



Spring 2013

# TENWEK TODAY

*A publication by Friends of Tenwek*

## Tenwek Honors First Graduates of General Surgery Training Program

*By Carol Spears, MD*

Tenwek Hospital honored the first two graduates of its General Surgery Training Program at an inspiring ceremony held at the hospital on January 4, 2013. Dr. Agneta Odera and Dr. Arega Fekadu Leta were recognized as the inaugural graduates of the residency program, which is sponsored in collaboration with the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) and The College of Surgeons in East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA).

The graduation ceremony began with members of the Hospital administration, board, faculty, graduates, and current surgery residents walking in a procession from the surgery building, down the hill, and into the meeting room. As the procession entered the room, Dr. Agneta and Dr. Arega lit a torch there that burned throughout the ceremony.

John Wright, who was serving as Tenwek's interim CEO in January 2008 when the General Surgery Training Program was founded, had returned for this event. He recounted the history of the program, recalling the scripture in Psalm 127:1 that had been claimed as the residency was started: *Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.*

Led by Dr. Russ White, the surgery residents and a few friends presented a special musical number for the audience, *Ma Yi Bu Ye, O Afrika*. The song was sung in a tribal South African language and accompanied by African drums played by Dr. Agneta. The words are literally translated, "Return to me, O Africa," and were especially poignant since Dr. Arega was leaving Tenwek the next day to return to his home in Ethiopia and begin work at Gimbe hospital, while Dr. Agneta will soon be going to South Africa for a two-year Pediatric Surgery fellowship.

Dr. Agneta and Dr. Arega told their personal stories and thanked Tenwek, PAACS, and their teachers – both the long-term consultants and the many visiting staff who have poured into their lives by coming to Tenwek and being a part of their training. Prayer and a "passing of the torch" ceremony followed, where the two graduates charged those remaining in the program to maintain standards of excellence and Christ-like ideals in caring for patients.



The assembly was asked to stand reverently and quietly as Dr. Arega and Dr. Agneta led the recessional. They slowly walked out of the meeting room carrying torches with flags of Ethiopia, South Africa, and Kenya – indicating the bright lights they will be as they take their skills and God's word with them wherever they serve Him in the future.

Applause rang out in the silence – for the graduates, for all that God has done, and for the joy that was felt in celebrating the completion of something good and the continuation of all that is to come. The ten Tenwek Surgery residents in their white coats followed, carrying candles with flames lit to indicate the bright light and hope that will continue to shine at Tenwek. As all the faculty and administrators fell in behind, smiles were abounding and it seemed likely that God was smiling too. He has done the building --- and it is good!

God's handiwork was clearly evident in this special and celebratory day. We were able to clearly give Him the glory and our gratitude and praise for all He has done. We all felt humbled and euphoric to see the culmination of years of hard work celebrated in two such incredibly special young surgeons. Perhaps it is just the beginning of sending surgeons out into Africa, not only to provide excellent surgical care, but to be missionaries for the gospel of Christ.

*Carol Spears MD, FACS, MBA is the General Surgeon and Director of Surgical Education at Tenwek Hospital.*

# FOT News and Notes

## Friends of Tenwek Contributes to Water and Health Information Systems Funding



### HMIS Makeover

Friends of Tenwek has contributed \$25,000 as a first step to help raise \$466,000 for the comprehensive upgrade to Tenwek's outdated and inadequate hospital management information system (HMIS).

Dr. John R. Spriegel, acting medical superintendent of Tenwek Hospital, describes the need: "People used to visit Tenwek to see the system designed by a former Tenwek missionary and his staff, which kept our cashiers honest and our patient accounts orderly. But as our equipment and software aged, the hospital became busier and more sophisticated. The aged software made us unable to replace our archaic equipment, and Tenwek became in need of a radical makeover. After nearly a year of evaluation, review, and discussion, Tenwek has found a way forward.

"For many, improved financial decision making was a driving force in jumping into a hospital management information system (HMIS). And our first implementation step, scheduled for mid-April, is to switch from Excel spreadsheets to Microsoft Dynamics NAV ("Navision") as the accounting software of Tenwek Hospital. This corporate software will have the power and sophistication to move Tenwek one large leap ahead. New payroll and HR software will follow close behind.

"The crowning step of computer integration is the paperless electronic health record (EHR); Tenwek has selected Kranium software for their EHR. Training is underway, and implementation will begin with outpatient charting, laboratory, pharmacy and inventory. Once outpatient care is running smoothly on Kranium, inpatient care will follow. By June, our EHR should be fully operational.

"Patient care at Tenwek will experience a huge step forward once all personnel are fluent with the use of the system."

Would you help make this happen? While the FOT is waiting for its tax deductible 501C3 status, gifts can be sent to WGM, P.O. Box 948, Marion, IN 46952-0948. Checks should be made payable to WGM. Then "FOT HMIS Project" should be written on the memo line.

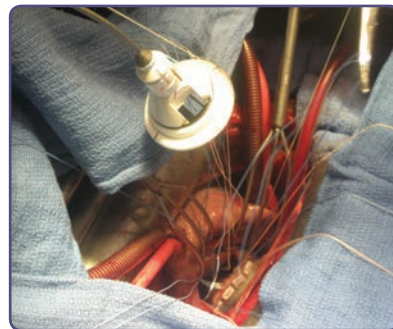
## All-Tenwek Team Completes First Open Heart Surgery

For years, Tenwek has benefited from the visits of Dr. John Galat and his heart surgery team from the Munroe Regional Medical Center in Ocala, Florida and the cardiac teams from Vanderbilt University in Tennessee and Brown University in Rhode Island. Open-heart surgery could only be performed six weeks out of every year when visiting teams came to Tenwek; even with that limitation, the hospital was performing about half of the pediatric cardiac surgeries in Kenya.



Dr. Galat hosted two of Tenwek's nurse-anesthetists in August 2012 to study and observe perfusion as part of his Ocala team. Returning to Kenya with Dr. Galat and his

team, they applied the skills they had learned. On September 12, for the first time in the 77-year history of the hospital, an all-Tenwek team performed open-heart surgery.



Read more at [www.friendsoftenwek.org](http://www.friendsoftenwek.org).

## Water Bore Hole Benefits Dispensary and Community

In a year-end appeal, FOT raised \$22,500 to drill a water bore hole for the Ngito Dispensary, one of Tenwek's satellite health centers. Tenwek has made a significant investment in this community facility, located about 42 kilometers from the hospital. Physicians, interns, and nurses treat some 20-25 patients daily at the dispensary.

With no accessible water supply in the area, water must be transported from a river some distance away and brings with it many risks for water-borne disease. A reliable and ample potable water supply is both critical to the health of area residents and essential to the successful operation of the dispensary. A well will meet dispensary needs with running water and also supply potable water to the entire community.

## Children's Homes Offer Hope

Chuck and Amy Bemm have a shared call to service in Kenya: Dr. Bemm, a pediatrician, as a full-time medical missionary at Tenwek Hospital and Amy in full-time service at three children's homes operated by Africa Gospel Churches in the surrounding area. The need to provide care to a generation of children whose families have been destroyed by AIDS is acute. When no loving adults are responsible for these orphans, they become victims of exploitation and forced labor.



When the Bemms arrived at Tenwek in 2004, the first children's home Amy visited was caring for 29 orphans; today over 150 children, ages 4-19 are cared for in the three homes. Yet the number of orphans who remain on their own is overwhelming. Many are virtually enslaved as "house servants," but are barely clothed, receive little to eat, earn below-subsistence wages, do not attend school, and have no hope for a better life.



The goal is to provide compassionate care in the name of Christ. Children are clothed, housed, fed, provided healthcare, and educated. But most of all, the homes provide the love, warmth, and security

to help them recover from the trauma they have often experienced. Each home needs approximately \$1,500 monthly to provide for the children's daily living: food, milk, firewood for cooking, and other necessities.

Though schooling is technically "free" in Kenya, students are required to purchase uniforms, textbooks, and supplies – an expense of approximately \$100 per child that the homes struggle to provide. Even more pressing is the need for funds to support children who want to attend high school and beyond. Over 100 high school students are currently sponsored by the ministry. However, only one student is being sponsored in a higher education program, due to the high cost. Each year, several qualified students are unable to pursue university study due to lack of funds.

Currently the FOT is waiting for IRS approval of its 501C3 tax deductible status. In the meantime, WGM will provide tax-deductible giving for this ministry. Simply go to the WGM website, "Donate," "Chuck & Amy Bemm," and "Tenwek Orphanage Ministry" to set up a one-time or monthly contribution.

## Featured Stories

### Share Your Story

*Keith Baldwin, M.D.*

I visited Tenwek as a medical student in 2004 and have wanted to come back ever since. I recently had a two-month elective during my Surgical Oncology fellowship and convinced them to allow me to use the time to serve at Tenwek! This was actually a time of urgent need and I served as a Consultant Surgeon, covering while Dr. White and Dr. Spears were away. I viewed this as God's providence for myself and for the needs of Tenwek.



Dr. Keith Baldwin

Tenwek has "modernized" far beyond my expectations. Now, when you arrive, you get a cell phone (3 cents a minute for calls to the US!), a password for the WIFI, access to a beautiful hospital library, access to a CT scanner, online radiology...it is amazing! Having all of this technology didn't change the number of unusual and advanced surgical problems that I saw, but it did allow me to feel that we were able to diagnose and treat these problems in a very modern way.

A lasting impression of Tenwek is praying before each and every surgery. I have a new appreciation for resource management in the operating room. I don't waste sutures or equipment the way I used to. Also, one of the surgeons there encouraged me to pray with every patient that I operate on, and I am starting to do that, even in New England!

One of my first days at Tenwek I saw a beautiful six-year-old girl sitting outside the operating theatre ready to have her leg amputated at the hip for what was felt to be a large sarcoma of her proximal thigh. As I asked her questions through the lens of a surgical oncologist, I started to feel that she perhaps had a benign tumor. I got involved and decided to do a limb sparing operation, dissecting the large tumor off of her femoral vessels and closing without a skin graft or any reconstruction. She walked out of the hospital three days later.

Two weeks later, her pathology came back as a benign intramuscular myxoma, and she was cured. I find great joy knowing that God's purpose for my visit to Tenwek was to help this little girl to be able to walk for the rest of her life. I was blessed to participate in many more wonderful things during my next two months at Tenwek, but even if nothing else happened during the rest of the trip, I would have been satisfied that seeing this girl walk was worth the 24-hour plane ride!

*Since sharing this story, Dr. Baldwin returned to Tenwek for another 4 week medical stay in March/April 2013.*

# Staying Connected

## Visit the Friends of Tenwek Website!

Friends of Tenwek has launched a new website:  
[www.friendsoftenwek.org](http://www.friendsoftenwek.org).

We're using the site to bring you the latest news from Tenwek Hospital, and keep you up-to-date on what the missionary doctors and their families, visiting physicians, and hospital staff are doing in support of Tenwek's unique medical and spiritual mission in Kenya.

The site includes links to the blogs maintained by Tenwek staff and also offers you the opportunity to share your own Tenwek story. We expect the site to grow into a vibrant online community of Tenwek "alumni" who want to remain in touch with the hospital and with their Tenwek colleagues. We invite you to visit the site at your earliest opportunity.

## How You Can Help!

As a valued member of Friends of Tenwek, we invite you to discover new opportunities for involvement with Tenwek Hospital. You can help in any of the following ways:

- **Pray** for the hospital's staff, operations, and specific needs we will bring to your attention.
- **Be an ambassador** for Tenwek to your church's mission and/or service board and leaders.
- **Encourage colleagues** to consider a volunteer service assignment at Tenwek.
- **Return to Tenwek** for a volunteer assignment in your area of medical expertise.
- **Make a financial gift** to meet critical needs at Tenwek Hospital.

## Share Your Story!

In our experience, every U.S. physician who serves a short-term medical mission at Tenwek Hospital has a deeply personal experience – as evidenced by Dr. Keith Baldwin's story in this issue (see page 3).

Your Tenwek experience is important to us – and to your colleagues. We will feature many of your stories in this newsletter and on our website – to inform and encourage others who share and value the Tenwek experience. Please visit the FOT website at [www.friendsoftenwek.org](http://www.friendsoftenwek.org) to learn how to share your story. **We want to hear from you!**

## Revisit Tenwek!

If you want to use your medical skills and specialty training to serve the people of Kenya, it's never too soon (or too late) to visit. Physicians from all specialty areas are needed and welcomed.



Short-term service trips to Tenwek Hospital for Christian physicians, dentists, and other medical professionals are arranged through World Medical Mission, a division of Samaritan's Purse. This international relief organization coordinates all details, including:

- Matching each professional's interests, abilities, and time frame
- Providing orientation and spiritual resources before and during the assignment
- Arranging international travel schedules and airline ticketing
- Assisting with necessary visas, permits, and other field requirements
- Coordinating field housing and transportation
- Assisting volunteers in handling financial details related to overseas service



For specific information about short-term assignments at Tenwek Hospital, please visit the World Medical Mission web page at [www.samaritanspurse.org/index.php/wmm/](http://www.samaritanspurse.org/index.php/wmm/)

### Tenwek Hospital Mission

*Tenwek Hospital is a Christian institution that seeks to exemplify Christ in all aspects of what we do. Our motto, We Treat – Jesus Heals, is Tenwek's guiding belief and the hope that we offer to each patient.*

Friends of Tenwek is committed to fostering communication among U.S. physicians who have served at Tenwek and know first-hand how vital the hospital's medical and spiritual mission is to the people of Kenya and beyond. As an independent 501c3 non-profit charitable organization, we will solicit tax-deductible donations in support of Tenwek's mission to treat patients in the name of Jesus and its unique "teaching-sending" ministry. Gifts will become tax deductible upon IRS approval of the FOT Inc as a 501c3.

