



# HOSPICE AFRICA IRELAND

## Newsletter



## HELLO FROM HAI!

Spring is here and we are pleased to share with you our first newsletter of the year!

Fortunately COVID-19 restrictions have finally been able to ease across the country, meaning Hospice services can start to fully resume. However, financial repercussions from the prolonged lockdown are providing additional challenges to the team at HAU. With rising inflation and costs of living, there is growing concern that this may affect patient care as fuel and public transport costs increase.

The HAI board continues to meet on a regular basis, supporting the team in Uganda in whatever way we can. More recently, two of our team were able to visit Uganda and you can read about this in more detail on page 3. We are also very fortunate to have gained two new wonderful board members, and would like to welcome Phil Molony and Siobhan Kennelly to our team.

Finally, we are pleased to share that Dr Anne is doing very well since her return to Kampala in December. She is in good health and has remained actively involved with goings on in Hospice, including teaching students at the Institute.

## MICHAEL CORLESS TAKES OVER AS CHAIR OF THE ANNE MERRIMAN FOUNDATION

[PENNED BY DR ANNE MERRIMAN, FOUNDER HOSPICE AFRICA UGANDA]

When the AMF was formed 9 years ago, the Foundation was launched to an international audience at the International Conference of African Palliative Care Association (APCA) in Uganda. AMF consisted of representatives from those countries affiliated to HAU, together with the Founders and the holders of the HA vision of "Palliative Care for all in Africa". It was to maintain and spread our Ethos, not only to palliative care but to other caring professionals and non-professionals. HAU was to be the example of our Ethos.

I was voted in as the first Chair of AMF. AMF has continued to meet regularly ever since to ponder on the way forward, to give sufficient financial and advisory support to all following the vision.

However, times have changed. I had to adapt to the many changes in our world in the 29 years since I first set foot in Uganda, to set up our model for the rest of Africa. It is time now, for a new visionary, who holds the values of Hospice Africa and is dedicated to our vision and Ethos, to take the reins and bring us forward while maintaining our Ethos and spirit. The next AMF chair, needs to have "fire in the belly" to reach all in need of palliative care in Africa while being aware that it is only through our God that our work, will carry on.

Recently HAI's Michael Corless has been voted in as the new Chair of AMF. I am delighted to let you know that Ireland and the Irish are now leaders for the support of our Mission, Vision and Ethos throughout our supporting countries on the Foundation, holding the patient and family as the centre of all we do.

Michael your coming to Hospice Africa was indeed the work of our God. Welcome Michael to your new vocation. We know you will carry it forward in a caring and empathetic way.



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Got questions, comments or fundraising ideas? Wanting to raise money and looking for suggestions or materials? We would love to hear from you! Please send an email to [hospiceafrica.ie@gmail.com](mailto:hospiceafrica.ie@gmail.com)

Want to donate? Please visit our new online donation page: <https://donorbox.org/hospice-africa-ireland> or you can text 'HAI' to 50300 to make a €2 donation.

# THE SITUATION IN UGANDA



## The 'long tail' of the Covid Pandemic and Hospice Africa

While many of us now feel that we are hopefully moving into a post Covid era, in many parts of the world including Uganda a long process is now beginning. As we are seeing in the Irish healthcare context the Covid pandemic had many anticipated and unanticipated consequences. A recent WHO bulletin advised that the allocation of resources for COVID-19 in the Health systems of many developing countries has "severely weakened services for other serious conditions such as cancer and HIV infection" (WHO Bulletin, Aug 21). Palliative Care patients who contracted Covid were also more likely to die from it. There are also ongoing issues for supporting and retaining healthcare workers in palliative care who have been working in very difficult conditions for the last two years. Within all of this we in HAU want to extend a special thanks to all the teams in HAU who have given of themselves so tirelessly in supporting their patients. We will continue to support you in all your efforts. For readers who wish to continue to support these efforts please see the table below outlining how a donation can be made and the supports that can be funded through same. Every donation no matter how big or small can make a difference.

Written by Siobhan Kennelly

## CURRENT COSTS AT HAU (2022)

### Cost of patient care

Per week: €2.50

Per month: €10.84

Per year: €130.05

### Average nurses salary

Per month: €520

Per year: €6,246

### Average doctors salary

Per month: €732

Per year: €8,788

### Cost of training and maintaining community volunteers

Per six months: €1,057

### Transport Maintenance

Cost of fuel per car

Per month: €214

Maintenance of car

Per quarter: €66

Average drivers salary

Per year: €1,959

### Degree Scholarships at HAU's Institute (IHPCA)

Per year: €1,663

Per three years, full cost: €4,989

Short course, 7 days: €104

Hospice Africa Uganda, 2020)

## CONTINUING PALLIATIVE CARE

Despite the many challenges faced by the team in Uganda in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, they are unwavering in their efforts of delivering care to those in need. In March 2022, **1,222** contacts with patients were made, including home visits, outpatient clinics and telephone encounters. In this month, the team saw **122** new patients across the three Hospice sites. Additional projects within Hospice are continuing ie; Road to Care for women with cervical cancer and Give a Chance programme. In addition, the recent lifting of COVID-19 restrictions has meant that day care has finally been able to resume again, bringing patients and their families together at Hospice for socialising, food and various activities.

# RECENT TRIPS TO UGANDA

*Adam's Trip in January...*

One of the highlights of Adam's trip to Uganda earlier this year was to get to accompany the Irish Ambassador to Uganda, His Excellency Kevin Colgan and Mr Cormac Shine from the Embassy to Little Hospice Hoima ('LHH') on the 3rd February. Ambassador Colgan had not been in Hoima in 20 years and by golly, has it changed, he observed. The Ambassador was greeted by the head of LHH Germans, LHH staff and members of the LHH Board. The song Stand Up For Jesus was sung and a feast served. It was a great opportunity for the Ambassador to get to meet the team in Hoima and he commented, "That it was great to return after so many years to see the great work of LHH still going and delivering for the people of Hoima and the surrounding areas".

We thank the Ambassador, all the staff at the Embassy in Kampala and Irish Aid for their incredible support of Hospice Africa down through the years.



Irish Ambassador to Uganda Kevin Colgan, Little Hospice Hoima Manger Germans Natuhwera, and HAI Director Adam Sweetman.



Michael Corless and the staff at HAU Kampala.

*Michael's Trip in January...*

Michael Corless, HAI Director and HAU Board Treasurer visited Uganda for 2 weeks in January to catch up with each member of management and staff. Michael accompanied HAU's Chair, Joy Mirembe on two visits, one to Mbarara and Hoima, to meet the Antonia and Germans respectively, together with their teams.

Despite HAU finances being tight, it was evident that our nurses were very busy looking after our patients, given the constraints of Covid as well as coping with the rising cost of fuel and food. Inflation is very much impacting peoples lives and it is a matter that needs attention particularly in relation to patient needs and staff.

The Institute is making steady progress to achieving target breakeven and efforts are being ramped to seek more scholarships for new students. Education is a very important part of Dr Anne's vision of bringing palliative care to all of Africa.

The trip also included a visit with Dr Anne to meet our Ambassador, Kevin Colgan at the Irish Embassy.

Overall there was little time for relaxation, with the added bonus of meeting Ian Dolan, Trocaire, Uganda Country Director and a brief visit to the Devenish Plant, managed by our HAI Director, Adam Sweetman, both of which gave a good sense of what is happening on the ground.

Michael's visit was fully self-funded.

## A TRIBUTE TO AMBROSE BLAINE

The Hospice Africa community were heartbroken to hear of the untimely death of dear friend Ambrose Blaine, beloved husband of Anne and loving father of Aoibhín, Niamh & Anna Rose.

The Mayo pilot had been a great supporter of Hospice Africa for a number of years. Ambrose was introduced to Hospice by his daughter Niamh who did her transition year work experience in Uganda, and is currently a final year medical student at RCSI. During that time, he used Dr Anne's car to travel around the country. Ambrose also met His Excellency Yoweri Museveni on one occasion. In 2018, Ambrose came back to Uganda to help with the delivery of two fire brigades and one ambulance. On that memorable trip he visited Dr Anne and he received a full update on the work of HAU. Ambrose was planning to raise funds for an ambulance for Hospice. It is an honour for HA to be associated with such a great man who will be sorely missed by his beloved family and friends.

We send the family our deepest condolences.

A special thanks to the RCSI final medicine SC2 class who donated 650 euros to HAI in his honour.



This is Ambrose (far right) and his fundraising friends on his last trip to Uganda. They are photographed at Dr Anne's home in Kampala.