

Overwhelmed in Uganda

By Steve Nester

I was blessed to return to Uganda in February 2022 after almost 3 years of absence due to Covid-19 lockdowns. This was the first year since 2013 that Palm Beach Atlantic University Gregory School of Pharmacy did not join the team along with Word In Deed Ministries (WID) for the annual medical mission. In the past, our teams consisted of pharmacy students and professors numbering 12 to 20 participants. This year, our US team numbered only 5, including a nurse, and myself being the only pharmacist. To say I was a little anxious about the possibility of being the only pharmacist to support our scheduled medical camps is an understatement, but I was also confident that God would provide.



We had 4 clinic days scheduled for remote villages near Lake Victoria and we anticipated seeing between 800 to 1,000 patients during those 4 days. Many people had been praying for God's provision of our needs in many different areas. Through our established relationships in Uganda, our friend Victoria at the National Drug Authority introduced us to a few potential helpers for the pharmacy. I was at peace that God would provide the personnel for the pharmacy team and He supplied more than I could ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20, NIV: "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us."). I was ultimately overwhelmed by His faithful provision. Four days before the clinics began, we received notice that 2 pharmacists, 2 fourth-year pharmacy students, a doctor, and a nurse (all Ugandans) had agreed to volunteer to help in the pharmacy. This is a real testimony to God's work in Uganda because in the past we were told, "Ugandans don't volunteer for anything." God is definitely moving in the hearts and minds of the Ugandan people today.

In all clinic areas, the Lord provided! Four doctors, 4 nurses and 4 support staff from a local hospital worked as diagnostic and testing support; PSI (Population Services International) joined us with a team; Hope Smiles provided dental cleanings and extractions; StrongMinds joined us and took names of those interested in free mental health counseling, which offered much-needed support after the pandemic. Through our church partnerships, several other Ugandans also volunteered to help with crowd control. One young man, Muyomba Allan (who was a Compassion International student sponsored in Uganda by one of our friends in Florida) was introduced and recruited to also help in the pharmacy. Another young man named Bukenya Jonathan had a scholarship through WID. Bukenya was finishing up his semester and course studies for Clinical Medicine, so he was able to serve with our team and actually meet his sponsor in person.

God provided an enthusiastic, Christ-centered, mostly Ugandan team and we were able to see and treat 1,300 patients in these 4 villages. Some patients who received dental care had never seen or heard of a dentist before. Most of these villagers had no medical treatment in the past 3 years, so the response was enormous. Through the patient evaluations at the medical camps, the doctors were able to perform 30 necessary outpatient surgeries on the following Saturday at a local clinic that we rented. Our focus while we were in Uganda was to live out James 1:27, NIV ("Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.") and God opened so many doors for this to happen.

Thanks to answered prayers and support from many Americans, CPFI, and WID, we were also able to bless





accepted Christ as their Savior.

There are so many needs in Uganda, which can be emotionally overwhelming. For instance, elderly grandmothers often become caretakers for many orphaned children. A few days after the clinics were finished, we visited a grandmother (“Jane”) in her small, one-room cubicle where she lived with her 6 orphaned grandchildren and their meager belongings. We talked, prayed with them, and said we could not promise school funding (Jane was asking for financial help with her grandchildren since they were unable to attend school), but we assured her we would ask our American friends to pray for God’s help. Again, God provided more than we can ask or imagine because all 6 children have been sponsored to go to school. After this trip, I was inspired to pray more, believe more, trust more, expect more, and depend on God more. We continue to pray for grandmothers Jane, Betty, Agnes, and many others.

some students with 200 pairs of shoes purchased from the Soul Hope organization in Jinja, Uganda; 50 mosquito nets were given to the schools in partnership with WID; and 100 Bibles to the different churches and schools we visited. We were honored to share our testimonies at each clinic and at 2 churches, and the Lord was faithful in calling some to salvation. Prayer was also an intentional focus in each of our clinic stations as several people

The many needs in Uganda can be overwhelming and we cannot help everyone, but we can help the one in front of us. I encourage each of you to have bold faith and take risks for God’s glory. Serving God is a privilege, and His strength and power shine like the sun through our weaknesses and limitations.



Steve Nester is a recently retired pharmacist enjoying life on mission with his wife of 20 years Lisa Sorensen. Steve graduated from the Ohio State University School of Pharmacy and is an avid Buckeye supporter. Hobbies and passions include photography, travel, and gardening. Lisa and Steve have been involved in mission work with Word in Deed Ministries for 10 years in Uganda. Steve is a member and volunteers at Family Church in West Palm Beach, Florida.

How to Deal with Healthcare Burdens By Fady Sadek

- *“The doctor just told me I have pancreatic cancer. I didn’t hear anything he said after that. Would you please explain to me what this means?”*
- *“Can you check the diagnosis for me again? I thought I have lung cancer but the papers mentioned something about kidney cancer and you said this medicine is for kidney cancer, correct? “But I thought I have only one kind of cancer.”*
- A friendly, intelligent, and active patient in his early forties tells you that he thought he had a cold, but was told it is a late-stage cancer with a very low survival rate.