



Transformations

News from the Fistula Foundation, Winter 2010

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

◆ The FISTULA
FOUNDATION
from despair to dignity

CAMPAIGN 2011: We're Not Stopping

Our momentum is strong. Our need remains great. Last year, our mission boldly expanded to fight fistula globally. And we're not stopping.

Last November, we announced an ambitious goal. We wanted to double the number of women we could help outside of Ethiopia. While we remain the largest current funder of the Hamlin Fistula Hospitals in Ethiopia, we knew we could help more women in more places. We had begun funding fistula treatment programs in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Angola. The global need was so great, there was no alternative but to be ambitious. But would we really double the number of women we could help? Well, we hoped we could.



Executive Director Kate Grant standing in front of a large map, newly installed in the Foundation's conference room. (Countries appearing in orange and red currently have the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. Map courtesy of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, University of Washington.)

During our final two months last year, it happened. And it felt like a miracle. Hundreds of friends made charitable donations during the final days of 2009. As a result, we more than doubled the number of women we could help outside of Ethiopia. In early 2010 we began expanding to fund fistula programs in eleven countries in Africa and Asia. Without everyone's donations, it would have still been just a dream, and one that had to wait.

This year, we're hoping for another miracle. 2010 isn't over yet. Before December 31st, can we count on you to make your charitable donation to the Fistula Foundation?

Staggering numbers of women with untreated fistula are still waiting. They are waiting for an inexpensive operation that will dramatically change their lives. The Fistula Foundation has not forgotten them. And we know you haven't either.

Will you help more women receive life-changing treatment? Help us change the world one woman at a time. We can't rise to the challenge without you.

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Pioneering Surgeon Honored for Perseverance in Alleviating Human Suffering

On October 18th, Fistula Foundation grantee Dr. Stephen Foster, founder of the Centre Evangelical Medical Center of Lubango (CEML), was awarded the Teasdale-Corti Humanitarian Award by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. The annual award recognizes a Canadian doctor whose lifetime career reflects altruism and integrity, courage and perseverance in the alleviation of human suffering.



Dr. Stephen Foster and his wife Peggy at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada's Teasdale-Corti Humanitarian Award ceremony in Ottawa.

Foster grew up in Zambia; his father was also a missionary surgeon. Foster returned to Canada for his medical training, and then chose to go to Angola in 1978 though the country was embroiled in a devastating civil war. Now, with peace restored, Dr. Foster is running the hospital he founded in 2006 in the regional capital Lubango. There, he and his team treat thousands of patients a year. The Fistula Foundation is honored to fund all the fistula surgery performed by Dr. Foster at CEML. We warmly congratulate Dr. Foster on this richly deserved award.

Spotlight on Where We're Helping:

Approximately 12 million people live in the West African country of Senegal, where mortality rates in the world, most severely in remote rural areas.



The roads are to blame. It poses a challenge for labor and women with fistula are

The Fistula Foundation is funding a project designed a one-of-a-kind, three-wheel ambulance in Senegal's Kedougou region. This project helps women with post-partum complications.



Our grantee Women and Health Alliance International has designed a one-of-a-kind all terrain ambulance as no paved roads exist in Senegal's Kedougou region.

One Woman's Story: Afghanistan

The Foundation is supporting the work of the highly respected CURE International Hospital in Kabul Afghanistan that is building fistula treatment capacity and training in this conflict-ridden country.

CURE's Medical Director Dr. Richard Manning shared this story about Fauzia, a recent fistula patient.

Fauzia's story is one which tragically highlights so well the suffering which a young woman can be made to endure in Afghanistan. When she arrived at CURE International Hospital in June 2010 from a small village near Kabul City, she was 35 years old, but her problem with obstetric fistula (OF) had started 25 years earlier at the age of 10 after she gave birth to a stillborn child. Twice before coming to CURE, other surgeons at different hospitals in Kabul had tried unsuccessfully to repair her fistula.



Dr. Sofia Hail, Director, Obstetric Fistula Program, CURE International Hospital (Kabul, Afghanistan)

As bad as all of the fistula symptoms were, it is hard to grasp the enormity of suffering which she was made to endure. Pregnant at age 10 -- by whom? Losing a child. This tragedy is all too common in Afghanistan. School? Out of the question. Making friends? With whom? How about feeling hopeful regarding a chance to have the problem fixed not once, but twice before, only to wake up disappointed? How many of us would have been willing to undergo yet a third procedure? How many of us would have been willing to go on living? Her courage and determination staggers the imagination.

continued on page 4

Senegal

Senegal. And 45 percent of these people are under the age of 15. Senegal has one of the highest maternal

is a major problem. The most rural places in Senegal have few roads, and rarely any that are paved. Women in rural areas are limited in the treatment and help they can receive.

There is a truly innovative intervention. Our grantee Women and Health Alliance International (WAHA) has developed a wheeled All Terrain Ambulance Vehicle equipped to transport patients where no paved roads exist in rural areas. This exciting effort will help reduce maternal deaths and injuries as well as provide surgical treatment for conditions including obstetric fistula. Community health workers are trained to recognize danger signs during delivery. If an emergency arises, this unique All Terrain Ambulance Vehicle can be called by radio to rapidly deliver the patient to the nearest health centre or hospital.



All terrain ambulance vehicle to transport patients where no paved roads exist

In addition, community mobilization activities will be conducted to raise community awareness about the importance of skilled attendance at delivery to prevent fistula and to simultaneously stimulate demand for fistula care services and facilitate the process of re-integration of fistula patients into the community.

Washington, D.C. *Investing Women* Don't Rest on Sunday

On a glorious Sunday afternoon in October a group of accomplished women – *Investing Women* – gathered at the Washington Ethical Society to view the Emmy Award Winning film “A Walk to Beautiful” and engage in a discussion with Foundation Executive Director, Kate Grant. This was the first fundraising event hosted by the new group, formed to “join forces to research and contribute to international projects that support women in developing countries”. The Foundation is honored by their support and interest. The event was lively and informed, and raised nearly \$7,000 to support fistula treatment. As to what motivated these talented women it may have been said best by one of the organizers, Mame Templeton: “When I heard about how these women suffer, I just had to do something”. We are glad you and the rest of *Investing Women* decided to do just that.



Donna Boxer checks in participants.



Investing Women Participants (October 17, 2010)

One Woman's Story... *continued from page 3*

It is a good thing that she didn't know that the more failed attempts a patient has at OF repair, the less chance she has of ever having the problem surgically corrected. Dr. Sofia Hail, a graduate of CURE International's OB/GYN fellowship and director of its obstetric fistula program in Kabul Afghanistan, understood well the complexities which a third OF repair would present. Because of this she waited until a visiting expert surgeon, Dr. Tom Raassen, was in Kabul to help with the repair. It was a wise decision reflecting professionalism and humility and above all her compassion for this woman. Together, at CURE International Hospital, on June 21 2010, Dr. Raassen as trainer and Dr. Hail as trainee, repaired Fauzia's fistula in an operation that took 4 hours. Exactly two weeks later, Fauzia left the hospital without wearing a diaper for the first time in 25 years.

There are parts to this story that many of us would like to change, but are not within our power to do so. However, the one that stands out that we can change has to do with the delay in Fauzia seeking care at CURE International. She remained in Kabul without coming to our hospital to be evaluated for three years even though our obstetric fistula program had been running since mid 2007. Whether from fear of another procedure, lack of hope in any care offered in Afghanistan, financial concerns, or simply being unaware of CURE's program, she suffered for three years longer than she had to. What a shame. We can and must get the word out to the many women in Afghanistan suffering with obstetric fistula so we change this tragic scenario one life at a time. We have undertaken a concerted outreach program including advertising, a dedicated community outreach coordinator to get the word out that treatment is available, so fewer women suffer for years the way Fauzia did. We appreciate the Fistula Foundation's support of this work.

-- Richard Manning MD, Medical Director, CURE International Hospital (Kabul, Afghanistan)

What is Fistula?

A fistula is simply a hole between an internal organ and the outside world that should not exist. Women in the poorest places on earth suffer from fistula due to unrelieved obstructed labor. Fistula causes incontinence; forcing formerly vibrant young women to lead lives of shame and despair.

Holiday Giving Ideas

This Holiday Season we have a few ideas for those on your gift list.

We provide a way for you to show you care about the recipient and women who need your help.

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 if you live in the U.S. or 408 249-9596 between 8 am and 4 pm Pacific Time weekdays. If you wish to send a gift for the Christmas Holiday, please place your order with us no later than Monday, December 13. Help restore health and dignity to otherwise forgotten women.



Dignity Necklace

The silver-plated Dignity Necklace incorporates a single cultured pearl – a universal symbol of health and purity – into a drop pendant.

The necklace

can be worn for special occasions or can be casually elegant with your favorite pair of jeans. It comes packaged in a lush black velvet jewelry box perfect for gift giving. The necklace makes a wonderful gift and is yours with a donation of \$150 or more.



"Blue Flower" Scarf

The floral scarf was custom-designed by the Fistula Foundation in cheerful hues of blue, green and gold. 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.



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.

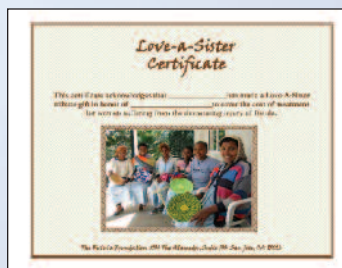


Dignity Earrings

With any donation of \$65 or more you can receive a pair of silver-plated 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 & Earrings Gift Set

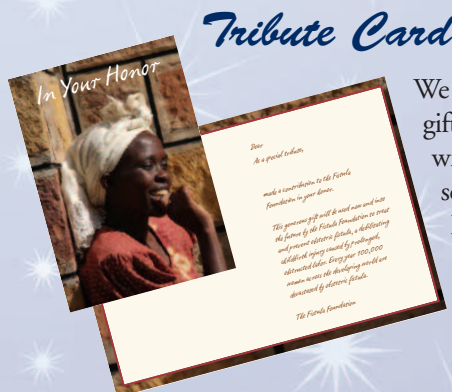
With any donation of \$150 or more, we will send a gift set to a recipient of your choice. (This is a special offer, providing a savings of \$40 if requested separately.)



Love-a-Sister Tribute Gift

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 2,000 women's treatment has been covered by our "Love-a-Sister" supporters. For a gift of \$450, 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.



Tribute Card

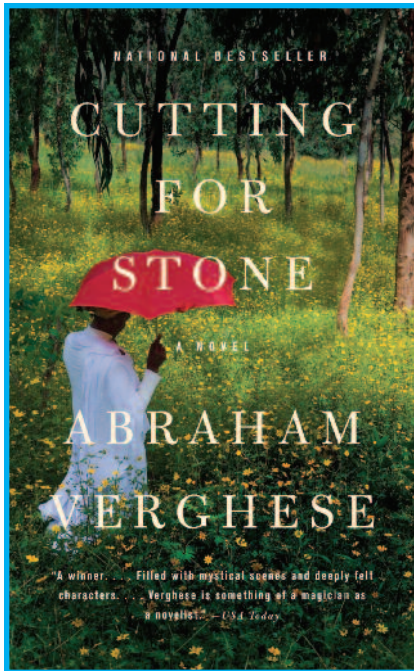
We invite you to make a gift in support of women with fistula in honor of someone you care about. For your donation of \$10 or more we will mail a custom card to someone special in your life.

**Book
Club Idea!**

Good Reading: *Cutting For Stone* By Abraham Verghese

One of our loyal donors, Renee Landegger, called me earlier this fall recommending the best-selling novel *Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese. I confessed that I had been given a copy but had not made the time to read it, in part because it takes place largely in Ethiopia. While I love Ethiopian culture and people, I've spent so much time at work thinking about this wonderful country, I put off reading even more. I regret that. Because of Renee, I picked up the book and, as is often the case with wonderful fiction, it was hard to put down; I was sad when it ended because I'd come to cherish Verghese's characters. The novel is largely focused on a family headed by two Indian ex-pat doctors running a Missionary Hospital in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, and their twin adopted sons. The book provides a compelling view of the practice of medicine in resource deprived places; it also touches on the scourge of fistula in Ethiopia. Verghese took me on an enriching and entertaining journey that I highly recommend.

– Kate Grant, Executive Director



Dr. Abraham Verghese, Professor and Senior Associate Chair for the Theory and Practice of Medicine at the Stanford University School of Medicine and the author of "My Own Country" and "The Tennis Partner." (Photo credit: Joanne Chan)

More good reads:

Half the Sky by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn and
The Life You Can Save by Peter Singer

Donor Spotlight: Sandra Wilkinson

Nurse midwife Sandra Wilkinson and her friend, fellow nurse midwife, Ginny Gladwin, know first-hand that childbirth can be a beautiful and healthy experience. They also know that sometimes life-threatening complications can occur. Sandra's personal commitment to helping women bring life into the world gives her great empathy toward women who suffer days of unrelieved obstructed labor and awaken with an even greater nightmare, a fistula. Sandra hosted a dinner with a great steel band and silent auction on Saturday September 11 in Thousand Oaks, California. Her invitation said simply "Please Help". Indeed, this is just what Sandra and her friends did. While her goal was to raise \$5,000 she raised over \$10,000 – twice her goal -- to support fistula treatment, giving young girls and women back their lives and dignity. The Fistula Foundation is deeply grateful to Sandra for her capacious heart, to Ginny, and all their wonderful friends.



Sandra Wilkinson and Ginny Gladwin