

WE RISE INTERNATIONAL

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2020

Our Mission

Empowering the World
with Health and Hope

Our Values

Interconnection, Equity, Respect,
Compassion, Innovation, Resilience



The Heart of We Rise International

We believe that every community has strengths to combat the problems that face the world today. Neighbors lift up neighbors. Strangers help each other. Working with communities of all sizes, we empower people of all backgrounds to maximize their strengths and respond to their struggles – together.

**MORE
DETAILS
TO
COME!**

Upcoming Events

Due to COVID-19 virus, We Rise International has postponed some of our live activities, and moved others online. We look to resume our in person programs in the near future. In the meantime check the "programs" page on our website for the most up-to-date information, as well as our current webinar series.



Diabetes Supply Bags

We Rise International will be at craft shows in PA this holiday season selling our beautiful diabetes supply bags and purses, hand-made in Africa, to raise funds for our new Diabetes Initiative. You'll soon also be able to order them via the We Rise Website. Here's one of several beautiful limited-edition patterns.

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DIABETES-A GLOBAL HEALTH CRISIS IN WE RISE INTERNATIONAL'S WHEELHOUSE

Sharing the vision:

By Janelle Bitikofer

We Rise International was developed to partner with communities in the US and around the world; empowering them to improve their health and well-being with strategies that work for them. Two years after our founding, we have honed-in on two sets of target health issues – Mental Illnesses and Addictions (MI/SA), and Diabetes Types 1 and 2 (T1D and T2D).

The Streetlights Project is addressing mental health and addictions, incorporating the "Christian Faith Communities Improving Outcomes in Mental Illnesses and Addictions Program" now called the "Churches Care Program," with training for mental health and addiction professionals. Meanwhile, a new initiative promoting Diabetes education and support programs globally, is also in the works.

As a person who has lived for 20 years with Type 1 Diabetes (T1D/Juvenile Diabetes) I have a personal passion for this topic. Before We Rise International I worked for three years at an NGO in the Dominican Republic co-developing and expanding locally led programs of education, support, behavior change, and treatment for adults with type 2 diabetes (T2D), in partnership with the Dominican Ministry of Public Health and local hospitals. We Rise Int'l Health Technical Advisory Team members Tracy Kaye, MPH and Dr. Rosalba Santana, MD, are also experts in the field of Diabetes. As the We Rise Int'l team looks around the world, we see diabetes needs. In the U.S., the American Diabetes Association and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation are addressing the needs of people with diabetes; but across the globe in Africa, the Caribbean, and other "developing" regions of the planet, the health education and support services for adults, children, and their families living with T1D and T2D are

less established and less well-financed. Many people diagnosed with T1D and T2D don't have enough information and support to manage their diabetes well. While traveling around the world over the past few years I have heard stories in Africa and the Caribbean of pre-teens and teens who are dying from T1D – a treatable but life threatening condition.



Meanwhile, T2D is on the rise globally, including a significant increase in developing nations, where western style foods and soft drinks have become new high sugar/high carb staples in many diets. The number of people with Diabetes in Africa is projected to increase 143% over the next 24 years! For the kids and teens living with T1D and the adults increasingly being diagnosed with T2D, education and support programs like the ones I worked on in the Dominican Republic, have been shown to reduce deaths and secondary health problems caused by diabetes. In conversation with diabetes advocates in Africa and the Caribbean, We Rise Int'l is beginning an initiative to partner with local communities, hospitals and diabetes educators in these areas to develop and expand culturally adapted behavior-change SEGs (Support and Education Groups) for adults with Type 2 Diabetes, and educational and supportive Diabetes clubs, camps, or peer support networks for youth and their families living with T1D.

Diabetes by Country

| Country | # of People with T2D | % of Population with T2D | # of People with T1D* | Average # of Deaths per Year |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Nigeria | 1,702,900 | 2.4% | 85,145 | 40,329 |
| Ethiopia | 2,567,900 | 2.5% | 128,395 | 30,972 |
| Kenya | 458,900 | 2.9% | 22,945 | 7,865 |
| Liberia | 440,100 | 2.4% | 2,205 | 750 |
| Dominican Republic | 520,800 | 8.2% | 26,040 | 6,541 |
| Native Americans, U.S. | 1,900,000 | 6.1% | 145,000 | 28,278 |

* less than 1% of the population Sources: WHO, IDF, ADA Based on 2017 Data

Welcome Aboard Chelsea Brubaker

Chelsea joined the We Rise International team in May and is our Summer/Fall 2020 Social Media and Marketing Intern.

During her first month with the organization, she created our Facebook page and youtube channel helping us make the leap into using online Social Media platforms to raise awareness, share information, and connect with communities across the U.S and globally.

Chelsea has been a tremendous help in coordinating our fundraising and marketing efforts for the new Diabetes Initiative. Some of her other projects include producing recordings for our recent Type 1 and 2 Diabetes webinars, designing beautiful hand-made earrings using fabric from Kenya, and helping to plan our 2021 Bike -A-Thon.

Chelsea is currently a senior pre-PA biology major at Eastern Mennonite University. Her passion for helping others inspires her and can be found in her work at We Rise International. We are delighted to have her on the team!"



LIKE US ON
FACEBOOK!



New Earring Project to Raise Awareness



We Rise International is creating a line of earrings to help raise funds for our programs and raise awareness of our mission! Our earrings will be sold, along with our Diabetes supply kit bags and Diabetes kit purses made in Kenya, at Lancaster, Pennsylvania craft shows this fall. A complete listing of shows will be posted on our website - come out to see us!

The earrings are crafted using vibrant African fabrics from our community partners in Nigeria. We will have several designs, including single hoops, double hoops, and rectangular earrings. We want to thank Intern Chelsea Brubaker for designing the prototypes and instructions to make these gorgeous earrings, but our goal is to connect with the community and outsource this wonderful project to a few volunteer Super Heroes.



Would you like to become a crafting Super Hero? We are in need of crafty volunteers who have little or no experience in creating earrings. All supplies, templates and instructions are distributed via a no-contact drop-off or by mail. Crafting is a wonderful way to spend time with friends or family. Get a group of friends and family together, virtually or following socially distanced guidelines, and have a "Crafternoon!" Become a We Rise International earring Super Hero today! Contact Desiree at desiree@weriseinternational.org for more information or to schedule your supply drop-off.

Welcome Aboard Christina Miles, LPC

Christina joined the We Rise Team in March 2020 to fill the grant-funded role of part-time mental health and addictions dual-diagnosis clinician, a role shared with Janelle, in the Churches Care Program!

The Churches Care Program, (otherwise known as *Faith Communities Improving Outcomes in Mental Illnesses and Addictions*), a 3 year initiative in partnership with Eastern Mennonite University - Lancaster, is still rolling forward during COVID-19. It provides in depth training to faith leaders (pastors and others) from Christian churches across Pennsylvania, regarding mental illnesses and addictions, and how to support and assist people who are experiencing them.



In her role as the Churches Care Clinician, Christina, a licensed professional counselor with significant expertise in both mental illnesses and addictions, provides confidential one on one support to church leaders who have taken the Churches Care training, and who are seeking guidance from a clinician regarding how to effectively help and support a person in their church or community who is experiencing a mental health or addictions struggle. Christina walks with the faith leaders providing guidance and support as they walk with and support the person in need in their church or community.

Christina also joined Janelle in co-leading a support session for church leaders related to COVID-19. Christina's knowledge, positive, can-do attitude, flexibility and committed care for the church leaders and those whom they are supporting in their churches and communities have been a great asset to We Rise Internationals since she first walked through the door of our "invisible office" We're thrilled to have you, Christina!

Webinars Offer Support During COVID-19

One aspect of We Rise International's response to COVID-19 has been a series of webinars offering support to health professionals and people living with Diabetes during COVID-19.

Find our Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes Webinars on the We Rise International Youtube channel at:

-Type 2 Webinar: <https://youtu.be/LZC59fA62yM>

-Type 1 Webinar: <https://youtu.be/IZeTCuoHvjE>



Join Us -- Five Ways to Get Involved with We Rise International

1. Stay informed! Sign up for our quarterly newsletter, at <https://weriseinternational.org/home>
2. Refer a college or graduate student you know to apply for We Rise Int'l internships – a great way to get involved and build their resume!
3. Volunteer yourself! We Rise International loves retirees and volunteers of any age, living anywhere on the planet!

4. Encourage church leaders, and mental health and addictions professionals you know in PA to sign up for the trainings and support on mental illnesses and addictions offered through the Churches Care & Streetlights Programs.

5. Support We Rise International financially through an individual or business donation any time of year, or by helping organize an event in your community during our annual fun”draising drive. All donations are tax deductible.



Donations are Tax Deductible

WRI is a US based 501c3 global non-profit organization. All donations received are tax deductible. Tax exempt 501c3 letters are available upon request.

Global Partnerships

We Rise International partners with community organizations striving to reach the global *Sustainable Development Goals by 2030*. These goals, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The SDGs are a global commitment, recognizing that ending poverty must accompany strategies to improve health and education; ideas that are shared around the world.

Ready to Partner Globally

With Technical Advisory Team members specializing in the fields of mental illness, addiction, global health, public health, women’s health, internal medicine, and sustainable development, We Rise International is poised to partner with communities in the U.S. and around the world.



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