



For immediate release

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Providence Manor's Medical Director working to open hospital in Kenya

The Medical Director of Providence Continuing Care Centre's Providence Manor is helping establish a pediatric hospital in Kenya with support from community members. Dr. Ivan Stewart has been travelling to the African country several times a year since 1986, first as a family doctor and then working with disabled children. Dr. Stewart's next trip to Kenya is planned for May 12, when he will be discussing the construction of a 120 to 200 - bed hospital for children in Kijabe, 60 km north of Nairobi.

"We see problems and neurological abnormalities not seen in North America because in many cases they have little or no preventative health care nor access to health care providers. It is not unusual in Kenya for disabled children to be hidden or even left to die. Many children are also HIV positive," Dr. Stewart says.

Dr. Stewart will be discussing plans for the new pediatric hospital with local officials during his trip. He estimates that \$20 to 30 million will need to be raised in order to build it in the next five years.

Bethany Relief and Rehabilitation International (BRRI), an organization dedicated to helping disabled children in East Africa, opened a 35-bed pediatric unit in a general hospital in 2004. "It quickly grew to 50 beds and is now bursting at the seams," he explains.

Last year at Kijabe there were over 440 children treated surgically with spina bifida and or hydrocephalus. Dr. Stewart is chairperson of BRRI, which is also involved in the education and training of health care professionals.

BRRI has received a great deal of local support for Dr. Stewart's mission. He also works with a former Kingston pediatric surgeon, Dr. Dan Poenaru, who is now practicing as a medical missionary in Kijabe. Local Rotary Clubs have provided resources for the mission and raised money for equipment. As well, Gerry Locklin of Royal Military College, David Bonham, former chair of the PCCC board and Dr. Joy Wee, a rehabilitation physician from PCCC's St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital, are local BRRI board members.

Dr. Wee has also traveled to Kenya recently with the support of BRRI. Last year she made recommendations to the United Nations on how to improve conditions for the disabled in a refugee camp.

Providence Continuing Care Centre is the leading provider of specialized care for some of the most vulnerable patients in Southeastern Ontario – the frail elderly, people coping with chronic illness, stroke survivors and those living with mental illness. One of Kingston's university hospitals, PCCC has several community locations and three main sites in Kingston: Mental Health Services, St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital and Providence Manor. Through our affiliation with Queen's University, PCCC is a major centre for teaching and research.

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