



Rural Health Care Initiative

Pursuing healthy pregnancies & children in Sierra Leone

April 2020--www.rhcinsl.org—PO Box 14822; Minneapolis, MN 55414

Mother's Day Gift Opportunity

There is no better gift to give your Mother than giving to a Mother in need. This Mother's Day, May 10th, consider a contribution to a mother in Sierra Leone in honor or in memory of your Mom or Grandma. With your donation, we'll send your Mom/Grandma or other special person a card on Mother's Day as a thank you. **To donate, use the enclosed envelope, or go to www.rhcinsl.org. Be sure to indicate to whom the card should be sent, and their address. Happy Mother's Day!**



This is Nancy Ganda from Waima village which is 17 miles away from Tikonko town. She is 30 years old and has delivered nine children and only two children are alive. Her first child a baby girl and the fourth child a baby boy died of convulsion with high fever. These two were taken to Bumphe Health Center for treatment and they died during treatment. The other five also died of the same symptoms. They were taking to Serabu Hospital for treatment as it was the closest hospital to their location. The mother is a farmer and married to Borbor Ganda also a farmer. She was admitted at the Mbao-mi Mother's Home on Thursday 2nd April 2020. She is awaiting child-birth. (Picture and text from Allieu Jongopie in Tikonko)

COVID 19 Update

Due to extremely limited medical resources and health care workforce, the entire country is vulnerable to the COVID 19 Infection. With no ventilators or oxygen to treat respiratory failure from the virus, the pandemic will be especially devastating. Many community members rely on RHCI's services and look to RHCI for guidance. Along with the Government of Sierra Leone, RHCI is providing guidance on precautions such as social distancing, hand washing and wearing masks. The tailoring instructors at Mbao-mi Mothers' Home are making masks for all staff and pregnant women to wear. Go to the RHCI Website for more information.



Gondama Mother's Home

The **Mbao-mi Mothers' Home** continues operating with 50 pregnant women admitted in January and February alone. The opening of the second 10-bed Mothers' Home in Gondama will be postponed due to COVID 10. The building is fully renovated and awaiting furnishings.



2020 Thus Far----During the months of January, February and March, the staff at our **motorbike clinics**, which reach villages miles from the local health center, evaluated and treated **over 780 children**, and **222 expecting mothers received antenatal care**. In addition, RHCI nurse Juliana Sagba, provided **family planning services** for over **416 women** in the first three months of 2020.

Food Security and Nutrition: Without food and nutrition, there is no health. RHCI is partnering with a local nutritionist, to teach expecting mothers about feeding techniques and nutrition for themselves and their newborns. In Sierra Leone, 1 in 3 children under the age of 5 are stunted or malnourished. This past week, over 100kg of Pikinmix (see picture below), a precooked and nutritious porridge, has been purchased for distribution to children screened as malnourished at the eight motorbike clinic sites. In the picture at the right, RHCI staff Patrick Vandy is working in the garden.



RHCI's Mbao mi Mothers' Home provides three nutritious meals a day, partially grown from RHCI's garden. Before the Home, pregnant women typically ate only one meal a day. RHCI's garden continues to provide fresh vegetables and fruit to ensure healthy food for the Mbao-mi Mothers' Home. RHCI aims to be an example of best agricultural practices for the Tikonko community, demonstrating farming techniques that result in higher yields, leading to a decrease in poor health caused with insufficient food supply and malnutrition.

Transportation: RHCI has two 4 wheel drive trucks specifically for the use of transporting women and children and children in need of medical care. In the month of February, 15 expecting mothers were transported between the Mbao-mi Mothers' Home (the 24 bed Birth Waiting Home in Tikonko) and the Tikonko Health Center or Bo District Hospital for safe delivery. Many post-partum women and newborns were transported safely home to their distant villages. **Ten critically ill children were transported** to Bo Children's Hospital in February, and received care funded by RHCI. In February and March, a total of 99 transports were made.

We are overwhelmed with gratitude! RHCI's Taste of Africa Fundraiser went virtual, due to COVID 19. We asked supporters to help us "Do More" during this crisis, and the responses made it possible to continue life-saving programs in rural Sierra Leone. Over \$23,000 was raised in just 48 hours! Thank you to Chris Janty for the matching donation, and all of our friends that participated. It's not too late to make a contribution. Go to our www.rhcimnsl.org to donate. Together we are doing our part to make a difference. Thank You.