

Linda Walsh Travels to Uganda with Project Hopeful

June 27, 2012

From June 15-26, 2012 University of Chicago Adoption Center's Linda Walsh, NP made a Medical Mission to Uganda with our partner, Project Hopeful, to provide medical care to orphans, many with special needs. The mission was funded by generous supporters of the Joyce Sloane Memorial Fund.

Linda Walsh is a board certified family nurse practitioner specializing in pediatric infectious disease. Her clinical practice and research focus is on pediatric and adolescent HIV infection, chronic disease, and family coping in the pediatric population. Although she has worked with children adopted from orphanages since 2008, this was Linda's first formal trip to an African orphanage.

The mission was organized by Project Hopeful, a special needs adoption advocacy group which partners with UCAC. Linda's role in the mission was to conduct medical clinics, meet with organizations dedicated to caring for orphans with and without special needs, as well as those working in the Ugandan Public Health sector to build a new clinic dedicated to the care of PLWHA. The team flew into Entebbe, Uganda and stayed in a guesthouse in Kampala. The team was made of 15 travelers including a medical care team and volunteers.

Medical Clinics were conducted within the community at Ssenge Village, on the shores of Lake Victoria with True Vine ministries, and at a refugee clinic also in Kampala.

- Over 5 days, roughly 500 people (60% children) were treated for a variety of ailments including fevers, upper respiratory infections, flu/cough, malnutrition, tooth decay, fungal infections, sadness, body aches/pains, and keloids.
- Rapid testing and treatment for malaria included over 50 cases in children. Team was able to provide full medication treatment course.
- Rapid testing for HIV resulted in positive-diagnosis in 3-5 children. Treated some children already diagnosed HIV+, some of them also sick with malaria
- Treated as many children as possible for worms/parasites
- Large distribution of multivitamins, toothbrushes, and toothpaste.

The team also met with several **Community Organizations** including:

- *Ekisa*, a special need orphanage, caring for children with a myriad of chronic health conditions including HIV, hydrocephalous, cerebral palsy, rare cardiac conditions, autism and other developmental delays.
- *African Hearts* a home for orphaned boys age 5-16 taken off the streets of Kampala.
- *Women of Destiny & Mother of Hope*, a group of HIV+ women learning to support themselves making jewelry, baskets, and other crafts. The women also support each other psychologically by meeting to talk about issues surrounding HIV such as stigma and disclosure.

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/UCAdoptionCenter> to see beautiful photos taken from the trip.