

GLOBAL LINKS

Sharing Surplus. Saving Lives.

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 22 NUMBER 2 FALL 2014

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**LOOK FOR US
AT THESE EVENTS:**

11.03 MedSurplus Alliance
Conference, Houston, TX

11.06 Women's Health Conversations
Conference, Pittsburgh, PA

11.21 PAACC Volunteer Fair &
Luncheon, Green Tree, PA

ABOUT GLOBAL LINKS

Every year, Global Links collaborates with U.S. health care institutions and the community to recover hundreds of tons of high-quality surplus medical materials that would otherwise be sent to landfills. These materials are shared with public health institutions that are providing care for their country's most vulnerable people.

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Global Links Program Officer, Karina Zalaya, PAHO Honduras representative, Lic. Fatima Valle and Hospital Director, Dr. Marvin Macedo, discuss a plan to help Santa Rosita Psychiatric Hospital care for its' 350 resident patients while supporting 27,000 out-patient visits each year.

Caring for the Forgotten

Health systems around the world face enormous challenges in delivering care and protecting the human rights of people with mental, neurological and substance use disorders. The resources available are insufficient, inequitably distributed and inefficiently used. As a result, a large majority of people with these disorders receive no care at all.

Dr. Margaret Chan

DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

October 10th marked World Mental Health Day, a global day of mental health education, awareness and advocacy. For the program officers at Global Links, it was a day of reflection on how two separate visits to psychiatric hospitals in two different countries culminated in an organization-wide effort to support these under-resourced and often forgotten institutions.

Mental and neurological disorders account for almost one-quarter of the total burden of disease in Latin America and the Caribbean, and yet the investment in treating mental illness has been far less. Many countries are working to bring the treatment of mental illness to the community level as part of primary care with the goal of better integration of mental health into

general health, but there remains much to do.

In the meantime, the officials at the Ministries of Health struggle to provide basic materials to all of their hospitals and clinics and the institutions serving the mentally ill are usually far down on the list.

This leaves administrators and healthcare professionals in these hospitals desperate for materials as basic as exam gloves, blood pressure units, adequate beds and mattresses, and the basic necessities of daily life for the patients such as soap, toothbrushes, linens and even clothing.

In Honduras, the Santa Rosita Psychiatric Hospital in Tegucigalpa is one of only two psychiatric hospitals for the entire country. The need there is great, but with a passionate director

and dedicated staff, the hospital serves a large population of patients suffering a wide range of mental health issues. After a site visit in May, our program officer for Central and South America, Karina Zelaya, worked with the

hospital director and Pan American

Health Organization to develop a plan that will improve the living conditions of the patients, and support the work of the hospital staff.

For the staff at Hospital Psiquiatrico Gustavo Machin in Santiago de Cuba, the challenges are twofold.

It not only became the only functioning psychiatric facility in the area after Hurricane Sandy damaged most of the hospitals around Santiago, but it also experienced a dramatic increase in patients needing treatment for post-traumatic stress due to tragic losses due to the hurricane.

On a site visit in April, Marisol Wandiga Valentin, Program Officer for the Caribbean Region, noted that the hospital was clean and that patients seemed happy and even organized an impromptu “Son Cubano” session for her. Despite adequate staffing and a safe environment, the need for materials was ever present. Global Links is continuing to provide office furnishings to help replace those damaged in the storm, and plans to support the hospital with furnishings for its cafeteria spaces as well as supplies for patient care.

Global Links’ innovative model of recovery and reuse provides the materials, but it’s our partnerships with health officials and relationships with healthcare providers that enable us to truly make a difference in patient’s lives, now and in the long-term. As governments everywhere, including the US, struggle to improve mental health care, Global Links’ work to improve health systems in the poorest countries in our hemisphere creates an environment where systems have the capacity to treat the whole patient. •

*Global Links
is doing something so
important in providing
for the significant needs
of patients that society
often overlooks.*

DR. MARVIN MACEDO

Director, Santa Rosita



Program Officer, Marisol, poses for a photo with the staff and female patients at Hospital Psiquiatrico Gustavo Machin in Santiago de Cuba.



Red Cross trailers ready to roll with the addition of wheelchairs, canes and crutches from Global Links.

Serving Our Region in Case of an Emergency

Global Links is proud to include The American Red Cross of Southwestern Pennsylvania as one of our Community Partners. After attending an event at Global Links this past spring, staff from the Red Cross disaster services team reached out for assistance with serving citizens with mobility issues in the time of evacuation during a disaster.

Global Links' extensive experience with community needs post-disaster enabled us to build a project that will supply wheelchairs, walkers, canes, crutches and other medical equipment for 43 Emergency Relief Trailers serving 25 counties throughout Western Pennsylvania.

"The American Red Cross has not stocked these items in our disaster trailers in the past, so we are grateful

for the cooperation of Global Links in partnering with us to increase the region's response capacity to serve all people during a disaster," said Victor Roosen, Regional Disaster and Program Officer for the American Red Cross, Western Pennsylvania Region.

In addition to the small trailers, Global Links will be providing mobility equipment along with nebulizers, home blood pressure units, adult briefs and other important healthcare items for the Red Cross' two larger trailers serving Allegheny County.

If you have mobility devices you would like to donate or if you or your group would like to host a Community Collection, please call us at **412.361.3424** or email **info@globallinks.org**.

A Global Links Volunteer "Retires"

We would like to send a special thank-you to **Jim Carr**, one of our biomedical equipment specialists, as he retires after nearly 10 years as a Global Links volunteer. Every blood pressure unit we have sent out since 2005 has been checked and, if necessary, repaired by Jim. His dedication and attention to detail enabled us to provide thousands of blood pressure units to clinics and healthcare facilities in resource-poor communities locally and throughout Latin America.

Global Links includes blood pressure units in just about every project as well as with many medical service trips. "They are one of the most important tools for primary care," says Program Manager Jennifer Novelli. "Expectant mothers and many other community members need to have their blood



Jim Carr

THANK YOU!
10 YEARS
of
VOLUNTEERISM

The Right Sutures at the Right Time

pressure checked regularly, and there is just no way to do that without a blood pressure unit.”

To quote Jim, “If you’ve got time on your hands, you may as well be helping somebody.” Although he will be enjoying his retirement out of state, Jim will always be part of the Global Links family.

If you have time on your hands, we are looking for volunteers to take over for Jim. If you’re willing to share your time and talents to assess and prepare basic biomedical equipment, we’d love to hear from you. Not only is the work environment fun and casual, but the schedule is also flexible and we’ll provide training and tools. Contact **Hayley Brugos** at **412.361.3424 x213** or **hbrugos@globallinks.org** for more information. •

Since the first valuable sutures were diverted from a landfill in 1989, Global Links’ Suture Donation Program has been helping to save lives for 25 years. One of the hospitals in our program is Haiti’s Hôpital Albert Schweitzer (HAS), which has been using sutures donated by Global Links for the past 9 years. Some of these sutures helped give this story a very happy ending...

Mari Clide, a 25-year old Haitian woman, was pregnant for the first time—and carrying twins.

One night she awoke with a severe headache, which she knew could be a sign of pre-eclampsia, a life-threatening condition for her and her babies. Luckily, Mari Clide was able to get help at HAS.

When Mari Clide’s doctors decided she required a Cesarean section,

they had the exact sutures they needed, thanks to the efforts of OR staff who save sutures for Global Links. According to her doctors, without a c-section, Mari was at risk for neurologic injury for her twins, stillbirth, infection, hemorrhage, fistula and even death. Having the right supplies from Global Links enabled the hospital staff to make the best decision for Mari, and the twins—Roodensly and Roodensky—entered the world safely.

If your company or facility has current sutures to share, please contact **Jennifer Novelli** at **412.361.3424 x204** or **jnovelli@globallinks.org**. Every packet we keep out of a landfill can save the lives of mothers and babies around the world. •



Mari Clide with her twins Roodensly and Roodensky resting comfortably thanks to sutures donated by Global Links

Have a Seat!

When hospitals renovate, consolidate or convert patient floors, Global Links is there to make a complex project easier on hospital staff AND the environment. We work with hospital administration, construction management and environmental services to ensure that furnishings in good condition, and which meet needs of our program partners, are given a second life of service and do not end up in landfill. Global Links staff coordinates with all teams to facilitate the process with minimal interruption to patients or hospital operations.

Our work with a local hospital replacing patient room furniture one floor at a time resulted in the

recovery of nearly 150 rooms' worth of nightstands, dressers, patient chairs, overbed tables, visitor chairs and more. Whether these materials end up at a clinic in Pittsburgh's Hill District or a hospital in Honduras, Global Links' proven process of recovery and reuse gives hospital systems a socially and

environmentally responsible way to dispose of materials.

For information on what Global Links can do for your facility in Pennsylvania, Maryland or Ohio, contact **Hayley Brugos**, Medical Outreach Manager, at **412.361.3424 x213** or **hbrugos@globallinks.org** •



Chairs recovered from patient rooms at Mercy Hospital will have a second life at hospitals and clinics in resource-poor communities.

The Global Links Volunteer Service Center Turns One!

Global Links staff moved into the new headquarters in May of 2013, but it wasn't really home until the Volunteer Service Center was ready last October. After many months of construction, new shelving installation and designation of work areas, Global Links now has work

space to accommodate all of our important programs. Having a large and organized work area allows us to host more volunteers and groups, as well as be more flexible in scheduling.

In addition to our daytime shifts Tuesday through Saturday, we're

pleased to be hosting individual and group volunteer sessions every Thursday from 6-8 pm. If you or your group would like to schedule a volunteer shift, please contact **Stacy Bodow**, Community Engagement Manager, at **412-361-3424 x205** or **sbodow@globallinks.org** •



A makeover that truly makes a difference.



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— CELEBRATE —
25 YEARS
of ———
**LIFE-SAVING
WORK**

We're marking Global Links' 25th Anniversary with a very special Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) Party on Saturday, November 1st, 8:00 pm - midnight. Please join us as we celebrate

the traditions of this joyous Mexican holiday with an evening of food, cocktails, art and entertainment. **Tickets and more information at globallinks.org.**



A Celebration of Life Supporting Global Links
Saturday, November 1st • 8:00 pm - Midnight