A story from your Global Ministries  |  JUNE 2013

“Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Philippians 4:8

The Blessing of Hope

“Just Communities” is the department at the Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) with which I work as the Director. There are many projects Just Communities has undertaken. The “One People Campaign” is our peace initiative in Kenya and many African countries, to teach and promote peaceful lives and approaches to controversy, especially during and following elections. Just Communities produced and distributed copies of “Young African Express,” an educational magazine to the young people in the community. Young African Express is a comic booklet which addresses issues often present in communities and discusses the role of church members in it.

Recently we visited a group of women in Kawangwar, an informal settlement in Nairobi. The women are HIV-positive and have initiated an income-generating project to support themselves and their children. There we met the four year old daughter of one of the women, who had suffered third degree burns to her head and face. Blessing is her name. Her mother explained she did not have enough money to pay the price of the procedure to treat Blessing’s burns. Now Blessing’s condition was more serious, she could not close her eyes to sleep and she had difficulty breathing because the burns had affected her nose and mouth. Just Communities contacted the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services in Uganda (CoRSU), which performs low cost surgery to children with disabilities. Blessing and her mother traveled twelve hours by bus from Nairobi to Kampala, Uganda arriving early on Sunday morning. They had an appointment to see a doctor at the hospital the next day. The doctor felt surgery was urgent because there were infections developing in Blessing’s eyes. The surgery was scheduled for two days later. The doctors successfully reconstructed much of Blessing’s face and more surgery is to come. We thank God for the many people who made Blessing’s medical treatment possible.

God, we pray that communities in Kenya will be able to focus on their daily lives in peace. We pray for Blessing as she continues to heal and recover, and we pray for the work of Just Communities that it may continue its impact making its among peoples in Kenya.

Phyllis Byrd serves in Nairobi Kenya, as a theological educator with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa as a theological educator. This is a joint appointment with the Presbyterian Church, USA and Global Ministries.

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