

# EMPOWERMENT

Global Health Connections Quarterly Newsletter



## Creating a Culture of Empowerment

Empowerment...What does it mean to us? It is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. This, in a nutshell, is what GHC strives to do. Our goal as an organization is to build a culture of empowerment—one where we motivate our villagers to chart their own course and make their own decisions to help themselves. One where we foster an environment of trust and accountability and give them the tools they need to succeed. One where we build up community institutions and a spirit of self-help. One where we help others connect with their own possibility of making things happen and drive change toward long-term sustainability.

### IN THIS ISSUE

DENVER'S EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR MESSAGE

SUCCESSES AND  
CHALLENGES

VILLAGE UPDATES

GREENER HILLS HONEY  
COOPERATIVE

HEADING INTO THE  
FALL



GHC had many visitors this summer! Several groups came to visit our villages, our apiaries and our office space. One noteworthy visit was to Nyasumi by Rotary District 9212's International District Governor, Leonard Ithau, and fellow Rotarians.

## Successes and Challenges

To kick-start our summer, 6 of our Community Health and Empowerment Clubs (CHECs) had Health Training Graduations (667 graduates!) and just finished the economic empowerment curriculum. These members are now ready to move on to starting their respective income-generating projects. Projects include beekeeping, cereal cultivation, tailoring/sewing and rock quarry mining.



PICTURED ABOVE LEFT: BLAIR AND COMPANY VISIT THE KEGATI APIARY. PICTURED BOTTOM RIGHT: CHEC MEMBERS FROM NYAMAGESA CELEBRATE THEIR GRADUATION FROM THE HEALTH TRAINING PROGRAM!

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Empowerment. A very strong word indeed. But one that guides us every day. We cannot physically “empower others,” but we can invite others to take ownership by creating the right environment and giving them the right tools. People must step into their own power and ability to impact. Therefore, it’s our job to cultivate a framework that supports, nurtures and sustains this. It is, after all, our mission at GHC to come together to empower individuals to connect, engage and improve the health and sustainability of their communities. We hope to be able to continue doing this into the foreseeable future!

~Mimi Gordon



He said, "Nyasumi is an excellent case study of how a community health and economic empowerment project works...The Nyasumi Community project is a testament of the transformative power of education, empowerment, and unity. Their journey is an inspiration and a reminder that we, can also sow seeds of positive change in our own communities."

Read the full article here --> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-rotary-health-economic-empowerment-project-has-lives-ithau/>

We also had a tragic loss this summer. Dena and Lee Van Slyke, proud adopters of Kegati Village, were supposed to meet Mimi Gordon in July to visit and see the Kegati Apiary. We learned on the day they were supposed to arrive that they were involved in a fatal car crash in San Diego. Only Lee survived the accident. Dena and Lee believed in what we did and were always spreading the word about our work in western Kenya. We hope that one day in the future Lee will be able to visit his village to see the wonderful progress the villagers have made and also to taste the amazing honey the apiary is producing.

PICTURED ABOVE: A NYASUMI CHEC MEMBER STANDS BY A DISPLAY OF VARIOUS VEGETABLES AND FRUITS GROWN IN THEIR RESPECTIVE KITCHEN GARDENS.



## Village Updates

It's hard to believe we are coming upon the 3-year anniversary date of the inception of our first three original villages: Mokubo, Biombe and Tabaka. We have come a long way since then and learned quite a bit as well! We are happy to report that all 15 of our villages are doing well. CHEC members from our first 9 villages are all carrying out various economic projects and living more healthful, empowered lives. Our newer 6 villages will be starting their respective economic projects this month. They are eager to apply the materials they were taught and to start earning income!

### Highlights:

We conducted nutritional assessments in our 6 new villages.

A few villages need follow-up assessments, but the initial results show significant improvement in decreasing or eliminating malnutrition over the baseline assessment in children 5 and under.

We built model latrines and shower shelters in our 6 new villages as well. GHC provided the materials and the CHEC members, with the guidance of the GHC team, built the structures. It was a team effort and all the structures turned out really well.

We distributed over 650 Aqua Clara water filters to our CHEC members in early July and taught them how to properly use them. Safe water for all!



PICTURED ABOVE LEFT: NYASUMI CHEC MEMBERS RECEIVE THEIR WATER FILTERS. PICTURED BOTTOM RIGHT: CHEC MEMBERS HELP CONSTRUCT THE NEW LATRINE AND SHOWER SHELTER.



We also are conducting beekeeping training for our four new apiaries in mid-September. Two consultants from the National Beekeeping Institute in Nairobi will be coming to Kisii for two weeks to train our members.

28 members from Nyasumi village, and 12 each from Nyanturago, Nyamacheo and Nyamagesa village, along with 4 from HEART International, will spend 3 days learning theory and doing practicals in several of our current apiaries.

## Greener Hills Honey

Introducing our newly formed Honey Cooperative--Greener Hills Honey! Formed in August 2023, Greener Hills was born out of a need for our village apiaries to have a central place to process and sell their honey. As a branch of Global Health Connections, Greener Hills works with the existing community health & empowerment clubs (CHECs) to help them set up apiaries, provide them with hives and training, and then help to process the honey. We then sell the honey under the Greener Hills Honey Cooperative label and split the profits with the village. It's a win-win for all involved.

We currently have 6 apiaries and over 190 hives. We are getting ready to add 4 more apiaries and 260 hives over the next month.

Please check out our new website:

[www.greenerhillshoney.com](http://www.greenerhillshoney.com)



PICTURED ABOVE LEFT: HONEY FROM BIOMBE, MOKUBO AND TABAKA. PICTURED BOTTOM RIGHT: MARK STANDS IN FRONT OF THE GHC OFFICE/HONEY PROCESSING CENTER.



## Heading Into Fall

We accomplished a lot over this summer and the fall brings exciting new opportunities and ventures.

We are in the middle of conducting our mid-line surveys in our 6 new villages: Kanyandhiang and Kanyipir in Homa Bay County and Nyasumi, Nyamagesa, Nyamacheo and Nyanturago in Kisii County. We are hopeful the data show improvement in all health, economic and social impact areas compared with the baseline data. Official results will be ready in a couple of weeks, but we already see vast improvements in household cleanliness, construction and use of drying racks, flourishing kitchen gardens, proper waste disposal, and proper water treatment and storage.

We just revamped and rewrote our 10-week Economic Empowerment

Curriculum. The material focuses more on the basics of financial literacy and what all is needed to start and run a profitable business. We are eager to try it out in our villages!

Finally we are currently writing a new Rotary Global Grant for 2024. The grant is two-fold: the first piece is bolstering the existing economic projects in our villages; for example, expanding all the apiaries and the tree farm. The second piece of the grant is to build two new CHECs in villages in either Kisii or Nyamira County and start a “pilot project” CHEC in Kajiado County (southwest of Nairobi). We have already identified local leaders to run the pilot CHEC after the GHC trains them. We will most likely introduce poultry as the income generating project as the area is well-suited for it. This will be GHC’s first attempt at scaling our CHEC model and it will be a test for us to manage from afar, but we are optimistic that we can be successful.



We hope you will consider partnering with us in the following areas:

1. Individual Donations to support CHECs in current villages and expansion into new villages.
2. Adopt-a-Village or Adopt-an-APIARY Sponsorship: Work with GHC to learn about everyday life in Western Kenya while supporting the health, economic empowerment and sustainability of villages. By adopting a village or apiary, an individual or club will be immersed in the CHEC transformation process and will have the opportunity to see firsthand how GHC has a direct impact on empowering individuals.

Be sure to check our website for new information and our social media accounts for weekly updates!

[www.globalhealthconnections.org](http://www.globalhealthconnections.org)

PICTURED ABOVE: THE SITE OF THE FUTURE NYASUMI APIARY