

CABC News

(December 2017 Issue of Change and Be Changed)

January

We were spending five weeks in Kaseye. The rainy season slowed down our work. Nevertheless, Block III of Kaseye Mission Hospital was, slowly but surely, getting ready for renovation and expansion. Based on the plans worked out by Thomas under the guidance of INTERPLAST Germany, walls were torn down, windows taken out, ceilings removed ... until the shell was deemed a solid starting point for the new operating facility. Not far from this building site, the HIV/AIDS clinic, named by the hospital staff *House of Acceptance*, was, after some months of construction work, being painted. In the guesthouse the luxury of a “modern toilet” and a cold shower were being installed. Showering under the cold, rather dirty water was a daily adventure of “oh dear – does it have to be?” Like many small inconveniences in this remote area of Northern Malawi, we survived the nightly challenge well. We also planned an annex to the guesthouse, which has only one tiny bedroom. The INTERPLAST teams, intending to perform surgeries several times per year in Kaseye, need a modest, yet comfortable place to stay. Before saying good-bye to our friends at Kaseye Mission Hospital, Thomas assigned a number of tasks to the construction staff, the most demanding and taxing being the molding of large cement blocks for the expansion of Block III into the new operating



Renovation of Block III into an operation tract.

facility. The molding machine was loaned to Kaseye Hospital by our dear friend Br. Peter Daino, who had just finished a very large project with several such machines.

At the very end of January, we received a generous donation from the Nilsson Family Fund in Florida in support of CABC’s scholarship program. We were able to pay the tuition for three new tertiary students. There is never a shortage of students, quite a few referred by Br. Peter, knocking on our door for a scholarship!

February - April

After returning from Kaseye, we were taking care of quite a few overdue appointments. Thomas was supervising the 2017 Engineering Ambassadors to Malawi at Wright State University every month until we left again in April. This year’s project is a bicycle-driven washing machine. Due to the ever-increasing power blackouts, a manual washer is a useful piece of equipment to have besides the brand new electric washer – still stored in the container - which the hospital received from INTERPLAST Germany. The renovation of the totally outdated laundry is planned for this coming year. Currently, the hospital laundry is still manually washed in concrete tubs – with mixed results.

Referred by former QAC pastor, Fr. Gene Contadino, we met with the Director of the Master’s Program in Health Services Administration of Xavier University, Cincinnati, Dr./Sr. Nancy Linenkugel, to discuss the possibility of a Malawian priest or sister attending the three-year program if funds can be made available. Some months prior to this visit, we met with Fr. George Buleya, the Vice Chancellor (President) of the Catholic University of Malawi. We learned of Fr. George’s strong support of having a suitable candidate attend Xavier University, where the priest/sister would be prepared to teach Health Services Administration at the Catholic University of Malawi. Also in March, the Board of *Change and Be*

Changed met in Dayton and learned about and approved of our activities, i.e., the funding of tuition fees for tertiary students from Northern Malawi through the CABC scholarship program and the renovation projects in Kaseye. The board is made up of very supportive members of the Social Justice Committee of Queen of Apostles Community (QAC), our home church in Ohio.

On the occasion of a quilt exhibit at the University of Windsor, we had the opportunity of getting acquainted with *Development and Peace* (Caritas Canada) and experiencing firsthand the breadth of the outreach work of this organization. We were impressed about the educational efforts *Development and Peace* makes in Canada to educate Canadians about the importance of looking beyond one's own borders.

Mid-April we visited the Rotary Club in Harrow and spent a couple of interesting hours with a group of members. We were invited back after our return from Kaseye end of September to report about our Kaseye projects.

At the end of April, we were packing our bags again to make our way back to Malawi.

May

Our first stop in Malawi was Ludzi Mission, where Thomas and the Wright State University Engineering Ambassadors to Malawi installed yet another x-ray room, this time in Central Malawi. The project was successful, and the students were grateful for the unique immersion into African culture; weekend trips and five days of travel at the end of the stay widened the students' horizon.

June

From Ludzi, we traveled up North, on the way stopping over several times to catch up with friends and most of the students in the CABC scholarship program. Our personal involvement in the students' education is usually welcomed. Only when things are not going as they should (a failed exam, truancy, cancellation of classes by the government, etc.),



Installation of x-ray room at St. Joseph's Hospital in Ludzi

creativity and tenacity are necessary to straighten out the problem(s) in collaboration with Julius, CABC's education coordinator in Karonga, himself a former CABC scholar. We visited Bishop John in Mzuzu to find out where next year's x-ray room is most needed. Mzambasi, a very remote mission station, will likely be the beneficiary.

Lots of work was awaiting us when we arrived in Kaseye mid-June. The *House of Acceptance* needed touch-up, the cement blocks made while we were gone were to be put one on top of the other to make new walls, the guesthouse annex was to be continued, plans were needed for a communication center (to get Internet connection to Kaseye, finally!) ... the list seemed endless and, at times, overwhelming, but after all, we came to serve, not to be served as vacationers. A special word of praise is

due to the new maintenance supervisor of Kaseye Hospital. Edwin was faithfully reporting in words and pictures (WhatsApp is a great invention!) while we were back home. Thomas was very pleased to find the projects executed as discussed with the workers prior to our departure in February.

Mid-June we were welcoming Rosemary, a nursing professor at Wright State University, Thomas' former employer. Rosemary assessed the current level of professional education of Kaseye Hospital's patient attendants and concluded that a course modeled after the course for American nursing assistants would make a big difference in the care of future patients. Rosemary is going to develop a curriculum to be introduced to Kaseye's patient attendants before the opening of the new operating area next year and to be followed up for the duration of 4-6 months by an LPN or RN volunteer from the US or Canada.

Another important event in June was our trip to Puma Mission in Tanzania, where Dr. Michael from INTERPLAST Germany had shipped a container of medical goods, half of which were for Kaseye Hospital. Assisted by Ally, our long-time friend, we were able to transfer the goods over several hundred miles to Kaseye. Unloading was quite an undertaking! Thanks to the storage space made available by Sr. Clementina, the head mistress of Kaseye Secondary Girls' School, the swift



Unloading of goods donated by INTERPLAST Germany.

construction of shelving by Thomas and the hospital workers and the eager helping hands of Dr. Michal and his team member Frank from INTERPLAST, the donation quickly found a safe, temporary home.

July

We were still in Kaseye. Power outages and lack of Internet hampered our work. Often, the hospital and the workers assigned to Thomas had no electric power from early morning until mid-afternoon. Driving 45 minutes to Chitipa, the closest small town, was the only way of connecting with the larger world. By the time we learned about a piece of news, it was already history! We were delighted to have another team of INTERPLAST physicians at Kaseye Mission. Chitipa District Hospital was their work place. The daily pictures Dr. Werner, the leader of the INTERPLAST team, was sharing with us spoke more than a thousand words. INTERPLAST is truly very much needed in Chitipa District! We are looking forward to the summer of 2018 when, so God will, Kaseye Hospital will be able to help many of the critical patients from near and far in the new operating facility. I (Elisabeth) enjoyed being the driver for the physicians, accompanying them on their daily trip to the district hospital as well as from Lilongwe to Kaseye Mission and back from Kaseye to Lilongwe two weeks later.

Dr. Armin, one of the INTERPLAST physicians, connected us with a dentist serving in the German Armed Forces who is interested in assisting us with the opening of the first dental clinic of Kaseye Hospital. Miriam will teach the dental officer how to do state-of-the-art fillings of cavities rather than extract the diseased tooth.

August

The *House of Acceptance* was officially opened on 3 August! It was a wonderful day for all involved, a day that filled everybody with joy and hope that other renovated parts of the hospital can be handed over to the local population in the not-too-distant future.



Completed renovation of the HIV/AIDS clinic, the *House of Acceptance*.

September

After months of trying to connect with the Solon Foundation, we were finally able to establish contact with Doug Funk, who is in charge of the foundation's charitable projects. We had learned about Solon's involvement in the renovation and expansion of Chinunkha Secondary School, a government school in the Kaseye area, through Principal McMillan. On the occasion of several visits to Chinunkha, we witnessed first-hand that Solon brought hope and confidence to this remote school community. Doug will follow up on Chinunkha Secondary School in the first half of 2018 and at the same time visit Kaseye Community Hospital to get a picture of what is needed for the proposed transformation of a dilapidated primary school block into a much-needed communication center. A generous relative of Thomas gave us the funds for a satellite dish, which "just" needs a home to help bring Kaseye Mission into the 21st century.

Until the day of our departure in mid-September, activities were running in high gear. Loose ends needed to be tied until our next arrival in early January. The many assurances that our presence was much appreciated was an inspiring thank-you from our friends at Kaseye Mission. They wished us all the best on our well-deserved vacation at home! We traveled home via Switzerland, where we hosted QAC friends for the benefit of our projects in Northern Malawi. This way of fundraising is very

personal; it brings us even closer to our QAC family than we were ever before when we lived a couple of minutes away from Queen of Apostles Chapel on Mount St. John. We arrived back home toward the end of the month. Much needed our tender loving care after our absence of five months, during which quite a few QACers vacationed in our cottage on Lake Erie in support of Change and Be Changed. Thanks to the visit of Thomas' sister and sister-in-law, there were four more hands to tackle the work awaiting. Trudi and Edith also assisted us with the preparation of Malawi Sunday, the yearly fundraiser for our projects, organized by the Social Justice Committee of QAC. We were invited to do much of the work at Marti and Tom's, our QAC friends' home in Beaver Creek, Ohio. They not only housed the four of us but also were by our side with help and advice.

We were also seriously working on inviting a religious Sister of the Holy Rosary to Xavier University, since the necessary funds were coming together for the three-year master's program in health services administration. Finding a religious *sister*, as per request of the donor, is our next challenge. Few Rosarian Sisters have a bachelor's degree, and if they do have the necessary prerequisite, they are usually much needed in the Rosarian healthcare and education ministries in Northern Malawi.

October

Malawi Sunday was a great success! We are deeply grateful for the generosity of QAC! The proceeds of



Preparation of Malawi Sunday sale at QAC.



Malawi Sunday celebration at QAC.

Malawi Sunday and a donation from a founding couple of QAC – both husband and wife are now deceased – will go a long way in Northern Malawi. They are helping us to survive the lean days ahead. Our grant applications for the continuation of the operating facility are still under consideration. Although we pinch pennies to make them go the longest way possible, construction work is expensive, even in Northern Malawi, which has been experiencing rampant inflation.

Exciting news about another very generous donation arrived toward the end of the month from the CPPS Heritage Mission Fund of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Dayton, Ohio. Our grant application for an ambulance for Kaseye Mission Hospital was favorably considered. The hospital's time-tested SUMAVI ambulance can finally be retired!

A week after Malawi Day, we took Thomas' sister and sister-in-law on a trip through New York State. Expecting to fundraise in the Diocese of Syracuse, Br. Peter's home diocese, we learned that the events had been cancelled on short notice; the hotel reservations, however, could not be cancelled. Hence, out of the fundraising mission trip became one of our rare family trips. We stopped over in Syracuse and attended church at St. James Parish, now Our Lady of Hope Parish, where we had made our mission appeal last year. We were fortunate to meet Fr. Chris again. Never having been in Africa, Fr. Chris told us he would love to take the opportunity

to visit us in Malawi, and Thomas and I would, of course, love to welcome him at Kaseye Mission.

On Monday following Malawi Sunday, we had a meeting with the Director of ETHOS, a hands-on volunteer program of the University of Dayton (UD), regarding the improvement of a stretch of the rocky road leading to Kaseye Hospital. The dirt road belongs to Kaseye Mission and is therefore not eligible for most grants dealing with improvement of *public* roads. We handed in an application which, if approved, would bring a couple of UD students and their supervisor to Kaseye in the summer of 2018 for assessment of the *private* road stretch. For the remaining 5 km of public road, we wrote a grant to Engineers Without Borders in hopes of getting support with the long-overdue road repair.

At the very end of the month, we visited Ginnie and Jack in Atlanta. Ginnie and I met thirty some years ago at Maine Correctional Institution where we did an internship in Clinical Pastoral Education. Both Ginnie and Jack are avid supporters of good causes. Ginnie is as passionate about her volunteer ministry in support of tertiary education in her church as Thomas and I are about our Kaseye ministry - we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, (therefore) each of us is to exercise them accordingly' (Romans 12:6).

November

Overton, Kaseye Hospital's HR officer in training, reported that two employees had been accepted for an on-the-job learning experience at St. John of God Hospital in Mzuzu, the premier mental health facility in Malawi. St. John of God is in many ways the role model of "New Kaseye Mission Hospital." We were delighted to hear that John, Kaseye's gardener, and Miston, the laundry attendant, are good "apprentices," both working hard to become the employees "New Kaseye" desperately needs. Overton, too, has been exemplary in keeping us informed about developments at the hospital. We trust that he, since 2016 a hard-working CABCS scholar enrolled at Mzuzu Technical College, will be

an invaluable staff member when he returns to Kaseye after graduating in HR management in 2018.

We just received word from Br. Peter Daino that a generous US family is considering assisting the Rosarian Sisters, through *Change and Be Changed*, with university/college tuition funds for young sisters studying in Malawi. We are very grateful because tertiary scholarships are very expensive and extremely hard to come by. As a retired university faculty member Thomas enjoys guiding and advising the tertiary scholars of *Change and Be Changed*; he and I are looking forward to welcoming new Rosarian scholars into the scholarship program.

From November 9-12, Thomas spent two days at the University of Missouri in Columbia MO, assisting a former colleague to solve some bone-related problems. At the reception in honor of his visit, Thomas met Jimi, a professor of veterinary medicine, who is also working in Africa. Jimi's charity is called "Make-a-Change Vacation" of all things! Volunteers



John attending gardening training at St. John of God Hospital in Mzuzu.



Broken windows at Kaseye Primary Girls' School.

signing up with the charity offer their time and talent for two weeks at a time to do construction work, in the summer of 2018 in Arusha, Tanzania. Jimi and Thomas hit it off right away. Jimi promised Thomas to visit us in Kaseye in July 2018. He wants to look at Kaseye Primary Girls' School to find out what kind of renovation work needs to be done to bring one of the very needy school blocks back to its former glory. Let's hope that providence leads us together!

Just last Sunday we were invited by Fr. Paul McGill, the pastor of Assumption/Windsor University's Campus Ministry, to introduce our work in Malawi to the student congregation. The Rosary Chapel, where the Campus Ministry congregation worships, has become our new church home in Canada. Educators by profession, both Thomas and I feel welcomed by this small, young congregation of quite a mix of nationalities. We are invited back to share with the students our latest Kaseye experiences when we return from our next stay in Kaseye in March 2018.

In conclusion, we are happy to have the date of our flight to Malawi: We will depart on December 31, 2017 and return on March 3rd, 2018. We trust that we will be able to accomplish much together with our friends at Kaseye Mission.

In gratitude to all our supportive friends in the US, Canada and Europe as well as in joyful anticipation of a fulfilling time in Malawi,

Elisabeth and Thomas