



The Nyadire Connection

Founded in 2006 and based in Pittsburgh, TNC is a faith-based, non-profit, all-volunteer organization that seeks to support and sustain the United Methodist Mission in Nyadire, Zimbabwe

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Mission Team Leader Shares Heartfelt Memories And Moments

Mary Beth Zollars of Christ UMC was a last-minute addition to the first Nyadire mission trip in 2006. When she and the other team members returned home afterward, they decided to form The Nyadire Connection. Mary Beth became the leader of several TNC programs and in June made her 19th trip to Nyadire!

The 10-person team focused on a number of activities: tutoring, mentoring and playing with children at the **Home of Hope**; assisting with distribution of supplies to students through the **Home of Hope Outreach**; helping to organize **Eyeglass** storage; assisting with projects at the orphanage and around the mission; participating in food distribution; teaching lessons to **Hearing Innovation** students; reviewing other TNC programs; and expanding the Coding Club.

Upon returning home, Mary Beth, the team leader, shared stories and photos about each of her fellow mission trippers (see pages 2 and 3).

“As for me,” she says, “I chose this photo with **Mr. Kambarami**, the carrots, the HOH solar water tanks, and the big, blue African sky above. It shows the possibility of solar technology. It shows the beauty of the heavens. It shows the dry earth. It shows a friendship that spans 18 years. Mr. Kambarami drove the bus that brought the first VIM Team from the airport to Nyadire United Methodist Mission in 2006. It shows the act of a simple, but significant gift. There, WE were representing TNC and the food distribution, and HE is giving our team the gift of carrots. Simply beautiful. And yet, if I hadn’t told you the story, would you know who was giving whom the carrots? And therein lies the question for all VIM Teams: Who is giving and who is receiving?”

TNC is already planning future trips, so please contact our mission trip program leader, Molly Michael, at mollyalice.michael@gmail.com for more information.

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Support Annual Chicken Dinner To Support TNC Scholarships

The **Upper St. Clair/Bethel Park Rotary Club** is hosting its 35th Annual BBQ Chicken Dinner Oct. 26 at Bethel Park High School (drive-through only, 11 am to 7 pm). TNC has sold more tickets to the dinners than any group for the past several years and, in turn, has received \$5,000 grants from the rotary, which we use to fund **Sister Rut Scholarships** for Nyadire-area students. Tickets cost \$15 and each meal includes half of a barbecued chicken, baked beans, roll, cole slaw and dessert.

For more information or to purchase tickets, contact **Phil Himmler** at 412-491-9238 or philhimmler@msn.com and put “BBQ tickets” in the subject line. Send checks made out to Upper St. Clair/Bethel Park Rotary Club to Phil at: 585 Fruitwood Dr., Bethel Park, PA 15102.

If you can't attend, please consider purchasing and donating tickets to the **South Hills Interfaith Movement (SHIM)**, which uses the meals for its Food Pantry Distribution Days. TNC donors have provided hundreds of tickets to SHIM in prior years and they are greatly appreciated. Tickets donated to SHIM must be received by Oct. 23.

“The Rotary has put aside 800 tickets for TNC to sell this year,” Phil says. “To help us reach the goal, I’m proposing a ‘**Go One More Challenge**’ for our friends and supporters. If you bought 10 tickets last year, please consider buying at least one more this year. Remember, we are provided for, so that we can provide for.”

Mission Team Leader Shares...

(Continued from page 1)

Here are Mary Beth’s thoughts on her fellow team members...

Marie Hunt (top right photo), retired teacher, **Christ UMC**: Her leadership. Her thoughtful and graceful manner in leading the Outreach meeting. Her organizational skills to include a wide variety of volunteers, supplies and mealie meal, vehicle coordination, drivers, letters, supplies, and hundreds of children. And to think that we didn’t even start distributing until Tuesday of the second week!

Marjorie Dold (left), retired teacher, **United Church of Walpole**: Her person-skills, ability to relate through cultural differences, language differences, ability differences, and age differences. “It’s all about relationships!”

Jen Retsch (bottom right), teacher, **St. Paul’s UMC**: Her absolute sweetness and flexibility. Helping in anything kid-related, from ECD to little Tanaka’s speech, to the schools, to the myriad of HOH activities, to field trips, to packing, sorting, etc.



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Mission Team Leader Shares...

(Continued from page 2)

Bill Retsch (left), engineer, **St. Paul's UMC**: His readiness to fix anything and be involved, from plumbing to charging stations, to hospital analyzers, to vehicle maintenance records, bicycle tires, drones, solar panels, to meeting anyone on the street, to making coffee in a camping percolator over the open fire.



Ken Simmons (right), retired engineer, **Community UMC**: Avid bike rider. Fixed and borrowed a Buffalo Bike from the HOH for his own personal transportation throughout the trip! He was our main bicycle man and resident photographer. He stated that the photo books he makes are his only souvenir! Ken was helpful in many



ventures: eyeglasses, mealie meal hauling, and storytelling. (And, yes, he and Bill played pool waiting for me to finish my conversation with Godknows!)

Pam Harden (left), retired nurse, **Community UMC**: Found a friend in Deborah immediately. She helped Deborah with H-I, but readily took on the organization of the eyeglasses, spending several days with Jonathan to give them a good start. Pam was a true organizer and helped out with the backpacks, but also loved coloring with the HOH kids.



Deborah Swineford (right), ASL expert, **UMC**: Completely everything H-I. She managed to teach, travel to the schools in Harare, distribute boarding kits, arrange an outing to Mutoko ruins for the H-I learners. Totally in her element.



Tuomas Rosqvist, Pastor, **Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland**; and **Hanna Rosqvist**, teacher of Swedish, **Swedish Methodist Church in Finland** (left).

Hanna: Multilingual talent, young, energetic, connected with everyone. My favorite memory was of her skipping down the trail with a HOH-child on each side with her ponytail swinging. Very flexible and became engaged in activities related to the schools and HOH children. **Tuomas**: Young, soft-spoken pastor. Courageous enough to speak on Pastors Appreciation Sunday! Loved playing football (soccer) with the HOH children. Enjoyed many opportunities to get to know TNC programs at the mission.



Tuomas: Young, soft-spoken pastor. Courageous enough to speak on Pastors Appreciation Sunday! Loved playing football (soccer) with the HOH children. Enjoyed many opportunities to get to know TNC programs at the mission.

Tatenda (Thanks) to each and every one of you!

A View From Nyadire: Savie Matsondota

Editor's Note: During a VIM trip, TNC's Marjorie Dold interviewed some of our Nyadire friends; this story is based on one of those interviews.

"Pray to God at all times" – SAVIE ("Beloved") MATSONDOTA, June 2024

Savie is a beloved friend, a humble servant of God, and a woman of compassion and gratefulness.

Background: Savie was born in 1958 to a stay-at-home mother and a father who worked for the road department. The youngest of three siblings, Savie and her family lived in a rural area in the town of Chimanimani. Savie completed grades one through seven in her hometown, before moving in with her sister in Harare, during the Zimbabwean War of Independence. After the war, in 1980, she went home for a few months to visit with family, and returned to Harare to look for work as a maid. Savie's older sister, who trained as a nurse, became a teacher, is married, and has one daughter and one son; and her brother, an accountant in South Africa, is married with three sons. Savie was married and later separated; she has two wonderful sons, both married: Kudakwashe, born in 1990, and Kumbirai, born in 1993. And she is overjoyed to be 'Gogo' to Kyrah, her adorable two-year-old granddaughter.

Nyadire and Community: Through connections of her sister and brother-in-law, Savie met and stayed with Alise, a nurse at Nyadire Hospital, who helped her secure a position at the hospital. As part of her hospital work, Savie was blessed to work alongside Sister Rut, immunizing infants in rural areas near the Nyadire Mission. In addition, she sold small packets of popcorn on the mission, to defray the costs of the community program. Thankfully for TNC, Savie was recruited, beginning in 2009, to work at the guest house as 'a woman extraordinaire' with TNC groups. She has gone above and beyond to meet the needs of many, many appreciative people, a shining example of humility and godliness...and humor as well! Savie recently retired, on July 14, after 42 years as a devoted employee of the Nyadire Hospital. She will soon reside in a small home of her own in Mutoko.

Successes: When asked about successes in her personal and professional life, Savie simply stated, "I thank God I'm here." She added, "In life you'll be climbing up and down."

Challenges/Childhood Memory: Savie spoke openly about the family challenges that surrounded her as a child. She stated that her father was a polygamist, which led her to feel "very bad" and "harsh." Her mother was not aware that their family would include other wives, until her husband would "just come home with another wife." Although three wives each had their own small homes, all shared the same yard, and there were "many half-brothers and half-sisters." When Savie confronted her father regarding his intentions, he simply said that he "wanted to have more children." Over time, Savie and her older sister and brother were joined by eleven much younger half-siblings. Years later, Savie came to the realization that, "My mother is no longer here and my father is no longer here, so there is nothing to separate." Subsequently, while living and working at the Nyadire Mission, Savie selflessly paid school fees for her half-brother and half-sister (who were at least 16 years her junior), enabling them to acquire a quality education at Nyadire.

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A View From Nyadire...

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Hopes and Dreams: “I hope that God can keep me longer, so I can see my grandchildren growing and see my boys growing.” She added, “I hope God will stabilize things in Zimbabwe, and I hope the Zimbabwean leader will know that God is leading us.”

I want people to know about Zimbabwe: “Zimbabwe is not a poor country. There are people who are educated in Zimbabwe. I don’t know where we are going wrong, but we are NOT a poor country.”

Mottos: “Life goes on.” And, “We shouldn’t feel that we are doing things on our own. There is someone who is leading us, who is taking care of us. We must pray to God all the times.”

Savie epitomizes Colossians 3:23: “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as if working for the Lord...” Savie is brimming with faith, beauty and strength.

SAVIE



TNC Continues To Provide Emergency Food Support

The severe drought in Zimbabwe has continued, and TNC has continued to respond by providing emergency food support, thanks to the generous contributions of our donors.

TNC Chairman **Ralph Duckworth** said: “Earlier this year, we raised more than \$100,000 to enable us to provide monthly donations for the purchase of food. These donations continue to make a difference in Nyadire by providing food to nearly 400 families with desperate needs. The Nyadire Social Committee administers and monitors the food distribution program [see photo at right], which may need to continue into next year depending on drought conditions.”



TNC supporters can continue to donate to the food appeal through this PayPal link on the TNC website: <https://www.nyadire.org/donate.html>

(Please note that the donation is for “Nyadire Hunger Relief.”)

Or, you can send a check made out to “The Nyadire Connection” (please put “Nyadire Hunger Relief” in the memo line) to:

Christ United Methodist Church
Attn – TNC Hunger Relief
44 Highland Road
Bethel Park, PA 15102

While visiting Nyadire during the June mission trip, **Mary Beth Zollars** posted this photo and text on Facebook: “With great hunger in the rural areas due to this year’s drought, aid is



coming in a few ways. This is mealie meal purchased through the **Home of Hope Outreach** program, which supports orphans’ school fees who live in villages surrounding Nyadire. The sponsors of this program have generously given and the funds exceeded school fees allowing surplus funds to be used for their staple food: cornmeal. Teachers reported that children were falling asleep in class due to hunger or not coming at all. This gift of mealie meal will greatly help the essential need for nutrition. Abundant thanks to **Marie Hunt** for her leadership of this program and to **Emmanuel Chiimba**, who considers every child his child.”

Sister Rut Scholarships Help Students Learn, Contribute

TNC's **Sister Rut Scholarship Program** helps students who want to further their education at college and vocational institutions. The late Sister Rut Lindgren was a missionary nurse from Finland who lived in Nyadire for more than 35 years. For more information or to contribute to the program, contact **Mary Beth Zollars** at mbzollars@aol.com

During each mission trip, TNC's representatives and the students meet for a meal and to share their experiences. This year's focus was the mandatory community service performed by the students. They have found joy in this volunteer work! See below for some of their stories...



Dellght (left), the tall, young man, helped the learners at Nyadire Primary to write their letters to their sponsors in the U.S. He is studying soil management at the University of Zimbabwe. He is an orphan who came from a rural school and has succeeded.

Josphat (right) traveled with us to Outreach schools in the back of a loaded pickup to deliver backpacks and maize meal to the orphans.



Precious (above), who grew up at the Home of Hope, is beginning her degree in electrical engineering. She visits the HOH often to play with the children and to tutor them.

Praise (right, dressed in black) just completed her freshman year at Chinhoyi University and is helping Shallom with the sponsor questionnaire. Praise lives with her uncle and his wife at Nyadire Mission.

Shelton (above in hoodie), who grew up at the Home of Hope, and Tinashe (hat) are both in agricultural programs. Here they are offloading bags of maize meal for the Outreach orphans in the outlying schools.

St. Paul's VBS Kids Raise Money For Water At Nyadire

This summer, St. Paul's UMC hosted Vacation Bible School with a "Scuba" theme and wanted the kids to learn a little about the importance of water around the world. In doing so, the youngsters raised more than \$500 in donations for Nyadire! Here's the story, as written by **Erin Soza** (speaking to the kids, right), director of Children's Ministries at the church:

"Many years ago, St. Paul's had a TNC Lenten Calendar that we used with the kids to collect funds, so I knew about the ongoing work in Nyadire to offer accessible, clean

water. I reached out to **Kevin Riley**, a church member and TNC leader, who has shared some of his experiences with the kids at St. Paul's previously. We wanted to offer something relatable to the kids, as well as educate them about needs elsewhere. Kevin helped make contacts and we invited the local water authority to come and teach the kids how and why we are able to have clean water in our homes and what a blessing that it is to have such a convenience. The Hampton Shaler Water Authority did an amazing job of educating the kids about our local water system. They also spoke about Creation Care to a degree, including how we need to care for the water system and prevent contaminations.

"From the local water system lecture, the kids then were taught about what a community without a public water system must do to provide water for their families. We set up a Mission Water Station and handed out "Hint" water and asked the kids to drink the water and then fill the empty bottle with change. The water bottles had a handmade label with facts about water insecurities around the world. We also had a large empty water cooler that we challenged the kids to fill. We had about 60 kids at camp and raised \$517.50.

"We also had a day where we told the kids they were going to learn about a water hippo [see photo and caption below], and then sent them home to share with their families after VBS. All the kids left VBS and stopped at the Mission Station to teach their families what a water hippo was. It was a great Mission Project and was very impactful. Many thanks to Kevin for his help with this project and his willingness to keep our youngest ones involved!"

The funds are being used to install a solar system to operate the two field bore hole pumps. Abundant thanks to St. Paul's, Erin, Kevin and the VBS kids for making TNC and Nyadire an important part of their summer fun!

These ladies are using a "hippo water roller" to transport water. The rollers are filled with about 20 gallons of water and make transporting this valuable resource much easier.



Eyeglasses Program Sets Vision For Its Future



TNC has helped to revitalize the **Faith Geer Eyeglasses program** by funding vehicle repairs and storage space at the Nyadire Mission.

Through the program, TNC partners with **Mission Vision** to provide eye exams and eyeglasses to improve the vision of people in Zimbabwe. TNC volunteers were trained and certified to conduct eyeglass clinics, and our volunteers then trained medical personnel in Zimbabwe to conduct the clinics, which has enabled significant expansion of the program throughout the region. Since inception, the program has served nearly 10,000 patients in

Zimbabwe.

TNC recently provided funding to repair the vehicle that transports teams to the clinics, and to provide shelving and bins to store eyeglasses donated in the U.S. and sent to Nyadire. Members of the TNC mission team that visited Nyadire in June/July helped to sort the glasses and prepare them for the next clinic. (Top photo: TNC's Pam Harden and **Deborah Swineford**. Bottom photo: **Theodora**, an assistant in the clinic, and **Jonathan**, an optometrist.)

If you'd like to help with the program, there are many opportunities to participate:

- Help at a Mission Vision clinic in Pittsburgh. Mission Vision conducts clinics in schools in the Pittsburgh area. Contact **Terry Snider**, executive director, at 412-303-7687 for more information.
- Clean, measure and catalog eyeglasses. You can help individually or as part of a group. The completed eyeglasses are sorted and sent to Mission Vision for distribution. In the Pittsburgh area, TNC has eyeglasses groups in both the North Hills and the South Hills. Our North Hills contact is **Kathy Belcastro** at **St. Paul's UMC** in Allison Park; she can be reached at belcastro@verizon.net or 412-487-3678. Our South Hills contact is **Marie Hunt** at **Christ UMC** in Bethel Park; she can be reached at emptynest05@comcast.net or 724-207-0281.
- We continue to look for a new Eyeglasses program leader in the U.S. No travel to Zimbabwe is necessary, and training and support will be provided. Please contact **Tim Wesley** at timwesley61@zoominternet.net if you're interested.



Program Highlights From TNC's September Meeting

Each month, TNC leaders gather by Zoom to review programs and discuss future plans. Below are highlights from our recent meeting:

- Sister Rut Scholarships: See page 7 ... The program team is meeting to discuss long-term funding sources, including grant proposals ... For a complete list of current and future graduates, please see the monthly minutes on our website at https://www.nyadire.org/uploads/4/7/6/4/4764398/tnc_meeting_minutes_9-23-24.pdf
- Home of Hope: Sept/Oct funds were sent ... Photo at right: Three youngsters from the HOH (Talent, Anotida, and Tanaka) hug their dollies and a stuffed animal.
- Home of Hope Outreach: 22 schools are served ... Term 3 funds have been sent, including funds for mealie meal for each child.
- Girl Empowerment Pad: An orientation meeting is scheduled for new school leaders ... Imported materials are due to arrive in Zimbabwe mid-October.
- Eyeglasses: See page 9.
- Rural Health Clinic Rebuilds: Work at **Chindenga** continued during the month and was concentrated on the development of external aprons, establishment of waste management pits, implementation of the second fix for electrical and plumbing elements, inclusive of floor and wall tiling for the Toilet block at the Mother's Waiting Home. Additionally, activities such as mortar application to the external walls, internal painting, and installation of doors, together with associated ironmongery, were completed within the existing building structures. The Waiting Mothers Home Toilet Block is 100% completed and the Fencing and other General Services are 100% completed ... A dedication for Chindenga has been set for February 2025 and TNC Chairman **Ralph Duckworth** is looking forward to attending.
- Hearing Innovation: **Tinashe** reported that the bookshelves were complete and he intended to deliver them before the end of the month ... Emails, including program newsletter, sent to sponsors and supporters.



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Program Highlights...

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- Agriculture: The Nyadire River is mostly dry (right top photo) ... **Emmanuel Chiimba** reported the following from the HOH farm: “Our water situation is still favorable and we are still carrying on with our garden projects. We have cabbages ready for the market [right bottom photo] but the market is a bit flooded with cabbages now. The tomatoes that were hit by frost in July sort of recovered and are now flowering. Watermelon is at flowering stage.”
- Engineers Without Borders/CMU: CMU students are back in session and held their first EWB meeting in mid-September. The focus was to educate potential members on the CMU chapter and the proposed Nyadire project. Over the summer, the student leaders researched and summarized a very detailed list of alternative solutions for keeping blood/vaccines at the **Nyadire Hospital** viable during frequent and prolonged power outages ... The students may travel to Nyadire later this year or early next year.
- Volunteer-in-Mission trips: **Mary Beth Zollars** is willing to lead a 2025 team, and Deborah Swineford is considering a trip, too ... See pages 1-3, 7 and 9 for photos and highlights from this summer’s June/July trip.



Figure 1 - Cabbage ready for market

If You Have Newsletter Story/Photo Ideas...

In our newsletter, we strive to highlight a variety of our programs and the efforts of our network churches and other supporters.

If you have story/photo ideas that you would like us to consider for publication, please submit them to **Tim Wesley**, at timwesley61@zoominternet.net