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Edgerton Hospital and the Hope Institute of Uganda Make Holiday Wishes Come True

(EDGERTON, WI) – As Wisconsin residents, we may take for granted that great health care is at our finger tips. New hospitals have opened in Edgerton and Janesville, new clinics and emergency centers are under construction; not to mention the wonderful health care facilities just 30 miles up the Interstate to Madison. When we're in need of care, the best doctors are standing by, with state-of-the-art medical equipment and the latest advances in medicine to ensure that our minds, bodies and spirits are the best they can be.

Now, imagine that your only option for health care is a local hospital that serves a community of 400,000. At first glance this doesn't sound like such a bad option. But, when you realize that this hospital is only staffed by four doctors and 30 nurses, and barely has the resources to feed its patients, let alone provide the pain medication needed after surgeries, this surely will not sound like a place where you would want to go to get well. This is what the people of Buluba, Uganda deal with on a daily basis.

Enter Edgerton Hospital and Janesville's Hope Institute of Uganda. Earlier this year, Edgerton Hospital prepared to move to its new facility and knew that plenty of items would be left behind. At the new hospital, staff members would all be receiving new desks and telephones, radiology purchased a new digital mammography machine, all of the new patient rooms would be equipped with new privacy curtains, surgery suites have new lighting, all of the sinks, cabinets and minor pieces of equipment that make up a hospital are new, and the list goes on. And, as the new hospital opened, there was never a doubt that everything left behind would be going to good use. As a Hope Institute of Uganda board member, Edgerton Hospital CEO Jim Pernau knew exactly how to make one holiday wish come true.

"Making a donation to the Hope Institute of Uganda to benefit the St. Francis Hospital in Buluba is something that I, and my team, am extremely proud of. These people are in need of so much, and the magnitude of this donation will be life changing, and life saving for some. Things that we take for granted, like being able to wash our hands with

warm running water or having bright lights to see during surgery, is something that they've never been able to experience, and now they will," said Pernau.

In mid-November, an OB GYN physician from Uganda, Sr. Dr. Elizabeth Nionzima, toured Edgerton Hospital with Pernau and the Hope Institute of Uganda's Executive Director Laurie McCutchan, to survey the donated material. All items will be inspected and documented, then sent on three containers to Uganda, which could take six to eight weeks. The following materials are expected to arrive shortly after the holidays:

- Diagnostic eye machine (St. Francis Hospital just opened a new eye center and is looking forward to receiving this piece of equipment)
- Fixed unit for radiology
- Lighting fixtures for surgery and patient exam rooms (St. Francis Hospital currently uses regular ceiling lights)
- Stainless steel sinks and other sinks
- Exam tables
- IV Poles
- Hospital beds
- Privacy curtains
- Computers
- Telephones
- Baby cribs
- Desks and chairs
- File cabinets
- Copiers, printers, towel racks and many other useful supplies

"Edgerton Hospital's donation is the largest that the Hope Institute of Uganda has ever seen. Through my travels to Buluba, I know the struggles that go on in this hospital every day. Edgerton Hospital has just brightened a lot of lives, and I guarantee that when the semi truck pulls up and unloads, there will be tears of joy, relief and thankfulness. When you have nothing, even the smallest of gestures is a blessing. Edgerton Hospital has done the right thing and definitely made many wishes come true in Uganda," said McCutchan.

To learn how Edgerton Hospital's donation will directly affect the St. Francis Hospital, visit www.hopeinstituteuganda.org. The Hope Institute is continuously seeking donations, especially bed linens and disposables. If you are interested in making a donation, please contact Laurie McCutchan at 608-290-0064 or hopeinuganda@gmail.com.

SIDE BAR:

Buluba Hospital History

Edgerton Hospital's donation will go to the St. Francis Hospital, Buluba Hospital. St. Francis Hospital is a medical facility belonging to the Catholic diocese of Jinja. It's a rural hospital in the Eastern part of the country.

St. Francis Hospital was started in 1934 by Mother Kevin of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters for Africa as a center to care for Leprosy patients. Later on, the Franciscan missionary sisters handed over ownership of the hospital to the Jinja diocese which delegated the managing functions to the Little Sisters of St. Francis, a religious organization. Over the years the hospital gained expertise with national and international recognition as a specialized center for Leprosy and Tuberculosis treatment. They also have developed one of the countries few prosthetic units.

Population Served:

The hospital is the only general hospital in Mayuge district. Its immediate area is in Bunya West with a population of 133,350. The district population is almost 400,000. Nevertheless, many patients come from other neighboring districts for care in Buluba Hospital.

Challenges:

The hospital is situated in a rural country side where it serves heavily poor communities. Almost all of the people are unable to afford the care in the big cities. It receives over 35,000 outpatient attendances. These are many, but on the side of hospital equipment and supplies, the transition from specialized leprosy center to a general hospital meant an additional need of equipment and supplies, but the hospital was not in a financial position to meet the need.

About the Hope Institute of Uganda

Each year the Hope Institute sends a team of caring Doctors and nurses to Buluba to perform surgeries free of charge. These teams do this as a way to give back and have been deeply gratified in being able to make such a difference. They have learned as much as they have taught, and have formed friendships that will last a lifetime. In the beginning of 2012, Dr. Bud Squires of Janesville and Judy Schmidt of Edgerton will be leading a team to carry out this year's surgical camp. In order to fund the projects of Hope Institute of Uganda, the non-profit has a Fair Trade shop in Janesville that sells handcrafted items made in Uganda. These items are all made from recycled or sustainable materials and the artisans are then able to afford food and education for their families. The Jinja Jewelry Fair Trade shop will be at a new location on the corner of Milton Ave and Mt Zion very soon.

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Edgerton Hospital is a Critical Access Hospital. The hospital serves the communities of Edgerton, Milton and surrounding communities. Founded in 1923, the facility offers inpatient, outpatient, surgical, diagnostic, emergency, urgent care and rehabilitation services. It is an affiliate of SSM Health Care of Wisconsin/St. Mary's Hospital. For additional information about Edgerton Hospital, please visit www.edgertonhospital.com.