

## Summer Update from ELWA Children's Ministry

Dear All at Saint Andrews and All Saints Malvern,

Thank you so much for your kind and generous support of the work that goes on at ELWA hospital, particularly the work on the children's ministry.

I wanted to provide you with an update on the last few weeks, especially as the work continues to grow and expand, and God has blessed us with many children coming to get treatment in the hospital.

During June we were able to install some new oxygen concentrators thanks to a very generous donation from both Mercy Ships and Freedom from Fistula. I have worked with both of these organisations before in Sierra Leone, and it is a huge privilege to be involved with them again. This has meant that we are now able to provide oxygen for up to 12 children (or 24 newborns) at a time, which has been very timely. As the delta variant of COVID-19 hit Liberia, many hospitals simply didn't have oxygen available for children. As a result, many more came to ELWA, and thanks to this amazing provision they were able to receive oxygen. Countless lives have been saved as a result.

June also saw a new very small newborn care area established on the ELWA paediatric ward with 4 beds, 2 cots and the newly repaired incubator. Before this area, all of the newborns were often mixed in with the other children on the ward, which meant that there was too much of an infection risk. We are up to over 30 beds now. The unit has been steadily receiving newborns through the summer, and we had a very generous donation from Creekside community church in Australia as well as our good friends at LIVE 2540 which has helped provide the medication needed for this new expansion. Please pray that the staff working there would know God's blessing as they care for the smallest children. Also please pray that the community soon becomes aware of the new service and are encouraged to come early with their babies!

The delta variant led to a very significant restructuring of the hospital, with the main emergency department becoming a ward for COVID-19 patients and the female ward being converted into a paediatric ward. This led to the children's emergency department being moved to the other side of the hospital. High numbers of children continue to pour in ready to receive care from the team, many very sick and often convulsing or breathing very fast.

Malnutrition has become more of a problem since the pandemic, as the presence of the virus has interfered with food supplies for families and increased the price of rice. As a result, the malnutrition program remains busy. Many of the children coming through the hospital are extremely unwell and need oxygen or strong antibiotics. Without your support, we would not have these vital things – thank you!



The Emergency Triage, Assessment and Treatment (ETAT) plus training has continued at a very high level in the hospital. The most recent course had 45 participants with a local faculty of 8 Liberian trainers. These trainers are able to carry out the training in a way which is culturally appropriate and well-absorbed by the local staff attending from the various facilities. We received excellent feedback with all the staff wanting it to be expanded to other centres as well as requesting for their colleagues to go through similar training, and there has been great co-operation from the ministry of health as well as other partners. Local ETAT plus trainer in action:



In the last 6 months, we have been prayerfully exploring a partnership with a smaller missions group called “hope for home”, who operate some beautiful foster group homes for abandoned disabled children in a town called Gbarnga in the interior of Liberia. Their ministry to these children is the most powerful I’ve seen in Liberia. We have been asked to explore ways to help them develop a paediatric and malnutrition clinic with a possible 12 bed inpatient ward. This is in an area of the country with almost no healthcare and very little gospel witness, and would be a great opportunity to share God’s love with Liberia’s most vulnerable children. Many Liberian churches have asked us to consider expanding the children’s work outside of ELWA, and we have felt the Lord’s leading strongly in this area. It would involve a significant change for us as we would be located 50% of the time in the interior, and this will need much prayer.

Please pray for:

- The COVID-19 situation in Liberia. Cases are very high now, with a lot of demand for oxygen and stress for our staff. Pray that the vaccine will soon become more available and people are not afraid to take it.
- A good start for Juah Foeday, our new supervisor for the children’s ward standing in for Emma while she is on maternity leave.
- Children and families to receive a Gospel impact when they come to ELWA. It is very easy to simply “do good”, but our higher goal is lives transformed by meeting Jesus. Many of the families coming to the hospital are from backgrounds of prostitution and chaos, and almost all the children are without father figures. Pray they would embrace Christ.
- Continued openness of supply lines for plumpynut, therapeutic milk and medication needed to keep the children’s programme operating. Without these precious supplies we simply cannot do what we need to.
- God’s wisdom as we move forward with the outreach clinic initiative into Gbarnga.



Many blessings!

Mikey and Bethany Bryant

On behalf of the ELWA hospital children's ministry

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