



Pos+Abilities

Healthcare and Education

Covid-19 in Tanzania



In late March, much like the rest of the world, Tanzanians became concerned about the risk of COVID-19 and a number of our local partners made the difficult decision to temporarily close their rehabilitation clinics. This was done to protect staff and patients, but also to allow for the reallocation of staff and physical facilities to an anticipated increase in COVID 19 cases. As a consequence and after careful consideration, GPN has decided to pause clinical activities in Tanzania and to repatriate volunteers who are currently overseas. We are relieved that two of our volunteers, Liam Burke and Kylie Webber have arrived safely back in Australia, and we thank them for their valuable service. Dr. Ryan Takagi returned to Vancouver this week, along with Sara Webber, a nutritionist, who joined Ryan in Tanzania. We are in constant contact with our local clinical partners so that we are prepared to quickly resume operations as soon as the decision is made that it is safe to do so. During this period, we will continue to engage potential volunteers and enhance

We would like to give a big thank you to our local clinical partners, Magu District Council, the Tanzania Home Economics Association, Villages of Hope and SOS Children's Village, who will be continuing their important work in Tanzania during this challenging time. We will also continue to engage other local organizations and hospitals with whom we have initiated partnership discussions.

As in Canada, Tanzanians have reduced outdoor activity and are adopting social distancing measures. This, of course, affects the students whom we have been supporting through our partners, the Africa School Assistance Project. As schools in Tanzania have been closed, our approximately 2 dozen students have returned to their families, sometimes in rather remote villages. GPN will continue to monitor their well-being and support them in their return to school at the earliest opportunity.

Dr. Ryan Takagi



This winter, Pos+Abilities welcomed Dr. Ryan Takagi to Mwanza as fulltime clinician and manager of our health care network in Tanzania, where he remained until late March, taking a slightly earlier plane home due to concerns around the coronavirus. During his time with us in Tanzania, he reports that he

at SOS Children's Villages and Villages of Hope.

He says he often found patients waiting for his arrival at Kanyama Village and had very full days, finding the top three diagnoses to be mechanical back pain (due to muscles or joints), cerebral palsy (or related developmental condition), and osteoarthritis.

He was been made very welcome by our partner clinics at SOS Children's Villages and Villages of Hope, both of which encouraged him to increase his time there.

Despite a busy schedule, Dr. Takagi was able to enjoy local sites, including a memorable trip to Rubondo Island, which contains a national game park. While in Mwanza city, he had the guidance of Emmanuel Bujashi, a former 'street kid' who went on to earn an undergraduate degree and a post-graduate certificate in counselling. Ryan has met with volunteers from CUSO and other international organizations and was able to hit the local gym and enjoy local life.

In the group photo are Dr. Kahema Mawe (Magu District Council), Dr. Liam Burke (volunteer), Mama Asia Kapande (TAHEA), Sara Cole (nutritionist), George Lutengano (Magu District Council) and Dr. Ryan Takagi (GPN senior clinician).

Recruitment Doesn't Stop



Months of preparation go into recruiting, orienting and dispatching volunteers to Tanzania, and so we cannot afford to pause our efforts while waiting for COVID to subside. We are continuing to recruit and engage volunteers so that we can reboot clinical services in Tanzania at the earliest opportunity. A big thank-you goes out to our new HR manager, Sarah Bugeja, who has been refining our documentation and making sure that our HR processes meet industry standards.

We also want to thank our new partners, Hands-on-Health Australia (HOHA), who recruited our two most recent volunteers, Liam Burke and Kylie Webber. HOHA CEO, Franca Smarrelli, has been doing phenomenal work recruiting on our behalf while managing deployment of volunteers to other sites in southeast Asia and the Pacific, and while managing a number of field clinics serving the brave volunteer fire fighters who have been battling wildfires in Australia! Franca's energy and dedication are an inspiration to all of us.

encourage them to contact us. Also, please consider making a one-time or continuing donation to support our good work in Tanzania.

Shown above: Dr. Kylie Webber with a patient

Online Educational Delivery System



We are pleased to report further progress on the online educational modules for overseas volunteers and clinical staff in Tanzania.

Our online educational initiative was established to provide advanced training in rehabilitation for local practitioners. Through the kind donations of content and web services, we have now developed an impressive suite of learning modules presented through a professional learning management system (LMS). What we had not anticipated, but have happily discovered, is that our LMS is also a wonderful tool to educate and orient international volunteers. In fact, we are now in discussions with two other NGOs to share this service with their international volunteers. We would like to provide a shout-out to the faculty and staff at Centennial College who have provided such valuable service in the development of educational materials for international volunteers

Additionally, on March 2, GPN was accepted as a full partner in Project ECHO, an international initiative out of the University of New Mexico, to implement online mentoring of health care workers in under-serviced areas of the world. We will be undergoing orientation and training in their methodologies, and we

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