

mma newsletter

sharing hope, health and life

medical mission aid inc.

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Autumn 2024



Supporting Nursing students in Madagascar

Brenton Ward, Board Secretary

Welcome to our Autumn Edition of the Medical Mission Aid Newsletter!

In everything MMA does, we seek to share hope, health and life, in the name of Christ, with the most disadvantaged communities in the most vulnerable parts of the world. MMA achieves this through 14 approved development projects with 13 Christian partners in 8 countries. We are excited to share our newest project, a partnership between Medical Mission Aid and Sekoly Fanomanana Mpitsabo (SEFAM), a training institute for health professionals. SEFAM aims to increase the number of Madagascan Christian Health Professionals who serve their communities as health professionals and Christian leaders.

MMA's support of health professional training at SEFAM is important as Madagascar is categorised as "least developed" by the United Nations and is ranked **173** in the **Human Development Index**, a measure for assessing progress in three basic dimensions: life expectancy, education and standard of living. By way of comparison, Australia is ranked 5. The Maternal Mortality Rate in Madagascar is 335 deaths per 100,000 live births compared to 5.8 per 100,000 live births in Australia. It is our hope and prayer that at the conclusion of their three year course, these **MMA sponsored nurses** will increase the capacity of their local health systems and improve health outcomes in their rural communities.



"I am overjoyed, deeply appreciative, amazed, and excited! We cannot thank you enough for your compassion and willingness to support our mission!"

Meta Paubert Kaurin, who selected the women to sit the nursing exam at SEFAM

Pictured Above: The three nurses, Harilanto, Florence and Bellefemme with a coordinator from Nofi I Androy, an organisation that empowers women through education

Pictured Left: One of the sponsored nurses with her family before leaving to study at SEFAM

And then there were three!..

Initially, MMA agreed to support two Madagascan women for nurse training. Therefore, three candidates were chosen by Meta to sit the entrance examination with the expectation that only two would pass. However, when all three passed the exam, Meta asked MMA if it could support all three students, Harilanto, Florence and Bellefemme!

Thanks to your support, MMA was thrilled to say yes. Meta responded, "I am overjoyed, deeply appreciative, amazed and excited! We cannot thank you enough for your compassion and willingness to support our mission!"



Photos: Left: Harilanto boarding the bus to travel to SEFAM Right: Florence, Bellefemme and Harilanto settling in at SEFAM

Praise God for MMA and its generous supporters who have provided such a wonderful opportunity for these young women.

from the president

Dear MMA friends and supporters,

In this Lenten season, we are reminded that all of us, just like Christ in the desert, must prayerfully prepare for and make ourselves ready for the mission that God has entrusted us with.

With the departure of Shanta Parker in early November 2023, I've reflected this is exactly where MMA finds itself. We would not have wished these circumstances, but we must face them, and prayerfully prepare for what God might expect from MMA next.

I'm grateful for the MMA Board's support, as we have negotiated and continued MMA's operations, whilst reflecting on changes we should make to MMA's structure, mission, and operations. We have set ourselves an ambitious challenge to deliver on both Board revitalisation and staff renewal before the end of the calendar year.

There is insufficient space here to give credit and thanks for the blessing which Shanta Parker was for MMA. The words of a past Board member ring true, "I did not think we could find someone who could achieve so much, like Shanta, but I was wrong."

Shanta achieved much in 4 years with MMA, including an OAM award for Ruth Judd! Also, from the heartbreak of last year's Tanzanian hospital visits, we hope the way forward for greater MMA support will become clear.

In the meantime, I'm also extremely thankful for your continued prayers for the Board during this time. I would like to thank MMA's immediate past Presidents, Jenny Bock & Meryl McEwen as well as Brenton Ward, current MMA Secretary, who has done a sterling amount of work covering for Shanta's absence.

Finally, thank you to MMA's generous donors for both your financial and prayerful support (for the Board, for our Project Partners and for MMA's future) without which none of MMA's work could be achieved. I sign off wishing you and your loved ones, peace, and joy in the Risen Lord, for this Easter.

Barry Kelly



Photo: Former MMA Presidents Ruth Judd OAM and Jenny Bock with current MMA Board Chair, Barry Kelly.

Autumnfest Re-imagined

This Autumn the MMA Board is taking an opportunity to reimagine Autumnfest.

Whilst this occurs, we have made the difficult decision to not hold an Autumnfest this year.

We look forward to seeing our supporters at Springfest later in the year and at a reimaged Autumnfest in 2025!

WATCH THIS SPACE!

Congratulations Ruth Judd OAM

Medical Mission Aid was thrilled to announce that past MMA President, Ruth Judd was awarded an Order of Australia Medal on Australia Day for her contribution to the international community through medical aid.

Ruth epitomises Medical Mission Aid by her Christ-like example of caring for the marginalised and vulnerable, her empathy for others, her integrity, her commitment to sustainability in healthcare through training of local professionals and a belief that every human is created in the image of God. Ruth served with the Church Missionary Society (CMS) as Australia's first nurse to work in Nepal. In Kathmandu, she worked as Director of Nursing at the Shanta Barwan Hospital where she had a particular passion for training local nurses, thus increasing the capacity of the Nepali Health System.

Pictured: Past MMA secretary Helen Potts with past presidents Ruth Judd, OAM and Jenny Bock



MMA celebrates 3 years supporting South Sudan!



Photo above: Former MMA Executive Director, Shanta Parker, Melbourne United Players Jo Lual Acuil Jr and Campbell Blogg surrounded by MMA supporters!

On Sunday 15th October, 2023

around fifty MMA supporters celebrated three years of Medical Mission Aid supporting the South Sudanese health system.

To mark this occasion, we gathered at John Cain Arena to watch South Sudanese basketballer, Jo Lual-Acuil Jr play as his team, Melbourne United defeated the Brisbane Bullets.

South Sudan has an incredibly fragile health system that has been effected by civil war for many years with millions of displaced people. This has created a desperate need for health care workers and MMA is pleased to support the rebuilding and strengthening of the health system through health scholarship funding. MMA's funding is administered locally through our partner, Christian Health Initiatives.

Unfortunately, Jo Lual had a wrist injury on the day but he was kind enough to introduce himself to the Medical Mission Aid supporters after the game. Jo and fellow teammate, Campbell Blogg signed merchandise and awarded the signed team jersey to lucky winner, James Van Der Westhuizen.

A powerful weekend of workshops in Egypt

Our partner, **Episcocare, in Cairo, Egypt**, aims to raise awareness of the harmful impact of female genital mutilation (FGM) by empowering young people to learn about FGM and share information in their local communities.

In February, with Medical Mission Aid's support a two day workshop was conducted in Cairo to equip young people from disadvantaged communities with the skills to design an awareness campaign about FGM to share in their local communities.

The youth who attended the workshop felt empowered and enthusiastic about making an impact about FGM in their local communities.

Project coordinators reported that both men and women were impacted with one man reporting he now understands the harm of FGM, why it is illegal in Egypt and against religion and medical science. He plans to share this information with other men and boys in his community.

One female participant, personally impacted by the effect of FGM received counselling following the workshop from an Episcocare counsellor. Having personally experienced FGM, she feels she has an important role in correcting misconceptions that FGM is a symbol of purity, personal hygiene and a necessity for marriage. She stated, "I will share the serious physical and psychological complications (of FGM) on young girls.

Your generosity helps!

This project faces funding **pressure** due to **extreme fluctuations in the Egyptian economy**. Please scan the QR code or use one of the methods on Page 4 to donate!



\$116/month

or \$1392 a year will provide a scholarship in Nepal or Tanzania for one student for one year, see page 4 for ways to donate to the work of MMA.

want to help
mma?

All donations
over \$2 are
tax-deductible

There are four ways of donating to MMA:

1 Electronic transfer to MMA's account:

BSB 033 112 Name and Number: MMA Inc. 378527

Please enter your surname as 'description/reference' and email your contact details to: mmaacts@gmail.com

2 MMA Website

Please visit

<https://medicalmissionaid.org.au/ways-to-give/donate/>

Please note 1.4% fees are deducted from these donations and a receipt will be automatically issued.

3 Cheque/Money Order payable to MMA Inc.

Mail cheque/money order together with your name, address or email address for receipt to:
Medical Mission Aid, PO Box 1142, Surrey Hills North, Vic 3127

4 Paypal/Credit Card via MMA Inc Facebook page

Please visit

<https://m.facebook.com/Medicalmissionaidaustralia/>

No fees are deducted from these donations and a receipt will be automatically issued by email if your FB page is linked to your email account.

Donations may be designated to:

- General Funds or,
- Any specific project. Visit our website to see the list of current projects.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of a **Legacy Gift** to MMA. For more information, please contact mmaexd@gmail.com or visit <https://wills.gatheredhere.com.au/c/medical-mission-aid>

MMA Inc. is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and has been endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a deductible gift receipt. ABN 36 062 783 362

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MMA is a not-for-profit Christian charity. Our mission is to show God's love in practical ways by supporting people in disadvantaged countries to improve health outcomes.

AGM Follow-Up:

Our statement of theological purpose

At our last Annual General Meeting, a motion was moved that the MMA Statement of Theological Purpose be revised within three months.

This process was delegated by the MMA Board to the MMA Governance Committee who completed the review following a period of consultation.

The Board approved minor changes and the updated Statement of Theological Purpose can now be viewed on the MMA website.

Our revised Statement of Theological Purpose states that MMA's work is a "worshipful response to Jesus Christ" and affirms and commits MMA "to Christian beliefs held in common by the Church as expressed in the Nicene Creed."

If you have any comments or questions regarding this process please email David Bock (MMA Vice President) via contact details below.

To view MMA's
Statement of
Theological Purpose
scan this QR code



Murgwanza Hospital Redevelopment

Dr. Amanda Ward (Obstetrician/Gynaecologist and MMA volunteer) presented at the 2023 AGM about her recent trip to some of our project partners in Tanzania.

MMA has a long history, thorough connections with the Church Missionary Society with Murgwanza Hospital and many MMA supporters were sorry to hear of the physical state of the Murgwanza Hospital buildings.

MMA Chair, Barry Kelly, Projects Committee Chair, Jenny Bock and a delegation of MMA volunteers have begun the process of exploring opportunities to partner with other organisations on the large task of improving the physical state of Murgwanza Hospital and securing its future for the health of future generations in the remote Murgwanza community.

Many thanks to former Executive Director, Shanta Parker for her contribution to this process. Any questions regarding this project should be directed to MMA Chair, Barry Kelly via the contact details on this page.