

This has been an incredibly challenging year for us all and no less so for small charities like us. However we are extremely grateful to our very dedicated supporters who have donated to us generously and enabled work to continue in Kenya. In this edition of our newsletter we update you on some of the activities taking place in Kenya to make sure patients still receive the palliative care they need despite the pandemic.

Wishing all of our friends and supporters a Merry Christmas with very best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year 2021!

Our Radio 4 appeal

The final total of our enormously successful BBC Radio 4 appeal is in. It raised an incredible £31,793 to train and support community health volunteers who will provide compassionate palliative care across Kenya.

From the Maasai villages of Kajiado County in the south, to Kilifi County on the coast, and Samburu in the central north, this appeal has enabled us to start work in ten counties across Kenya to bring palliative care to rural villages.

Training for 200 new community health volunteers is already underway and we are supporting over 250

trained volunteers to raise awareness of cancer and coronavirus. We're also providing them with home-based palliative care kits so they can give the best care to their patients.

The coronavirus pandemic has made life even more difficult for people in Kenya who live with cancer and depend on palliative care services. Lockdown travel restrictions made it difficult to reach a hospice and many say they are simply too scared to travel. The work of community health volunteers, who can easily reach out to patients in their communities, provide them with palliative care and teach them how to protect their fragile health from coronavirus, has become even more vital.

Thank you to all our supporters who contributed to the great success of our Radio 4 appeal.



Home-based palliative care gives people living with cancer the emotional support, advice and medication they need.

"I am happy because if it weren't for Jane, my community health volunteer, my cancer probably wouldn't have been detected. She takes care of me. She helps me manage my pain with medicines and helped me through my treatment. I am grateful to her for my life."

Elizabeth, a cancer patient, explains the difference community health volunteers Jane has made to her life

News from Kenya



Since local travel restrictions due to Covid-19 have been lifted, nurses from Siaya Hospice have been able to start visiting patients in their homes. The risk of Covid-19 means that many patients fear making the journey to the hospice so the dedicated hospice nurses have been battling the heavy rains and difficult travel conditions to reach them. They take all recommended precautions to protect their vulnerable patients and themselves from Covid-19.

This is Joyce pictured in her home with family members and staff from Siaya Hospice who have been helping her to cope with pancreatic cancer since she was first diagnosed in 2014.



Our partner Ongata Ngong Palliative Community Care (ONPACC) has been tirelessly raising awareness of Covid-19 in communities in Kajiado West. In a recent event they distributed reusable face masks and soap, and spread the message on social distancing; important in protecting the most vulnerable.



"We are visiting patients with the help of community health volunteers but we have a lot of challenges. People say there is no Covid-19 in their villages so many do not wear masks. Running water is another challenge for regular hand washing. We visit patients to bring food supplies and advocate the importance of wearing masks, social distancing and washing hands. We are doing our best despite the challenges."

Stella from ONPACC, pictured right with her patient



Nurses from Meru Hospice have been travelling throughout the county, with help from volunteers, to follow up patients in their homes and make sure they receive the care and support they need.

This year we are supporting Machakos Palliative Care Unit to run monthly day-care sessions where patients are invited to meet others and share their stories. Day-care is an immense source of encouragement and support for many patients. It is also an opportunity for nurses to train patients to better manage their condition and keep as healthy as possible. During most of the year these sessions had to be postponed, but have now resumed with two sessions taking place recently. Patients were trained in Covid-19 prevention and how to write a will. This means they know their rights in choosing who inherits any property or who will look after their children after their death.



"When I was diagnosed with breast cancer I used to hate myself and wondered why I was living, but the day I heard others share their stories, my thoughts changed and I now see better days ahead"

A patient shares her story



We helped Pamela receive her health insurance card which means she can keep receiving chemotherapy for free.

In our newsletter of Summer 2019 we shared the story of Pamela. A mum of two girls, Pamela was unable to afford treatment for advanced breast cancer. With no access to palliative care she lived with untreated wounds and only paracetamol for her pain. Thanks to donations to our appeal, Busia Hospice was able to provide her with home-based care. Pamela was able to resume chemotherapy treatment and her daughters were able to return to school.

Today, Busia Hospice nurse Peris tells us that Pamela is 'strong and still fighting'. Her breast cancer is causing painful wounds and has spread, but hospice nurses visit her regularly to treat her and provide her with morphine to keep her free from pain. We have helped her pay to enrol on the government health insurance programme which will ensure she continues to receive palliative chemotherapy for another year.

News from HCK

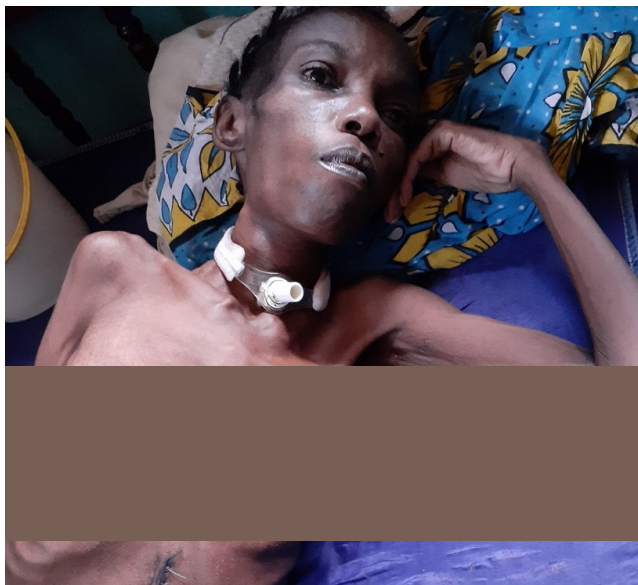


Congratulations to Liz Salmon, former HCK Chairwoman and long-term supporter, on her 90th birthday this year. A huge thank you from HCK to Liz for her birthday fundraiser, which was set up on her behalf and very generously supported by Liz's many friends, raising over £2,500.

Photo left: Liz taking part in a tree planting ceremony at Nyeri Hospice in 2015.

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With more of us shopping online this Christmas, don't forget you can use your purchases to donate to Hospice Care Kenya at no extra cost to you by shopping through Amazon Smile. Visit smile.amazon.co.uk and select us as your chosen charity. We will then receive a donation of 0.5% of every spend on eligible purchases.



Ann's Story

Ann is 35 years old and a mother of three children. She has oesophageal cancer. Ann's husband used to earn a living as a motorbike taxi driver, but providing full time care for Ann and the children meant he could no longer work. To pay for treatment they sold the few possessions they owned - TV, sofa and even kitchen utensils. Ann was able to undergo surgery to fit a gastronomy feeding tube, but the family received no training on how to care for or clean the tube and no follow up appointments. Eventually she was referred to Malindi Palliative Care unit where the nurses immediately paid her a visit at home.

Three months after Ann's surgery, palliative care nurse Alice found that the surgical stitches had still not been removed. Ann was very unwell and had no pain relief. Alice removed the stitches and showed Ann's husband how to clean the gastronomy tube. She also provided Ann with medicines and morphine for the pain.

Malindi palliative care nurses will now provide regular care for Ann, making sure she is comfortable and that her husband and family are supported. Ann's husband said that their biggest worry is how they will pay their rent as they depend completely on small donations from people in their community. With regular home visits from the palliative care unit, for free, Ann's husband is grateful for the help and for lifting the burden of the cost of her care. He even thinks he may be able to work a few hours each week to support his family.

Like Ann, many patients are too sick or too poor to travel to a hospice, and many now fear the risk of contracting Covid-19. It costs just £50 to provide regular home visits and medicines to a patient over 3 months. Please help us improve the lives of those in need with compassionate home-based palliative care.

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