km from his home, he couldn't afford the cost of travelling there or the cost of treatment. Without treatment his tumour has gradually developed into a severe ulcerated wound, the cancer has spread and his health has deteriorated.

With Moses unable to work and support his family, his wife and children moved away to live with grandparents. Moses now lives with his sister Elizabeth. She gave up work as a home-help to care for him.

Elizabeth is a dedicated carer but the full-time responsibility is taking its toll; she is exhausted and lives in constant worry about her brother's health and their financial situation.

Palliative care nurses have been supporting Moses and his family every step of the way. The palliative care team is over-stretched but visits every other week to support the family with counselling, and to provide practical support to Elizabeth so that she knows how to care for her brother; how to clean and dress his wound and administer his medication. They are grateful that they no longer pay out for regular trips to their local hospital for wound dressing; one less thing to worry about. And a community health volunteer, recently trained with our support, now visits regularly to help with Moses' care, giving Elizabeth a much-needed break.

Please help us care for carers this Christmas. Just £50 provides regular home visits over a month for patient care, helping to give exhausted carers a break, and to give advice and support to carers to help build their confidence in caring for their loved one.

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