

# GLOBAL LINKS

Sharing Surplus. Saving Lives.

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 25 NUMBER 1 SPRING 2017

## GET INVOLVED



Volunteer at  
Global Links



Support our work  
with a financial gift.  
[Globallinks.org/donate](http://Globallinks.org/donate),  
United Way #4319



Donate your unwanted  
crutches, nebulizers and more.

## ENGAGE



Like us on Facebook, follow us  
on Twitter and Instagram



Attend a Tour or  
join us for a Lunch + Learn



**IMPORTANT  
DATES:**

6.5

World Environment Day

7.1

Washington Hospital  
Community Collection kick-off

8.9

International Day of the World's  
Indigenous People

## ABOUT GLOBAL LINKS

Global Links is a medical relief and development organization dedicated to supporting health improvement initiatives in resource-poor communities and promoting environmental stewardship in the US healthcare system.

**GLOBALLINKS.ORG**  
**INFO@GLOBALLINKS.ORG**  
**412.361.3424**



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with vegetable based inks.



Global Links volunteers, Mary and Paula, sort medical materials for use in our international and domestic projects.

# Supporting Our Neighbors

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROGRAM

*In 2015, 1.7 million Americans received medical, dental, pharmacy and behavioral health care at free and charitable clinics.*

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE AND CHARITABLE CLINICS

Safety net organizations are a lifeline to medical care and support services for many of our neighbors. In Allegheny County, 7% of residents are currently uninsured and countless underinsured families cannot afford co-pays, deductibles, or home medical purchases, forcing them to go without critical services and support.

With 28 years of working with public health officials in areas of scarcity, Global Links is in the

unique position to help those serving vulnerable populations with minimal resources right here in Western Pennsylvania. Our newest program, Community Partners, was developed to do just that.

Over the past two years, our staff has worked with more than 40 safety net and human service agencies in Western Pennsylvania. Through collaboration and ongoing assessment of medical material needs, we have been able to provide

organizations with medical and homecare materials to help them better serve their clients. The materials we provide include medical supplies for treating homeless individuals; bathing and mobility aids that are not covered by Medicaid for low-income seniors; and formula and baby care supplies for women struggling to parent on their own.

We have provided nearly \$200,000 worth of medical materials to our safety net partners in the initial pilot phase, and we know there is more need as we expand our reach. Limited incomes and high co-pays are roadblocks to healthy and independent living when an individual has to do without.

While some of the materials most needed come to us as surplus from our hospital partners, a large percentage comes directly from the community. When a broken ankle heals or a loved one passes after an illness, individuals are donating no longer needed materials to Global Links, knowing they will be kept from landfills and go on to serve someone else.

Right now, the wait-lists at partner organizations for items such as rolling walkers, shower benches and incontinence products are growing.

To meet the need, we must increase our collections throughout the Pittsburgh area. With your help we can support our neighbors with the materials they need to live healthy, independent lives.

**If you have materials to donate or would like to host a collection event, please contact us at [info@globallinks.org](mailto:info@globallinks.org) or call 412-361-3424. •**

# The Support of Sisterhood: Community Healthcare Models in Nicaragua

## INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL AID

The Casa Materna (Maternal Homes) system in Nicaragua is an initiative of the Ministry of Health that aims to provide pregnant women with a safe place to stay before and after giving birth. The homes are designed to offer quality pre and post-natal healthcare and pregnancy-related education in an effort to increase the percentage of institutional births and lower the country's maternal-infant mortality rates, which are some of the highest in the region.

Taking their existing model into consideration, Global Links developed the Maternal-Infant Health and Nutrition Program in Nicaragua in cooperation with the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

As the foundation of our two-year program, we strive to strengthen the public healthcare

system and increase access to services for the most vulnerable populations.

Our current work within the scope of the project will equip each Casa Materna with a full exam room, including all necessary equipment, and a computer for data collection. As part of our mission to create a sustainable impact on the system, we will also provide a donation of furniture, basic equipment, and medical supplies to the health centers and hospitals that serve as reference institutions for the women in the Casas Maternas. This year, our goal is to strengthen 16 primary care institutions and 42 Casas Maternas located in rural areas with limited access to healthcare.

In April of this year, Global Links' program staff conducted two weeks of site visits to assess the needs of those institutions set to



International Program Associate, Kelly Paola, top left, and Program Director, Karina Zelaya, third from top left, meet with health officials, staff, and patients at Casa Materna Eva Maria Lopez in Puerto Morazán.

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*By joining forces with Ministry of Health officials, PAHO representatives and US-based partners like Rise Against Hunger and Computer Reach, we're able to reinforce primary care services from both a clinical and a nutritional standpoint, promoting an inclusive, safe, educational experience for pregnant women and empowering staff with all the necessary resources to provide high-quality care.*

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monitor and evaluate donations at the facilities that were equipped in 2016.

By joining forces with Ministry of Health officials, PAHO representatives and US-based partners like Rise Against Hunger and Computer Reach, we're able to reinforce primary care services from both a clinical and a nutritional standpoint, promoting an inclusive, safe, educational experience for pregnant women and empowering staff with all the necessary resources to provide high-quality care. The addition of a computer at each facility allows for important data gathering to assess if our collaborative efforts are having the intended impact.

In rural areas, pregnant women must often travel for hours by bus or on foot to arrive at the Casa Materna to receive healthcare services. Women are encouraged to come for regular prenatal checkups in order to maintain a healthy pregnancy, but it's difficult if you're living in a remote area and have a three-hour journey to get to your checkup. As an extra incentive to the women to make that trip, Global Links has been providing a Global Links reusable bag of newborn necessities such as blankets, onesies, soap, shampoo and other much-needed baby care items that they receive when they give birth. Casas Maternas are usually supported by the

local community, so in areas that lack resources, it's difficult to ensure that food and clean water are readily available, which makes this project important to the continuous functioning of the homes.

A training component within the program helps to educate both pregnant women and midwives to recognize problems and potential high-risk deliveries so women can plan better to have an appropriately attended birth.

During our site visits to Casas Maternas in the Chinandega department of Nicaragua, we found these daily challenges to stretch far beyond those listed above. Despite these obstacles, the staff and volunteers at the Casas Maternas provide a safe haven full of energy and creativity for the women as they wait for their babies to be born.

In the town of Puerto Morazán, the Casa Materna provides the women with fabric and sewing machines, providing an opportunity to learn a tangible skill. Activities in other Casas Maternas range among paper arts and crafts, needlepoint, basic reading and writing lessons, and gardening. The Casa Materna in Posoltega even supplies the women with medicinal plants that they can take with them when they return home.

From the administrators and nurses to the brigades of community medical volunteers and midwives, the Casas Maternas illustrate the importance of a community-based healthcare model. By giving pregnant women a secure, comfortable environment surrounded by peers and supportive community members, the Ministry of Health is working toward a safer and more educated birth experience. By strengthening them with necessary resources, Global Links is joining their community effort to increase institutionalized births and lower Nicaragua's maternal-infant mortality rates. ●



Karina and Kelly meet with staff at the Centro de Salud Roberto Cortez in San Francisco del Norte for a needs assessment.

# Healing Hearts

## SUTURE DONATION PROGRAM

We can always count on Dr. Shirish Pargaonkar, head of the Miraj Heart Institute and Deputy Director of Wanless Hospital in India, to provide feedback and reports for Global Links' Suture Donation Program.

As chief of cardiovascular surgery, he sees firsthand the impact that sutures donated by Global Links have on his patients and their families. The Wanless Hospital provides subsidized cardiac surgeries for individuals who cannot afford service at India's private corporate hospitals. By partnering with our Global Links Suture Donation Program, the hospital is able to reduce costs even further, saving upwards of \$500 per surgery that it would have spent on specialized cardiac sutures.

Dr. Pargaonkar recently shared the story of two-year-old Anushruti and her family. Born with Tetralogy of Fallot, a congenital heart disease that depletes oxygen in the blood, Anushruti's family brought her to Miraj Heart Institute for the surgery necessary to repair her heart. After using specialized sutures from Global Links during heart surgery, Dr. Pargaonkar reported that Anushruti is "cured" of her heart ailment and can go on to lead a healthy, normal life.

If your company or facility has any surplus sutures to share, please contact Medical Outreach Manager Matt Fuller at 412.361.3424 x213 or [mfuller@globalinks.org](mailto:mfuller@globalinks.org). Every single packet can save or improve a life! •

Support for our Suture Donation Program comes from our donors and GSK.



Anushruti and her parents following her successful heart operation using sutures donated by Global Links.

## Partnering for Success

### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I've been thinking a lot about partnerships lately, and how important they are to accomplishing Global Links' mission. In fact, everything we do is dependent on cooperative partnerships—with health institutions in the U.S., with our volunteers, with the local safety net organizations, with Ministries of Health and hospitals abroad, with our donors and supporters, and with the community.

The U.S. health institutions that support us both financially and with materials trust that we are putting their surplus to good use. Our partnership with our volunteers provides meaningful work for them and a consistent workforce for us. The safety net organizations that we support depend on our understanding and fulfillment of some of their critical needs, and we trust they are getting those materials to people that need them the most.

Our partnerships with Ministries of Health mean that our work



Kathleen Hower  
Executive Director  
& Co-Founder

is part of a framework of public health improvement efforts in the countries and that it has a bigger impact. Partnering with recipient hospitals means that we take the time to understand their needs and the communities they serve, and they understand how we work, our process, and our limitations. Partnering with our donors, both financial and material, means that we recognize their position as investors and stakeholders in our work, and both sides recognize the importance of each of our parts in the relationship. We couldn't do what we do or be as effective without the synergy of our partnerships. •

# Family Volunteer Days

## VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROGRAM

Global Links has always valued children as capable members of society and welcomed them as volunteers. Through our new, dedicated Family Volunteer Days, families with children of all ages can work together in a supportive and educational environment.

“Family Volunteer Days are one of the few volunteer activities in the region in which families with younger children can participate,” says Bree Orner of Ben Avon. “It is the perfect way to get my son involved in volunteering at an early age and educate him about global issues and his responsibilities as a citizen of the world.”

There has been much research

done exalting the benefits of volunteering for youth and for families. Benefits have been cited including:

- Volunteering helps children cultivate positive values, become more caring, and fosters empathy.
- Children/Teens feel appreciated and respected when entrusted with important tasks.
- People feel more like a part of the broader community and something larger than themselves.
- Parents and children have the opportunity to see each other in a different light and in different roles. They bond in a different type of situation and as a team.

There are so many benefits to volunteering, and volunteering as a family increases those benefits exponentially. “It is important to me that we have a volunteer experience we can do together,” notes Ms. Orner. “We love Global Links’ Family Volunteer Days!”

We invite you and your family to experience this for yourselves by participating in an upcoming Family Volunteer Day. When you do something to contribute to society beyond yourself, you feel good. And you want to do more. And that is good for everyone. •

### UPCOMING FAMILY VOLUNTEER DAYS:

SAT,  
OCT 7

SAT,  
DEC 9



PHOTO CREDIT: GLOBAL LINKS STAFF



TAKE  
NOTE!

## Attention hospice nurses, home health providers and social workers!

Help your patients and clients donate unneeded shower benches, rolling walkers, nebulizers and adult briefs. Global Links will accept those materials and share them with local families in need.

More info at [globallinks.org](http://globallinks.org).

## MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE WITH JUST \$5 A MONTH!

Become a Global Giver with a recurring monthly gift of \$5, \$10, \$20 or more, and provide vital ongoing support for our life-saving programs.

Sign up at [globallinks.org/donate](http://globallinks.org/donate).

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2016

by the  
numbers

\$2.7

million in  
medical aid

46

countries benefited

49

local organizations  
supported

243

tons of materials kept  
from landfills

16,102

volunteer hours donated