

EMPOWERMENT

Global Health Connections Quarterly Newsletter



THIS WINTER'S HIGHLIGHTS

🌍 Kenya is leading the work.

Faith, Christine, and our Kenya team continue to guide CHECs with consistency, follow-up, and community trust.

👉 Women Who Lead is real — and visible.

In Kanyipir, members have moved from sitting on the ground to 128 chairs purchased through group savings — and they're aiming for ~200 after their March share-out.

🌱 Loan → harvest → repayment.

In Nyamagesa, a women's group turned a small loan into maize-and-beans income — and repaid monthly, on time, finishing in January.

👤 More ownership, more sustainability.

We're beginning to transition many Greener Hills apiaries to the CHECs themselves to manage — a meaningful step toward community-run livelihoods.

❤️ Colorado Gives 2025 brought momentum.

Thanks to an incredible year-end surge, we're building on new donor energy as we move into 2026.

🌐 Global Grant #3 is on the horizon.

We're continuing to move the next grant forward as we strengthen current operations and prepare for the next phase of growth.

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20 Years Strong, Kenya Leading:

Just days ago, we celebrated 20 years of Global Health Connections — and what stayed with us most was the feeling in the room: gratitude, joy, and deep belief in what community-led change can do. But the real celebration is what’s happening far from Denver, across western Kenya — where, in just the last five years, CHECs are no longer something we “bring in” — they’ve become something communities run, protect, and improve. You can see it in small, powerful shifts: meetings that used to happen on the ground now happen on chairs purchased through group savings; harvests that once felt uncertain now come with repayment plans and real follow-through; local leaders who once attended trainings now lead them. Twenty years in, the story isn’t just that GHC is still here — it’s that the work is increasingly Kenya-led, community-owned, and built to last.

PICTURED ABOVE: GHC’S FOUNDER AND BOARD CHAIR, BLAIR GIFFORD,
VISITS KIMUKA VILLAGE
PICTURED ON FIRST PAGE: KANYIPUR CHEC MEMBERS SIT ON THEIR NEWLY
PURCHASED CHAIRS



DENVER'S MESSAGE

Dear friends,

Thank you for helping us celebrate 20 years of Global Health Connections. Whether you joined us in person, supported from afar, or have been cheering this work on quietly for years — we felt your presence. And one of the most meaningful moments of the night was hearing directly from our Kenya leadership team as they joined by Zoom. It was a beautiful reminder that the best part of GHC has always been the people leading change from within their own communities.

In Kenya, that leadership is the reason CHECs work. Faith, Christine, Mark, Salome, and so many local leaders continue to guide villages with consistency and care — and the results are both practical and deeply human. In Kanyipir, a women's group has now purchased 128 chairs through group savings so every member can sit during sessions (and they're aiming for ~200 after their March share-out). In Nyamagesa, a small loan became maize and beans — and the group repaid every month, on time, completing repayment in January. These aren't one-off stories. They're evidence of a system taking root.

We're also building on the momentum of Colorado Gives 2025, and we're looking ahead to the next chapter — strengthening current villages while continuing to move Global Grant #3 forward. And as part of our long-term sustainability focus, we're beginning to transition many Greener Hills apiaries to CHECs themselves to manage — another step toward true community ownership. Thank you for being part of this story. Your support helps communities lead — and makes progress durable, not temporary.

With gratitude,
Mimi Gordon
Director of Marketing



Then & Now (20-year arc in a snapshot)

THEN (How it began)

- Founded by Dr. Blair Gifford in 2004 as a program within the Center for Global Health at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, and became an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2006.
- From the start, GHC's approach has been the same: work with communities, not for them — building relationships that lead to lasting health and opportunity.
- Early roots included the Global Water Challenge (2004–2020), inspiring 16,000+ middle school students and 100+ teachers to learn about real-world health challenges through teamwork and innovation.
- International work began in Haiti (starting 2007), and after the 2010 earthquake, GHC partnered with relief efforts and ultimately helped build a maternity center at Haitian-owned CAMEJO Hospital in Léogâne.



Then & Now (20-year arc in a snapshot)

NOW (Kenya today)

- Since 2020, GHC has built partnerships and presence in villages around Kisii, Kenya — and in early 2021 launched our first Community Health & Empowerment Clubs (CHECs).
- CHECs combine health education, sanitation, financial literacy, and leadership development, turning knowledge into action and action into opportunity.
- Today we're in 19 villages, with 9 self-sustaining — evidence that village-led systems can keep going and keep improving.

NEXT (The chapter ahead)

- Strengthen what's working: deepen village ownership, grow more self-sustaining CHECs, and keep improving how we measure progress.
- Build partnerships that support long-term scale (Rotary, universities, and local stakeholders).
- Continue fundraising and prepare to submit Global Grant #3 in the coming months to expand and deepen impact in 2026.



Kenya Leading: Meet the Team

Faith Mageto — Executive Director, Kenya

Faith leads GHC Kenya and keeps CHECs strong and community-owned — guiding village partners, supporting local leadership, and ensuring the work stays consistent, practical, and sustainable.

Christine Nyaboke — Director of Operations, Kenya

Christine oversees day-to-day operations and program delivery, supporting CHEC implementation across villages and helping connect training to real household and economic progress.

Salome — Project Officer (Homa Bay County)

Salome works alongside CHEC members in Homa Bay, supporting trainings, follow-up visits, and group projects so momentum continues well beyond the classroom.

Mark — Project Officer (Kisii Region)

Mark supports CHECs around Kisii, helping groups stay organized, track progress, and strengthen village-led systems that keep improving over time.

If you'd like to learn more about Faith, Christine, Salome, and Mark, we have short bios on our About Us page → <https://globalhealthconnections.org/about-us>



Community-Owned Progress

Kanyipir: From Sitting on the Ground to 128 Chairs (and Growing)

Not long ago, CHEC members in Kanyipir held sessions sitting on the ground. Today, they're meeting on 128 plastic chairs—enough for every member—purchased through steady group savings. It's a simple shift, but a meaningful one: dignity, inclusion, and participation all rise when everyone has a seat at the table.

Even better, the chairs are more than a meeting upgrade. The group is building a small enterprise by renting chairs for community events, creating income that can be reinvested to expand their inventory. At their March share-out, they plan to purchase more chairs, aiming to grow to ~200.

This is exactly what we mean by community-led progress: small contributions, shared assets, and a system that keeps building momentum.

Nyamagesa: A Small Loan, A Strong Harvest, and On-Time Repayment

In Nyamagesa, a women's group used a small GHC loan to lease land, purchase seeds and fertilizer, and plant maize and beans. After one bean harvest yielded 79 market tins, the group had real income in hand—food for households, earnings at the local market, and a clearer path forward.

Just as important as the harvest was what came next: consistent repayment. The group repaid the loan every month, on time, completing their final payment in January after a strong harvest. That kind of reliability signals something powerful—planning, accountability, and growing financial confidence. It's the CHEC model in action: a spark of capital paired with training and group discipline, turning opportunity into long-term stability.



Sustainability in Practice

Sustainability isn't just a goal for GHC — it's the point of the model. We look for signs that communities are building systems that continue without outside leadership: governance committees that keep CHECs organized, savings groups that stay consistent over time, and livelihood projects that grow through reinvestment. In village after village, we're seeing steady progress that's community-owned — built on discipline, shared decision-making, and practical follow-through.

- **Apiary transition:** We're beginning to transition many Greener Hills apiaries to the CHECs themselves to manage directly — a meaningful step toward community-owned livelihoods.
- **Savings → loans → assets → income:** Table banking: Members can choose to contribute weekly into a shared "table bank." When the fund reaches a level the group agrees is strong enough, the bank begins issuing loans to members at 10% interest. During scheduled payouts, contributors receive their share back — with interest — rewarding consistent saving while keeping capital circulating within the village. This helps households build a savings habit and access small loans without relying on outside lenders.

Momentum + Funding

Colorado Gives 2025: Momentum We're Building On

Our Colorado Gives campaign nearly doubled last year's results, and we welcomed new donors into the GHC community along the way. We're grateful for every gift — and this momentum is helping fuel the next chapter of CHECs and community-led progress in 2026.

Rotary Global Grant #3: In the Works

Global Grant #3 is currently in development, and we're actively raising funds now to support it. Our goal is to submit the application in the coming months (targeting spring). If fully funded, this grant will launch new CHECs and strengthen the pathway to sustainability by:

- Supporting new CHEC launches (training, baseline surveys, and start-up materials)
- Seeding income-generating projects
- Strengthening local leadership and monitoring so communities can sustain the model long after the grant ends



PICTURED ABOVE: KIMUKA CHEC MEMBERS JUST FINISHED BUILDING THE NEW CHICKEN COOP. NOW COMES THE EXCITING PART — WELCOMING THE CHICKS!

Help Fuel the Next 20 Years

Thank you for standing with Global Health Connections — your support makes community-led progress possible.

Three ways to help:

- Donate: Support CHECs and village-led projects in Kenya
- Adopt-a-Village: Sponsor a village's full CHEC journey and follow the transformation
- Share the story: Forward this newsletter or share any of our posts to help us reach new supporters

Stay connected: globalhealthconnections.org

Follow us on social media for weekly updates and impact stories.

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PICTURED ABOVE: A MEMBER OF THE KANYAMFWA TAILORING GROUP WITH HER NEW SEWING MACHINE