



bochildren'shospital
SIERRA LEONE, WEST AFRICA

WWW.BOCHILDRENSHOSPITAL.ORG.AU



NEWSLETTER | MAY 2014

SIERRA LEONE, WEST AFRICA, IS A COUNTRY WHICH HAS A VERY HIGH INFANT MORTALITY AND VERY LOW LIFE EXPECTANCY. THE MATERNAL DEATH RATES ARE AMONG THE HIGHEST IN THE WORLD AT 2,000 DEATHS PER 100,000 LIVE BIRTHS. ONE IN SIX CHILDREN DIES BEFORE THEY TURN FIVE – THE HIGHEST INFANT

MORTALITY RATE IN THE WORLD. OF THOSE CHILDREN, 20% DIE WITHIN TWENTY EIGHT DAYS OF BIRTH. THE BO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL IS THE SECOND ONLY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL TO OPEN IN THE HISTORY OF SIERRA LEONE. THE HOSPITAL WAS OFFICIALLY OPENED ON 2ND JUNE 2012 AND IS A TRIBUTE TO A

COMMUNITY WANTING TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE AND THE GENEROSITY OF HUMANITY ACROSS INTERNATIONAL BORDERS. THIS IS AN UPDATE OF OUR EXCITING STORY, WHICH IS ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH YOUR GENEROUS AND ONGOING SUPPORT...

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

We are fast approaching the second year of operation of the Bo Children's Hospital. During the last 18 months we have seen a steady growth in patients while significant steps have been made in transitioning the management of the hospital to the local community.

This transitioning process is a step towards creating a sustainable project that will keep yielding urgently needed results for the infants and children of Sierra Leone.

It has always been the vision of the Bo Children's Foundation to create a community based project that is sustainable. The local community of Bo has met this challenge by taking ownership of the project and continuously working towards its future. Since our last newsletter Dr Wusu Sannoh has taken responsibility for oversight of the hospital and has formed a Board of highly respected community members that will take full responsibility for the hospital. As well as ensuring that the hospital functions smoothly, Dr Sannoh has ensured that the Foundation is supplied medical and financial reports each month as well as regular communication that coordinates efforts between the hospital and the Foundation.

Under the two doctors Jalloh and Sombie and their dedicated nursing staff we have seen a steady improvement in the level of

service that is being offered. This includes x-ray facilities that have been made possible because of the generous donation of a suitable x-ray machine. In addition the local community of Bo have made contributions to the hospital. A local company gave a water pump and power generator and community groups have given donations.

In recognition of the need for sustainable growth, the Bo Hospital has set a target of raising forty percent of the operational cost by the end of the year. The hospital already contributes towards 23% of the operational costs by charging parents that can afford it, a modest fee for treatment. Further revenue will be raised locally by furnishing a room for treatment of private patients who will pay towards the costs of treating the less fortunate. In addition, the hospital has received certification for treatment of patients covered by a local insurance company. This means that the hospital will be fully reimbursed for treatment of patients whose parents are covered by insurance. This has been supplemented with a feeding program that provides free food to the young patients and food at cost to their parents. This has expanded the reach of the hospital to mothers and their children living further out of town. The hospital is also in negotiation with AmeriCare for the free supply of medicines. The negotiations are in their final stages with only the detail of the logistics of sending and storing the medicines remaining.

By working together, the hospital and the Foundation are able to service an increasing number of infants and children that would not otherwise have received treatment. But this is not the only benefit provided by the hospital.

There is growing pride within the Bo community of what is being achieved by the hospital. The hospital is showing what can be done by the community to help the community. This is building confidence within the community that will spill over into other community self help projects.

The community of Bo, the hard working group of volunteers that make up the Foundation, and I thank you for your contribution towards this valuable project. As you can see, your contribution is not only helping to save children, but it is also building a foundation that will ensure many more children will be saved in the future. Thank you for your investment in humanity.



LAURIE FACER, CEO BO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

in this edition...

SURVIVAL RATES IMPROVING

BO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL VISIT

REACHING THE UNREACHED

3RD SHIPMENT OF SUPPLIES ARRIVES

IN PICTURES: DONATIONS MAKING AN IMPACT

CASE STUDIES: PATIENTS AT BCH

UPCOMING EVENTS



DR WUSU SANNOH

SURVIVAL RATES IMPROVING

MESSAGE FROM NULI

As you will recall the main reason for starting this project was the high infant and child mortality rate in Sierra Leone.

In 2005 158 out of 1000 babies died before their first birthday and 276 died before they reached the age of 5 in Sierra Leone. This compared with only 5 per thousand in Australia for infants less than one year. In 2012 UNICEF recorded that the infant mortality rate had dropped to 117 per 1000 and under 5s to 185 per thousand. This is a big improvement and the Bo Children's Hospital is playing an important role.

In its first year (April 2012 -2013) some 2000 patients were seen and only 1 death was reported. The second year has seen a steady flow of patients attending the outpatient clinic and the 11-bed ward being fully utilised for admissions. The staff at the Hospital are all Sierra Leoneans and have proved to be deeply committed to their work. Three nurses have enrolled in the online International Postgraduate Paediatric Certificate (IPPC) at the University of Sydney. I congratulate Medical Superintendent, Dr Vandi Sombie and Paediatric Consultant Dr Muctar Jalloh for their leadership and dedication.

The newly formed Bo Children's Hospital Board in Bo would like to see an increase in the number of beds for admissions, erect a security fence around the hospital site and obtain a reliable vehicle for transporting patients. There is also a need to maintain and expand the feeding programme initiated last year to help reduce the impact of malnutrition which is a serious threat to children's health in Sierra Leone. I hope the visit by volunteers from the UK and Australia later this year will be beneficial and further contribute to the services offered already.

There are many challenges in providing health services in Sierra Leone and I want to thank you our donors and volunteer helpers for your strong continuing support of the hospital. With you behind us we can carry on the good work and contribute even more to the health of the children of Sierra Leone.



NULI WITH PATIENT AND MOTHER AT BCH

BO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL VISIT JANUARY 2014

BY AJARATU "AJ" THOMAS

My annual visit to Bo Children's Hospital "BCH" has become a highlight each year, not only witnessing firsthand the smiles of recuperating children and their parents but the impact of the staff's contagious enthusiasm on the rest of the community.

The BCH staff is very grateful for the ongoing support of the Foundation in Sydney, their partners and in particular Ms Robyn Stevens and her staff at the SAN Hospital, Emergency Care Unit for donating lifesaving equipment particularly feeding tubes and knitted blankets, they came in

handy! They cannot thank her enough.

Nonetheless, there are challenges that continue to confront them. More pressing is the need to create more beds to meet the ongoing demands of the number of sick children coming through the doors, more importantly the critically ill. The hospital currently has 11 beds and is always at overflow. The need to complete the unfinished single rooms and ward cannot be emphasised enough.

Dr Jalloh, Medical Director BCH has set his eyes on setting up a high dependency/intensive care unit with some of the donated equipment so that critically ill children are appropriately quarantined and to reduce the congestion of the ward and outpatient services. He hopes to accomplish this project as soon as practicable and of course, with the appropriate support.

Notwithstanding these challenges, many lives are being saved daily with very basic resources at hand but the powers of determination prevail.



AJ THOMAS



SOME OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BO COMMITTEE, FAR LEFT DR WASU SANNOH, FORMER MAYOR, FAR RIGHT, VANDI SOMBIE



SOME OF THE STAFF AND MANAGEMENT AT BO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



HOSPITAL WARD

PROJECTS THAT NEED YOUR SUPPORT

The greatest gift that can be given to the hospital is reliable funding to cover operational costs and to obtain essential equipment and infrastructure.

Below is a list of limited commitment projects that you or your organisation can support. The projects are split between immediate needs and longer term needs.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

■ Medical Staff for 6 months	\$40,000
■ Administration and Supplies for 6 months	\$30,000
■ Reliable Power Supply/ Additional Solar Panels	\$12,000
■ Ambulance/Patient Transport	\$30,000
■ Minivan Transport	\$35,000
■ Patient Feeding Program	\$ 5,000

LONG TERM NEEDS

■ Extensions for an additional 11 beds	\$40,000
■ Laboratory Upgrade	\$10,000
■ Security Fencing	\$45,000



REACHING THE UNREACHED

BY VANDI SOMBIE – MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT – BO CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Vandi Sombie is my name, born and bred in Bo town, eldest son of a family of seven to my father (deceased), mother alive in her eighties, and lost younger sibling as a result of deadly preventable diseases viz poliomyelitis and diarrhea and vomiting secondary to dehydration.

It was these episodes which motivated me to pursue medical training and to work to save lives of children in my country – Sierra Leone, a country with one of highest infant mortality rates in world.

I had my primary and secondary education in Bo through government scholarships, and this opportunity extended further to undergraduate medical training at the Bo paramedical school in 1984. Later, I undertook postgraduate

training in the department of community health and clinical sciences (Njala University), obtaining an international postgraduate certificate (IPPC) at the University of Sydney and Children's Hospital at Westmead in Australia. While I worked as head of paediatrics at the Bo Government Hospital, I benefitted from many short courses in paediatrics nationally and internationally, management of paediatrics HIV/AIDS in Gaborone Botswana, neonatal resuscitation and kangaroo mother care at the department of Child Health in the University of Ghana in ACCRA.

Due to shortage of full time specialist paediatrician, I was appointed the Medical superintendent of BCH and Assistant to Dr Muctarr Jalloh, Consultant Paediatrician who works part time at BCH. My work generally entails me being on call 7 days a week except when I am unwell.

I am married with four children and passionate



VANDI SOMBIE

about children's issues. My focus at Bo Children's Hospital is to increase accessibility of 'reaching the unreachable', establishing intensive care for critically ill children, and also expanding service to patients that require privacy for fund raising and isolation to prevent spread of highly infectious diseases.

THIRD CONTAINER FOR BO

The third container of donated goods arrived at the Hospital in October, having left Sydney on 12 June.

Thanks to our very generous donors, the shipment included:

- A new Dongmun X-ray machine and stand
- Refurbished automatic x-ray processing machine (with manual)
- X-ray Cassettes, film, developer and fixer chemicals, x-ray safety gowns and 2 x-ray viewing screens, 2 darkroom safety lights
- 2 new vital signs patient monitors
- 3 oxymeters

- 3 portable electronic baby scales with carry bags. It is thought that the Community Nurses might be able to use these
- 1 lap top computer
- 2 hospital cots
- Large quantity of other supplies

Thank you to all those wonderful people who helped pack and load the container, including members of the Committee, the Rotary Club of Turramurra and friends of Bo. If you have medical supplies or hospital equipment that you would like to donate to the hospital please contact Peter Matthews – email pimatthews@bigpond.com



CONTAINER ARRIVES IN BO, SIERRA LEONE

DONATED EQUIPMENT HELPS SAVE LIVES



CRITICALLY ILL PATIENT



PORTABLE X-RAY MACHINE



DONATE TODAY & MAKE A REAL
DIFFERENCE

ALBERT BENEFITS FROM BCHF

Albert Gbassay, aged 10, has epilepsy. He has been in the hospital for more than 3 weeks due to severe burns he sustained during an epileptic attack.

Albert was helping his father to put out burning bush used for charcoal when he suddenly developed an epileptic attack. Before



THE PICTURES SHOW THE VARIOUS STAGES OF HIS MANAGEMENT IN THE HOSPITAL. ALBERT IS ALMOST FULLY RECOVERED FROM HIS BURNS

he could be rescued, he sustained severe burns on his right hand and right side of abdomen.

Albert was brought to BCH three days after sustaining his burns. On arrival the skin lesions were infected from an application of a herbal ingredient that was prepared with some dirt. He received first aid treatment and was put on broad spectrum antibiotics, pain killers and antiepileptic dressing applied to the skin. Albert was extremely lucky by benefiting from supplies received in the consignment that BCH received from Australia. He is one of six children in the family, and his father lives in one village not far from BCH

Charcoal sales are their family's source of revenue, however, Albert's father finds it difficult to pay for his son's consulting and hospital fees. Yet, as a sign of appreciation of the help his son received, Albert's father decided to leave seven bags of charcoal as a token gesture.

CHANGING ATTITUDES, FULA TRIBE FATHER AND CARER

This is the second admission of my children in this hospital. I bring all three of my three children here whenever they get sick. It is only me and my wife at home and we don't have other help at home so we share the children's care. She looks after the other children there whilst I'm at the hospital.

We take turns at the hospital, I stay here during the day and she stays overnight. The staff has been absolutely wonderful in the care delivery and we are very grateful. We would like to see the hospital improve, particularly with better access to transport and food.



MEET THE STAFF - MRS MARTHA HOILMA SANDI

Mrs Martha Hoilma Sandi is a Nurse at Bo Children's Hospital, and is seen in the adjacent photo monitoring vital signs from a baby on the ward. She comes from Bo District and is 35 years old. Martha has two children and lost her first husband 4 years ago and is now married to a Rev Pastor.

Martha started her Nursing career as a nursing aid in one of our renowned Catholic Hospitals (Seribu Hospital) in Bo District. After 6 years

practice as a nursing aid she later pursued formal nursing training at the Njala University College in the Department of Community Health and Clinical Sciences in which she obtained her SECHN Certificate. Martha has previously worked with a Paediatric Doctor in Freetown and with an International NGO (MSF Belgium). She is now employed as a nurse at the Bo Children's Hospital, which literally involve a fair share of luck.

As the applicants were all skilled, committed and dedicated to their duty, the selection was made via a lucky dip which Martha won.

MARTHA IS SPONSORED BY THE ROTARY CLUB OF BOURNEMOUTH EAST CLIFF, ENGLAND.



UPCOMING EVENTS

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION - SYDNEY JUNE 1-4TH, 2014



We are excited to announce that we will be part of the Rotary International Convention being held at the Olympic site at Homebush.

Over 20,000 delegates will attend from all over the world. We will conduct a 5 minute presentation as part of the International Group and will also have a booth in the House of Friendship Hall, the booth number is 337. If you are attending the Convention we would be delighted for you to come and visit our booth.

CITY TO SURF - 10TH AUGUST 2014

The annual event, City to Surf will be held again this year on 10th August 2014. We are proud to announce we have AJ Thomas and her team representing the Bo Children's Hospital

this year. AJ would like you to join her in this wonderful event which leaves from the corner Park and College Streets and finishes at famous Bondi Beach.



To sponsor AJ go to the Fundraising page, Everyday Hero and nominate her name and team. If you would like to join AJ and her team in this great event contact Denise Curry on denise.curry@bigpond.com.

BOBBIN HEAD CYCLE CLASSIC 2015



The Bobbin Head cycle Classic "The Bobbo" held on 23rd March, now in its 3rd year, had 2007 participants! This exciting event is managed by the Rotary Clubs of Ku-ring-gai, St Ives and Turramurra. There are 4 courses: 104km, 80km, 57km and a family ride 12km. The route takes in some of the most beautiful scenery on

Sydney's North Shore, a pristine national park, rolling hills and countryside. A very big thank you to all the volunteers who put in long hours to make this an outstanding event! Don't miss out! To register for next year (29 Mar'15) go to www.bobbinheadcycleclassic.com.au



AND A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU !

Thank you so much to all the people who are donating their time and energy into fundraising for this very worthwhile project.

MORE INFO OR GREAT IDEAS?

If you have any suggestions to raise further funds to support the ongoing running of Bo Children's Hospital, please contact:

Denise Curry: denise.curry@bigpond.com