

FRIENDS OF EAST AFRICA FOUNDATION

December 2017 Newsletter



As any experienced traveler to Uganda will tell you, there you can expect warm hearts, broad smiles and great hospitality! Every time I visit the “Pearl of Africa,” I am reminded again of that abundance.

Friends of East Africa Foundation benefactor Gary Holmes and I paid a visit to Maganjo last month for the Nov. 19 dedication of the Ruth Gaylord Hospital’s new Gary S. Holmes Centre and groundbreaking ceremonies for our next project: the construction of the first of

three eight-unit apartment buildings on the hospital campus.

With dignitaries, dancers, drummers and more, the celebration couldn’t have been more festive. We’re so grateful for Gary’s leadership and generosity – and yours – in making these dream facilities become reality.

“Tis the season,” as we say, for grateful anticipation. May the blessings of the Holy Child be yours!

Christmas blessings,

Reverend Dennis Dease



Among special guests for the Nov. 19 dedication of the new Gary S. Holmes Centre were (front row, left to right): Doris Akol, commissioner general of Uganda Revenue Authority; hospital co-founders Charles Lugemwa (with son Cornelius) and Father Dennis Dease; benefactor Gary Holmes; Joseph Ssemwogerere, prime minister (“Katikkiro”) emeritus of the Buganda Kingdom, the largest of the traditional kingdoms in central Uganda; U.S. Ambassador to Uganda Deborah Malac; Diana Atwine, permanent secretary to the Uganda Ministry of Health; and Dr. Maria Lugemwa, Charles’ spouse.

More sights and sounds of celebration:

Gary S. Holmes Centre dedicated Nov. 19 at Ruth Gaylord Hospital



Minneapolis businessman Gary Holmes (left) donned a Ugandan shirt for the Nov. 19 dedication of a new facility bearing his name. The Gary S. Holmes Centre at the Ruth Gaylord Hospital provides a residence for visiting medical professionals, a patient ward, administrative offices and an imaging center. The celebration also included groundbreaking for Gary Holmes Hall, the first of three eight-unit apartment buildings on the hospital campus.



Give today! Couple provide \$120,000 challenge grant

Texas couple Tom and Susan Bisanz have pledged to match \$120,000 in gifts to the Friends of East Africa Foundation to fund the second apartment building on the Ruth Gaylord Hospital campus.

Tenants' rent will endow the replacement of expensive equipment, provide free hospital services for those unable to pay for care, and fund public health outreach activities (such as immunization clinics).



More than 1,000 people attended the Holmes Centre dedication celebration, which included a Mass with the choir and band of St. Henry's College School, rousing speeches by hospital co-founders, church leaders and government officials, a buffet lunch for everyone and, according to Father Dennis Dease, "the mother of all shows" with lively performances by drummers and dancers. "Ugandans really know how to throw a party!" he said.

U of M surgeons: Another mission accomplished

A surgical team from the University of Minnesota Medical School made a second visit to the Ruth Gaylord Hospital Oct. 15-20.

Dr. Gregory Beilman, Dr. Monica Lupei and Dr. Kristin Pokorney-Colling evaluated nearly 60 patients on the first day of their visit and over the next few days performed needed surgical procedures – including two urgent surgeries – for 28.

Beilman, a nationally recognized critical care surgeon, is deputy chair and professor of surgery at the medical school, where he holds the Owen H. and Sarah Wangenstein Chair. Lupei is an assistant professor of anesthesia. Pokorney-Colling is a Surgical Intensive Care Unit fellow at the medical school.



Ruth Gaylord Hospital physician Dr. Godino Kalungi (left) works with visiting surgeon Dr. Kristin Pokorney-Colling.

The team's visit was funded by grants from the William Gamble Fund of the medical school's Department of Surgery, the Fairview Foundation and private donors.

The surgical team members were the first visiting staff to reside in the newly dedicated Gary S. Holmes Center, which also hosts a patient ward, diagnostic center and administrative offices at the hospital. Beilman called the accommodations "outstanding" and looks forward to another visit early next year.



Above: Visiting surgeon Dr. Gregory Beilman (right) and the hospital's nursing director Annet Namyalo (left) posed with a patient. Right: Anesthesiologist Dr. Monica Lupei (left) and Dr. Kris Pokorney-Colling (third from left) enjoyed meeting hospital food service staff members Angella Musubika (second from left) and Noeline Nambi.



Meet those who inspired the hospital's building names

Ever wondered about the names of the buildings at the Ruth Gaylord Hospital? Periodically, we'll introduce you to the real people who inspired them.

The lovely "grand-mère" pictured here is Helen Bisanz, in whose memory Tom Bisanz, her son, provided generous leadership gifts to create the Ruth Gaylord Hospital's outpatient center. The Helen Bisanz Outpatient Centre of Excellence was dedicated on May 18, 2016.

Born Helen Catherine Rea Aug. 22, 1919, in Billings, Mont., she moved to St. Paul, Minn., in 1925. She attended St. Joseph's Academy and the University of Minnesota. She married Leonard Bisanz in 1943, and they had eight children.

A wonderful obituary published after her April 5, 2013, death revealed Helen as a devoted Catholic, a beloved wife and mother, a U.S. Navy nurse's aide during World War II and an active community volunteer. She also was an exceptional golfer into her late 80s, a watercolor



Helen Bisanz, 1919-2013

artist, a "White Satin Sugar Girl" in the St. Paul Winter Carnival in the 1940s and even "a loon caller of considerable renown."

Visit our new website!

Visit our new website, www.foeafoundation.org, thanks to the first University of St. Thomas alumnus from Uganda! We appreciate your patience as the site gets a few finishing touches and fixes, but we couldn't wait to give you a first glimpse.

Information technology entrepreneur Francis Ssenoga developed the site. He received bachelor's degrees in quantitative methods, computer science and mechanical engineering from St. Thomas in 2003 and went on to earn an M.S. in software engineering in 2007. Founder of Ssensoft, a technology services company, Francis also is a past president of the Ugandan North American Association. He and his wife, Cecile, are the parents of two young children and live in Champlin, Minn.



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