

HEREFORD - MUHEZA LINK SOCIETY
***(Working with Health Services in Tanzania, East
Africa)***

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Hereford-Muheza Link Society Newsletter November 2014

**All are welcome
to
The Christmas Carol Service
On
Friday 12th December at 6pm

In the Hospital Chapel

mulled wine & mince pies will be served after
the service**



News from Hereford

It has been a busy summer with 4 visitors from Muheza (Rose Samzughi, Andrew Kalimbe, Jesca Lebba & Elisaria Somi) being welcomed by various departments at the County Hospital. Thank you to everyone who helped with their programmes especially Dr Joy Thomas (Radiology), Dr Najeeb Waheed & Jonathan Cummins Thomas (Diabetic Centre), Tracey Scott (CCU), Gale Robinson (Heart & Lung Unit), Fiona Blackwell & Lynne Butler (Children's Ward). While gaining experience on CCU in August, Andrew gave an interview on Radio Hereford & Worcester, informing listeners of the difficulties he faced working in Muheza. Both he and Rose had their photos in the Hereford Times, as did Elisaria who joined the Ultrasound Department for his visit. In September he and Jesca went to Gloucester for the day for a training session on an Ultrasound scanner similar to the one sent recently to Muheza. The visitors were also very well entertained by committee members and other friends of the Link, enjoying hospitality and visiting local places of interest as well as trips to Oxford and London.

The strawberry Garden Party at John & Bridget Wood's house at the end of June was enjoyed on a balmy evening for once ! In September June Whitcombe's coffee morning was held in similarly fine weather, a welcome change from recent years. Later on the same day, John Wood organised a film show in Tarrington featuring two accounts of Teule Hospital, the first by Central TV in 1989 following Adrian While & Simon Lind's visit and the second in 2008, recording a visit by John & Bridget.

Other recent events:

In October, a visiting Consultant from Rwanda, Dr Christian Ntizimira, gave a fascinating insight into the provision of Palliative Care in his country. The lingering shadow of the genocide (now 20 years ago) was very evident throughout his talk, and he spoke movingly of how palliative care had helped Rwanda restore humanity. The impression of the health service was well organised with funding from Western Countries helping to provide essential services and drugs, particularly antiretrovirals (for use in HIV). Christian's account of cultural differences around the concepts of

illness and pain were also interesting. In health, a Rwandan belongs to himself but in illness he belongs to his family. As families are large, this invariably means that agreement on care can be difficult. Also, pain is considered positive, proving the patient is alive and although morphine is widely available it remains stigmatised and associated with drug abuse and addiction.

Richard & Karilyn Collins recently worked in Rwanda mentoring Christian and his palliative care team. They gave us their own impressions of the country and of how mentoring has highlighted the importance of discussion and working through patient's problems. They were impressed by the role of customer care managers in Rwandan hospitals who routinely asked patients if they felt they were being listened to and the use of mobile phones to refer patients for investigations rather than relying on letters. Some advice for services closer to home perhaps !

The Annual Autumn Supper was held later on in the month and the guest speaker this year was Dr Rina Patel who gave an engaging account of her experiences working for six months in palliative medicine for Muheza Hospice Care. The programme of support is now well established throughout Tanga region and Rina clearly enjoyed visiting patients in the outlying villages with the rest of the team from the Diana Centre. From her slides we were able to see how the poor state of the roads often hampered efforts to reach patients. On a positive note she reported that morphine was now readily available for patients in the community as well as for those in Hospital. One patient in particular, a little boy in obvious pain from kaposi's sarcoma was transformed and smiling once treated. There are still improvements to be made, however, as Rina pointed out with dismay that the average life span in Tanzania had not risen much above 50 years in several decades. The buffet supper as usual was delicious, and enjoyed by all. Thank you to everyone who contributed and to Nicki Westoby for co-ordinating everything.

Visitors to Muheza:

Sara Higginson, social worker at St Michael's Hospice has just returned from a month long visit to Muheza. Richard & Karilyn Collins are there at the moment and Sally and Zack Amos are going out very soon. We look forward to catching up with their news very soon.

With best wishes,

Elly

