



Transformations

News from the Fistula Foundation, Spring 2009

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"Charity begins at home, but it shouldn't end at home."

— Professor Peter Singer

The FISTULA FOUNDATION
from despair to dignity

Fighting Fistula in Congo

The Fistula Foundation made its first grant outside of Ethiopia to help treat women in The Democratic Republic of Congo suffering from fistula. The \$50,000 grant was made this month to the Panzi Hospital in the Congolese city of Bukavu. The Hospital faced a funding shortfall when a major European donor cut support funds unexpectedly because of the global financial crisis. The Foundation grant was put to immediate use to rehire and pay twenty-two furloughed surgeons, nurses and medical aides that treat women with fistula in this war-ridden region. Many of the surgeons working at the Panzi Hospital doing fistula surgery were trained at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital.

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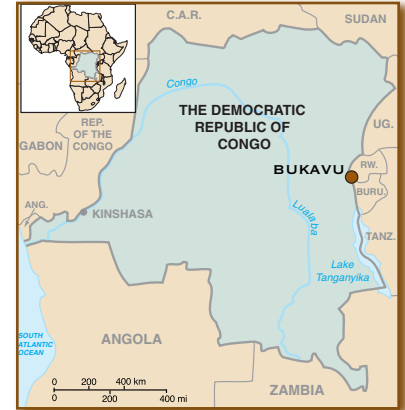


Photo: Paula Allen

Two young patients in the recovery room at the Panzi Hospital in Congo

Dr. Hamlin Celebrates 50 years in Ethiopia



Yvonne Mardoux

Dr. Hamlin and her late husband, Reginald, arrived in Ethiopia in 1959. They expected to only stay a few years. Destiny had another plan, and fifty years later Dr. Hamlin is still in Ethiopia working daily to heal broken bodies and spirits. Celebrations are being held in Ethiopia in late May and early June to honor Dr. Hamlin and her service to the women of Ethiopia. A special reception is planned at Desta Mender — "Joy Village" and a church service too. The Foundation is planning to host a special screening of the award-winning film "A Walk to Beautiful" in Addis Ababa that week to honor Dr. Hamlin. ✨

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The FISTULA
FOUNDATION

Letter from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The last few months have been ones of great uncertainty globally as economies around the world, including our own, wrestle with the deep recession. We are happy to report that most of our donors in the final months of 2008 chose to continue giving, and thankfully, the same is holding true for the first part of 2009. We are gratified to see the loyalty of people like you who are continuing to support treatment for women in desperate need of care.



*Kate Grant, Executive Director,
Fistula Foundation*

I am often asked if fistula is prevalent only in Ethiopia. The sad fact is no, over two million women in developing countries in Africa and Asia have untreated fistula and only a small fraction of that number live in Ethiopia. Our work has been focused in Ethiopia because of the pioneering work done there by Dr. Catherine Hamlin and her late husband Reginald.

In recognition of the profound need for fistula treatment in countries and communities outside of Ethiopia, the Foundation Board broadened our organization's mission so that we can help women both in Ethiopia and in other needy corners of the world. We will continue to be a major supporter of Dr. Hamlin and the Fistula Hospitals in Ethiopia.

Our first new grant outside of Ethiopia, summarized on page 1 and 3, is the Panzi Hospital in Congo. We were gratified to be able to provide an emergency grant of \$50,000 to this hospital to make up for a shortfall they had when a major European donor unexpectedly was unable to fulfill a commitment to the Panzi Hospital because of the global financial crisis. Many of the surgeons at the Panzi Hospital were trained at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital.

The Panzi Hospital treats women who have been victims of sexual violence that are a heartbreaking hallmark of the decade long conflict in Congo. They operate on fistula sufferers – providing psychological and medical care. We are honored to be able to support their inspiring work.

With Mother's Day coming up next month, we encourage you to honor the mothers in your life – your own mother or grandmother, or sister, wife or good friend, by sending her a tribute card or other gift from us. We think it's a great way to pay tribute to a mother in your life.

Sincerely,



Kate Grant
Executive Director

Improving Fistula in B

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Panzi Hospital Founder: Dr. Denis Mukwege


Dr. Mukwege specializes in treating women and girls who have been victims of sexual violence in Congo's 13-year war — many of the patients have fistulas. Dr. Mukwege has evolved to become the world's leading expert on how to repair the internal physical damage caused by gang rape and brutal sexual violence that is characterizing the conflict in Congo. Since the founding of the Panzi Hospital in 1999, Dr. Mukwege has treated 21,000 women, some of them more than once. Dr. Mukwege performs up to ten operations a day and often works 18 hours straight. His patients arrive at the hospital in a heartbreaking state — sometimes naked, often bleeding and with fistulas that cause incontinence through their brutalized vaginas.

Dr. Mukwege is the son of a Pentecostal minister and his wife, and has eight brothers and sisters. He said his reason for studying medicine was that he wanted to heal the sick that his minister father had prayed for his whole life. Though he studied gynecology in France, he returned home to Congo to treat women there who had no access to regular medical care. In 2008 he received



Paula Allen

Dr. Denis Mukwege, founder of the Panzi Hospital and patients at the Panzi Hospital


the Olof Palme Prize for his work to help women victims of rape and war crimes in Congo. He also received the United Nations Human Rights Prize in 2008 for his work protecting the rights and dignity of tens of thousand of Congolese women. 



The Mission of the Fistula Foundation is to raise awareness of and funding for fistula treatment, prevention, and educational programs worldwide.

Maternal Health and Preventing Bahir Dar

Fistula mini-hospitals opened in the Northern Ethiopian city of Bahir Dar. The Hospital is operating at capacity and the Foundation is expanding the facility through a grant to Hamlin Fistula

More women in the region have learned of the new pristine Fistula Hospital. Many have arrived in labor. The Government Hospital adjacent to the Hamlin Fistula Hospital has a maternity ward, but it often does not have the resources — both doctors and supplies — to meet the needs of all women who arrive. In order to help make deliveries in Bahir Dar safer, the Hamlin Fistula Foundation's partnership with donors in Sweden, is providing funds to Hamlin Fistula Hospitals to significantly upgrade the maternity ward at the Government Hospital. A new operating room for emergency deliveries, such as c-sections to prevent fistula will be created. Plans have been approved and June 2015 is the completion date for the exterior structure, before the rainy season begins in June. 



Site for Expanded Maternal Health Unit in Bahir Dar



Mother's Day Gift Ideas

This Mother's Day we have a few ideas for those mothers in your life.

We invite you to make a gift in support of women seeking treatment for fistula, in honor of someone you love – be it your mother, your grandmother, your wife, your sister, or good friend.

You can order any of these gifts online at our website at www.fistulafoundation.org or by calling our office toll free at 866 756-3700 in the U.S. between 8 am and 4 pm Pacific Time weekdays. Or you can mail in your order in the enclosed envelope. Please place your order no later than Wednesday April 29, 2009.



Tribute Mother's Day Card

For your donation of \$10 USD or more we will mail a custom made Mother's Day Card to someone special in your life.

Dignity Bracelet

The silver-plated Dignity Bracelet incorporates the Fistula Foundation logo and the word Dignity in English on one side and in Amharic, the most common language in Ethiopia, on the other side of the central bead. For any donation of \$125 or more you can receive a Dignity Bracelet or send one to a recipient of your choice.



Dignity Earrings

The silver-plated Dignity Earrings make a simple but lovely gift that helps support the work of the Foundation. With any donation of \$65 or more you can receive a pair of Dignity Earrings or send a pair to a recipient of your choice. The earrings are designed to match with the Dignity bracelet so they can be worn together or separately.



Dignity Bracelet and Earrings Gift Set

We are offering another gift option for women you want to honor, which is a gift set that includes both the dignity bracelet and a pair of the dignity earrings. With any donation of \$150 or more, we will send this gift set to a recipient of your choice. (This is a special offer, providing a savings of \$40 if requested separately.)

"Blue Flower" Scarf

The floral scarf was custom-designed by the Fistula Foundation in cheerful hues of blue, green and gold. The flower motif works well during any season. It has a discreet signature in the bottom corner "The Fistula Foundation from despair to dignity". It is a full 3 feet by 3 feet square, so it can be worn as a shawl or a scarf. It is 100% silk. With a donation of \$95 we will send the scarf to a woman who you want to honor with a unique gift.



Love-a-Sister Tribute Gift

For those wishing to make a gift that will likely never be forgotten, we encourage you to consider providing a gift equivalent to the cost of complete treatment for a woman suffering from fistula. Since the Foundation began this program over 2000 women's treatment has been covered by our "Love-a-Sister" supporters. For a gift of \$450, the approximate cost to provide complete treatment for one women, we will send the person who you want to honor an 8 1/2" x 11" four-color certificate on high quality paper that acknowledges that this life changing gift has been made in their honor.



New Grants to support Hamlin Fistula Hospitals

The Foundation was delighted to approve over \$1.5 million dollars in new grants to Hamlin Fistula Hospitals in late 2008. The Foundation continues to be one of the largest supporters. The largest grant of \$736,000 was used to support the core programs at the main facility in Addis Ababa that treats over 1200 women per year.



In addition, the Foundation followed through on its commitment to fund all the running costs to support the new Fistula Hospital in Harar. This new Hospital in Harar was built entirely with funds donated by the Fistula Foundation, with key support to the Foundation provided by the Ethiopian American Community. Dedicated Ethiopian American volunteers in Washington, New York and the San Francisco Bay Area spearheaded a campaign – named Tesfa Ineste, which in Amharic means “Let’s give them hope” — that was as inspiring as it was successful. ☀

New Fistula Foundation grant covers Harar Hospital’s annual operating expenses for FY 2008-9

Fighting Fistula...continued from page 1

The Panzi Hospital was established in 1999 to confront the injuries suffered by the population of Bukavu in Congo during the “war of liberation” that began in 1996. Maternal death rates increased dramatically after the war started. Specifically, many women needing help had been gang raped, and some subjected to assault from the inside out with bayonets, chunks of wood and even rifles.

The Hospital is run by its founder, Congolese gynecologist, Dr. Denis Mukwege, profiled on page 3. The Hospital contains 334 patient beds and provides a range of obstetric, gynecological, pediatric and internal medical services treating patients for free. It provides specialized surgery for women who are victims of sexual violence that often result in fistulas. The Hospital also contains a pharmacy, a laboratory, a radiology unit, ultrasound and endoscopy. The Hospital is becoming the primary referral center of South Kivu and North Kalemie, and receives patients from other parts of Congo as well. The Foundation was honored to be able to support their work.

For viewers of the television show “60 Minutes” you may already be familiar with the Panzi Hospital and its founder, Dr. Mukwege. They were featured in 2008 in a segment produced by Anderson Cooper. There is a link to this and other press stories about the Hospital on our website (www.fistulafoundation.org). ☀

NETFLIX

for A Walk to Beautiful

If you missed the award-winning film “A Walk to Beautiful” when it aired on PBS, but subscribe to the service Netflix, you can order it now. In addition, we’ve learned that “A Walk to Beautiful” is also one of the films that Netflix subscribers can watch instantly, streamed from Netflix over the Internet to you PC or Mac.

All that’s missing is the popcorn!





The Life You Can Save — New book argues giving is a moral responsibility

Peter Singer is a philosopher and bio-ethics professor at Princeton University and was named by *Time* magazine as one of “The 100 Most Influential People in the World”. In his new book *The Life You*



*Professor Peter Singer, author of
The Life You Can Save*

Can Save Singer argues that Americans — wealthy compared to the world’s poor — have a moral responsibility to help alleviate the suffering of the global poor. He demonstrates that relatively small contributions can save and transform lives. Professor Singer, who Foundation Executive Director, Kate Grant, met last year, uses the Fistula Foundation and Hamlin Fistula Hospitals as an example of how lives can be transformed:

“If you have a spare \$450 and are thinking about whether to spend it on yourself or to use it to help others, it won’t be easy to find anything that you need nearly as much as a fourteen-year-old girl with a fistula needs an operation.”

The book is available in book stores and on Amazon.com. It’s relatively short 176 pages, not including the index, and provides a concise and compelling argument for why the “good life” is a life of giving. ✨

