



## Swanson Family Newsletter

March 2015

We have now been living in Arusha for 18 months! There have been many ups and downs in life and work, yet we keep walking forward. The challenge before us seems as steep and rocky as the final ascent of Mt. Kilimanjaro. And just like the climb, we have to navigate the path immediately before us, trusting that our Guide will lead us. We have been busy at Arusha Lutheran Medical Center (ALMC) and Selian Lutheran Hospital, as well as at home with three children, three dogs, and a rescued African hedgehog, Ollie.

In the past year, I (Steve) have witnessed the further development of our region's only neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Our inpatient census of critically ill, premature newborns has doubled every year since 2011. We have expanded the NICU, trained numerous physician and nursing staff, written NICU protocols, and acquired necessary equipment. These victories have dramatically improved our ability to care for the smallest, and sickest patients in the hospital--- but the successes are balanced by the great sadness of having lost 53 babies last year to death.

Three young, very motivated Tanzanian doctors approached me to see if I would train them to work in pediatrics. This represents a substantial increase in our capacity to care for children at two hospitals, and helps me avoid inevitable burn-out. It is the beginning of Arusha's only training program in pediatrics. However, given the lack of healthcare funding in Tanzania, funding for their modest salary requires outside support. I have had wonderful opportunities to conduct teaching rounds, lecture on relevant topics, and provide primary care in both hospitals.

Jodi has enjoyed working with the pediatric staff at Selian Lutheran Hospital and improving a re-feeding program for hospitalized children with severe malnutrition. Together we have been able to build relationships with the staff and work alongside them. We are learning as we face daily challenges of severe shortages of medicines and supplies, lack of trained staff, systematic inefficiencies, and poverty. We are grateful that we are not alone in this journey. God is with us.

## Malnutrition affects so many kids

By my estimates, 25% of the hospitalized children at Selian Hospital are moderately-to-severely malnourished and 60+% are growth stunted. They are among the most vulnerable, medically fragile children in the hospital, and typically the youngest patients. Pneumonia, diarrhea and sepsis are commonplace because of compromised immunity. Severe electrolyte and mineral deficiencies, hypoglycemia and improper feeding regimens place them at greater risk of hospital death.

Faraja (pictured L, R), age 3, had severe acute malnutrition with edema (kwashiorkor) and weighed <22 lbs (10 kg) on admission (pictured L).

Following careful refeeding, she was discharged home (pictured R) after surviving sepsis. Her food was provided through donated funds due to poverty. Her story is repeated every day at Selian Hospital.





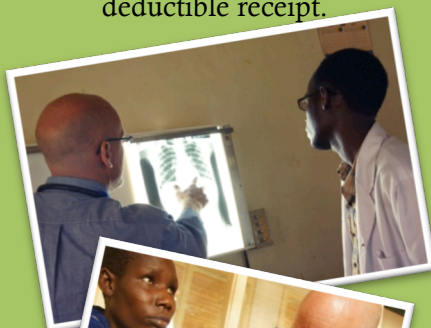
**Tax deductible contributions for 2015 can be sent to:**

**Global Health Ministries**  
7831 Hickory Street NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55432  
Office: 763-586-9590

**Please designate on any contributions:  
79AL-P3020 Tanzania:  
ALMC/Selian Pediatric Projects.**

*Please indicate this account number/name on any contribution, so that it is directed into the Tanzania Pediatrics account.*

**GHM will send you a tax-deductible receipt.**



**As we continue working in pediatrics in 2015, here are additional ways that individuals and churches can help:**

**1. Help support the salary of one of our new Tanzanian doctors who is training in pediatrics.**

We now have 4 bright, motivated doctors who have recently completed medical school. They have requested to work in pediatrics and be formally trained by us. They are:

Drs. Christina Hongella, Nafisa Darod, Linda Simon (pictured L) and Joseph Sameji (pictured L).

Their help has lifted a great burden off of my shoulders, and enabled me to expand our clinical services whilst not having to directly respond to every pediatric emergency. To my knowledge, we are offering the only pediatric training in the Arusha Region, with a catchment area of several million persons.

The annual salary for a new Tanzanian doctor is USD\$14,000 (~\$1100/month).

We will be raising the funds to support the salary of two of our Tanzanian doctors that are training/working in pediatrics.

**2. Provide re-feeding foods and therapeutic minerals, vitamins, medications**

We are developing training materials and protocols for nurses and doctors to treat hospitalized children with severe acute malnutrition and/or rickets (Vitamin D/calcium deficiency). Deleterious and outdated practices are being slowly replaced by newer protocols and the introduction of better formulas (F75/F100) for the feeding malnourished infants and small children. Jodi has simultaneously developed a model garden on the hospital grounds as a tool for teaching mothers and caregivers about high-impact, nutrient-rich foods that can be locally grown within their community to prevent malnutrition.

Estimated number of hospitalized children with severe malnutrition treated annually: 400+

**3. Invest in the care of neonates in our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit**

As NICU medical director at Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre, I have witnessed our census of hospitalized newborns skyrocket. We are the only facility in our geographic region that offers the ability to care for severely ill or premature neonates. Our cost estimates for the NICU is \$100,000 per year, which is under \$500 per baby admitted. This includes all the baby's care plus room and board for their mothers in the hospital.

Imagine that the average two-week stay in an NICU could cost so little. Currently half of our NICU babies are coming from the community and have no ability to pay. We desperately want to continue to serve these children.



- **Please pray that God will supply these needs.**
- **Pray also for rest, our children, and daily wisdom to navigate life in Tanzania.**

**We are grateful that you are with us in this work!**

**~ Steve & Jodi Swanson**