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SERVING TOGETHER

Official Newsletter of Mission:318



Serving Together: Working for Good

Dear Friends,

I write to you today with a renewed sense of urgency and purpose. As the landscape of global aid and domestic welfare programs shifts the vulnerable communities we serve—both here and abroad—have been left with immense uncertainty. The needs of these communities are now being left to individuals and organizations like ours to fill.

At times, filling this need can feel overwhelming. But as believers, we hold fast to the truth in Romans 8:28: ***“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”*** Even in the face of adversity, we trust that God is working, calling us to step forward in faith and action.

Mission:318 has always been about answering that call—to serve, to bring healing, and to restore hope to forgotten communities. Whether delivering life-saving care in Ghana, meeting urgent medical needs in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, or providing care to those in need in St. Louis, our work has never been more critical.

Recently, on an exploratory mission trip to Karanda Hospital in Zimbabwe, we felt the presence of God daily, but two moments stood out above the rest. On our first morning of service, Precious, a young nurse with radiant faith and an angelic voice, led her colleagues in singing “How Great Thou Art” in her local language, Shona. Her voice filled the room, radiating love and virtue as tears welled in our eyes. In that moment, we felt God’s presence so clearly, reminding us that goodness remains steadfast, no matter the struggles we face.

And then there was Sarudzai, a patient afflicted with a rupturing goiter. Before surgery her eyes reflected the love of God despite years with a disfiguring goiter and after the surgery, those same eyes shone with a new light, relief, and gratitude—a transformation that spoke of God’s presence in all that we do.

These moments remind us why we do this work. In every wound treated, in every prayer whispered, in every life touched—***God is working for good.*** This is our moment to stand in the gap, to embody love in action, and to ensure that no one is left without healthcare they so desperately need.

I ask you to stand with us. Pray for this mission. Give, if you feel called. Volunteer, if you are able. Through our collective efforts we can continue to bring His love and healing to the most vulnerable among us—both at home and around the world. Let us move forward with confidence, knowing that even in uncertainty, ***God is working for good.***

With gratitude and hope,

April

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OUR WORK AND GLOBAL HEALTH: IMPACT OF USAID CUTS

While Mission:318 does not receive any support from USAID, the suspension of USAID funding has significantly disrupted other global health programs in the countries Mission:318 serves - Ghana, Zimbabwe, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. This 90-day freeze has led to halted medical missions, layoffs of healthcare workers, and has severe impact on essential health services, including vaccination programs, and has harmful impacts on vulnerable populations.

USAID Contributions to Healthcare (FY2023 and FY2024)

Ghana: In FY2023, USAID obligated \$156 million to local partners, supporting various health initiatives, including vaccination programs, maternal health, and infectious disease prevention. ([USAID Ghana Report, 2023](#)).

Zimbabwe: USAID provided \$360 million, primarily for HIV/AIDS programs, highlighting the significant role of U.S. assistance in the country's healthcare system. ([USAID Zimbabwe Report, 2023](#)).

Haiti and the Dominican Republic: Since the beginning of FY2024 in October 2023, USAID has obligated \$368 million in contracts and grants for activities in Haiti. These funds support multiyear programs, with a significant portion allocated to humanitarian aid and health projects. The funding suspension has halted approximately \$330 million in outstanding commitments, severely impacting ongoing health services, including vaccination programs and HIV/AIDS treatment. Specific funding amounts for the Dominican Republic in FY2023 or FY2024 are not detailed in available sources. However, USAID has historically been a major contributor to vaccination programs, HIV/AIDS treatment, maternal and child health, and health system strengthening in the region. ([USAID Global Health Data, 2023](#)).

Impact on Healthcare in the Countries we Serve

Ghana: The suspension has disrupted anti-malaria campaigns, vaccine distribution, and other critical health services. The Ghana Health Service (GHS) reported that USAID's withdrawal has severely impacted the Global Procurement Supply Chain program, affecting essential medicines and vaccines in the Northern, North East, and Savannah regions. The halt has weakened procurement and supply chain management, leading to shortages of critical vaccines and treatments. ([Ghana Health Service Report, 2025](#))

Zimbabwe: USAID's \$360 million support for HIV/AIDS programs has been suspended, leading to the closure of clinics and the termination of services such as antiretroviral therapy (ART), tuberculosis screening, and HIV testing and counseling. Essential medical supplies, including tuberculosis and HIV drugs, are now stranded on ships and in warehouses, causing imminent shortages, especially in rural areas. Vaccination programs have also been affected, further straining the healthcare system. ([Reuters, 2025](#))

Haiti and the Dominican Republic: The funding freeze has halted HIV treatments, disrupted vaccination efforts, and exacerbated the country's already fragile healthcare system. With USAID playing a significant role in public health initiatives, its withdrawal has left many without access to necessary medical care. ([USAID Haiti Report, 2025](#)). While specific details are limited, the suspension of USAID funding has likely disrupted vaccination programs and the supply of essential medical commodities, especially in border areas where health disparities are already severe. ([Hispaniola Health Initiative, 2025](#))



OUR WORK AND GLOBAL HEALTH: IMPACT OF USAID CUTS



Christian Nonprofit Organizations' Reactions

Numerous Christian nonprofit organizations rely on government grants to deliver essential services worldwide.

World Relief: This evangelical organization, which partners with USAID to provide humanitarian aid, has faced significant financial challenges due to the funding freeze. In response, World Relief has mobilized its church networks and private donors, successfully raising \$4.5 million in two weeks to sustain its international aid programs and U.S. refugee resettlement efforts. ([Crosswalk, 2025](#))

Catholic Relief Services (CRS): As the top recipient of USAID funds, comprising about half of its \$1.5 billion budget, CRS has been compelled to initiate layoffs and shut down programs. The sudden funding gap has forced the organization to reduce its workforce and cease operations in several regions, severely impacting communities dependent on their services. ([AP News, 2025](#))

Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society: This organization has highlighted the dire consequences of the funding suspension, including the closure of field hospitals in regions like Syria and disruptions to educational programs in countries such as South Africa, Ghana, Mali, and Sudan. ([Lott Carey, 2025](#))

These organizations, among others, are actively seeking alternative funding sources, including increased appeals to private donors and church communities, to continue their critical work. The suspension has not only financial implications but also challenges the operational capacities of these nonprofits, potentially leading to long-term setbacks in global health and humanitarian efforts.

Mission:318 Impact and Conclusion

The abrupt withdrawal of USAID funding has placed immense pressure on healthcare systems around the world, jeopardizing the continuity of essential medical services provided by organizations like Mission:318. While day to day operations of Mission:318 will not be affected, the broad halt in foreign assistance, has already resulted in the loss of lifesaving medical humanitarian aid and harmful impacts on vulnerable populations. Our patient populations are at risk of becoming sicker and therefore more vulnerable. The suspension not only disrupts current health interventions but also undermines long-term health outcomes and the stability of healthcare infrastructures.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: STEVE WEST, MD - GATEWAY ENT

Dr. Steven West is a private practice, board-certified Otolaryngologist with Gateway ENT. Steve has been in practice for more than twenty years. He is trained in all areas of Adult and Pediatric Otolaryngology.

How and why did you get involved with Mission:318?

My first encounter with Mission:318 came about through my wife: Judy, who mentioned that there was this couple at our church (The Crossing) I should talk to as they were leading a surgical mission group. I've always had a passion for adventure and serving and had done surgical mission work in the past but was looking for a group that served not only the patient's physical needs but their spiritual ones as well. Shortly, afterwards, I met Jon and Patti Limpert and the next thing I know, I'm on a mission trip in Uganda.

How many years have you been volunteering with Mission:318? Where have you traveled with Mission:318?

I'm going to say 5 but it could be 6. I've been fortunate enough to have served in Uganda, Ghana, and Zimbabwe with Mission:318.

What do you find most rewarding about working with Mission:318?

At the end of every trip, I always feel that I've received more than I've given. There are numerous rewards that I have received from working with Mission:318. First, I get to use my medical skills to serve the underserved. I feel that God calls us to use what gifts he gives us to serve him and this is my way of doing so. Second, there is a relationship that forms with every community in which we serve. From the other health care workers, hospital staff, and patients, there is an opportunity to see things from other perspectives. We experience different food, cultures, and norms and that just serves to remind me that we serve a big God who loves each of us the same. Finally, and in some ways most importantly for me, I've been able to work alongside some truly remarkable people in Mission:318 and grateful for them and their friendship.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: STEVE WEST MD



How would you explain the working in Yendi, Ghana and/or Zimbabwe to someone who has never been?

For those who have never served in Yendi or overseas, I always tell them to be prepared to be stretched. The hospital will not be what they think a hospital should be. The equipment will not be everything they are accustomed to. Nothing will go according to the plan that has been laid out. At the end of the day, everything that had to happen will have happened, just not in the way you thought it would.

Is there a person/story that has made a special impact on you?

This is a tough question. On our last trip to Karanda Hospital in Zimbabwe, there was a 9 year girl that had been in the hospital for the past 4 days on IV antibiotics and was still spiking fevers and just looking sick. We examined her our first day there and thought she had an abscess behind her tonsil which can be devastating if not removed. For some reason, the hospital had the instruments to do a tonsillectomy although I don't believe anyone had ever done one there. The patient ends up doing well and seeing Mom the next morning with a smile on her face with a daughter who's now eating and drinking was fulfilling. It shouldn't amaze me, but it still does that a girl shows up with something that needs a specialist to resolve at the only time that could have happened with a hospital that for some reason has the equipment to do the surgery. Only God can orchestrate these things.

*"...Let us not love with words or speech
but with actions and in truth."*

1 John 3:18

SERVING IN THE YENDI, GHANA

YENDI MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL



In mid-January, Mission:318 completed its 12th surgical mission trip to Yendi Municipal Hospital (YMH), continuing its commitment to providing life-changing surgical care to underserved communities in northern Ghana. The team of 12 dedicated members included two surgeons, three anesthesiologists/CRNAs, three RN/first assists, three support staff, and a spiritual leader who provided guidance and encouragement throughout the mission.

Community Connections

Once again, the mission was made possible through the efforts of longtime friends, Reverend Emmanuel Mustapha and Pastor Francis Owaku, whose support was invaluable in organizing cases and ensuring the efficiency of the surgical schedule. The team also had the opportunity to reconnect with Dr. Ayuba Abdulai over lunch, a meaningful moment that reinforced the deep relationships built through these trips. While many administrative changes have occurred at YMH, the hospital still has a pressing need for ongoing surgical support.

Surgical Impact

Over the course of just 3.5 days, the team successfully performed 55 surgeries, offering critical medical interventions to patients who otherwise lacked access to specialized care. Among the many cases, two stood out: a patient with an extensive “keloid necklace” requiring careful excision and reconstruction, and a particularly complicated thyroid case that challenged the team’s expertise and surgical precision.

Post-Mission Reflection & Historical Experience

To enrich the experience for those who had not previously visited, the team planned a post-mission excursion to Cape Coast, exploring the historic Cape Coast Slave Castle. This visit provided a sobering and reflective look into Ghana’s past, offering a deeper understanding of the country’s history and resilience. This mission team reaffirmed the critical need for continued surgical outreach in Yendi. The relationships built, lives changed, and surgical interventions provided all underscored the impact of Mission:318’s work to this underserved community.

SERVING IN MOUNT DARWIN, ZIMBABWE

KARANDA MISSION HOSPITAL

In late January 2025, a team of 11 dedicated medical professionals and support staff embarked on a life-changing surgical mission to Karanda Hospital, a rural healthcare facility near Mount Darwin, Zimbabwe. The mission was driven by a shared commitment to providing essential surgical care to underserved communities while exploring the potential for future medical collaborations in the region.

Over the course of just 2.5 days of surgery, they successfully completed 29 surgeries, including two C-sections and two deliveries. Among the complex and challenging cases the team encountered were a fungated thyroid tumor, an XP scalp tumor, a splenectomy, and a bilateral below-the-knee amputation (BKA). Each procedure underscored the critical need for skilled surgical interventions in rural Zimbabwe, where access to specialized care is severely limited.

A Spiritually and Professionally Enriching Experience

Beyond the medical impact, this mission was deeply spiritual. The team bonded over shared prayers, reflections, and moments of profound gratitude as they witnessed firsthand the resilience of the Zimbabwean people. The experience strengthened their sense of purpose and reinforced the importance of using their skills to serve others.

Exploring the Beauty of Zimbabwe

After days of intense surgical work, the team concluded their trip with an unforgettable journey through some of Zimbabwe's most breathtaking landscapes. The post-mission excursions, a visit to Victoria Falls—one of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World. The thundering falls, locally known as “Mosi-oa-Tunya” (The Smoke That Thunders), is one of Africa's most spectacular sights. The adventure continued with game drives, where the team witnessed Zimbabwe's diverse wildlife in their natural habitat. The beauty of the landscape and the thrill of seeing these magnificent creatures up close offered a moment of reflection on the richness of Zimbabwe, beyond its medical challenges.

Looking Ahead

This mission was more than just a trip—it was a powerful testament to the impact that compassionate, skilled healthcare can have in underserved regions. While there are logistical aspects to refine, there is a potential for collaboration with Karanda Hospital. The experience left the team inspired and eager to continue serving in future missions, bringing hope and healing to those who need it most.



GLOBAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHT: RARE GENETIC DISEASE -XERODERMA PIGMENTOSUM

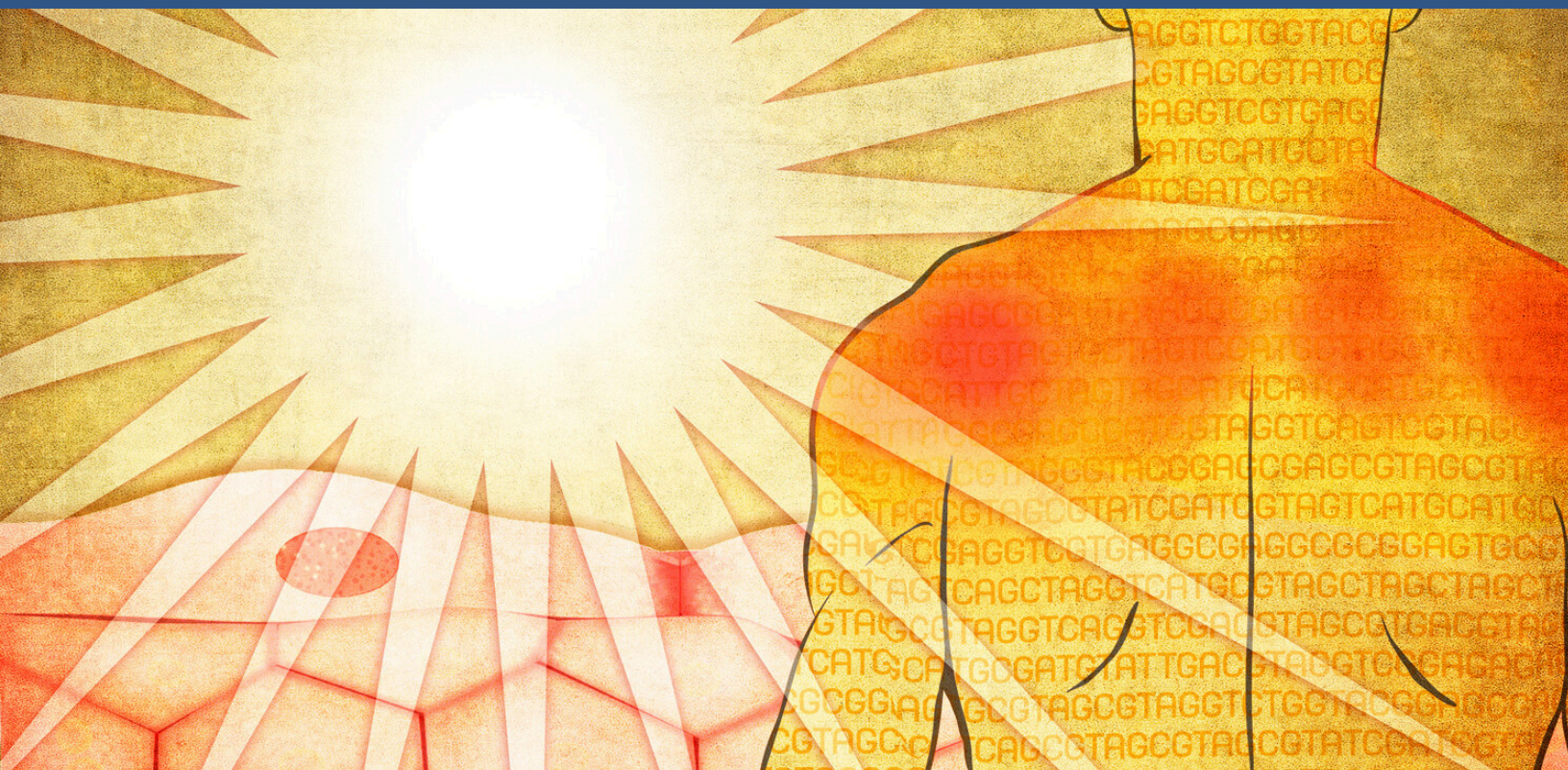


Image from storymd.com. <https://storymd.com/journal/vm9d8zrcgj-xeroderma-pigmentosum>

Xeroderma Pigmentosum: Junior's Fight Against the Sun

Xeroderma Pigmentosum (XP) is a rare genetic disorder that leaves those affected extremely sensitive to ultraviolet (UV) light. This condition impairs the body's ability to repair DNA damage caused by sun exposure, leading to a dramatically increased risk of skin cancer, severe sunburns, and progressive disfigurement. Without proper protection from sunlight, individuals with XP often develop extensive skin damage and malignancies at a young age.

A Journey to Healing in Zimbabwe

During our recent medical mission to Karanda Hospital in Zimbabwe, we met a resilient 3-year-old boy named Junior. He had already endured significant challenges due to his condition. His delicate skin was pockmarked from previous sun exposure, and he had undergone surgery to remove a large lesion. But the most pressing concern was a golf ball-sized open sarcoma at the top of his head—an aggressive tumor that had developed as a result of his unprotected exposure to the sun.

Drs. Leibold and Cassat, our skilled surgeons, faced a daunting challenge. Removing the sarcoma was only the first step; closing the wound on Junior's fragile scalp was another matter entirely. The procedure required precision and expertise, as there was minimal skin available to cover the exposed area. Beneath the lesion, only a thin layer separated his brain from the external environment, making every incision a delicate balancing act.

For four intense hours, our team worked tirelessly. The sarcoma was excised with great care, minimizing trauma while ensuring that all affected tissue was removed. However, due to the extent of the damage and the limitations of the available skin, the closure was not complete. A small 4mm section remained open—a gap that, with time and proper care, would heal naturally.

GLOBAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHT: RARE GENETIC DISEASE -XERODERMA PIGMENTOSUM

Living with XP

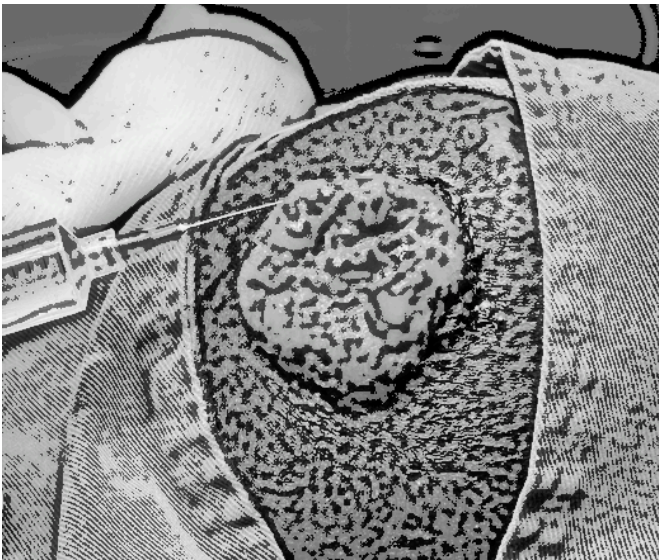
For children like Junior, managing XP is a lifelong battle. The key to survival is avoiding UV exposure—requiring protective clothing, specialized sunscreen, and, in many cases, living a nocturnal lifestyle to minimize sun exposure. Without these precautions, the risk of developing additional malignancies remains high.

Currently, there is no cure for XP, but treatment focuses on early detection of skin cancers, prompt removal of lesions, and constant sun protection. In developed countries, children with XP benefit from regular dermatological surveillance, but in regions like Zimbabwe, access to these resources is limited. Our mission to Karanda was a reminder of how critical it is to bring life-saving interventions to communities where specialized care is scarce.

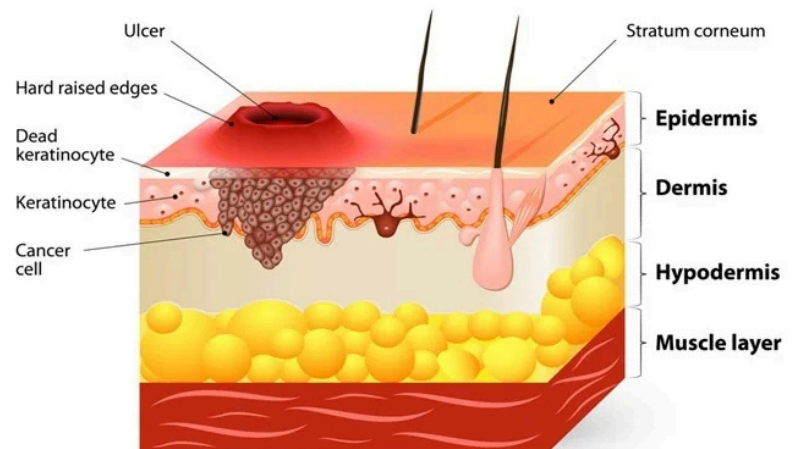
Hope Beyond the Horizon

Junior's journey is far from over, but his surgery was a crucial step in his fight against XP. Thanks to the dedication of our team and the incredible resilience of this young boy, his future is a little brighter.

Every act of care—every surgery and every moment spent educating families on the importance of UV protection—makes a difference. As we left Karanda, we carried Junior's story with us, a reminder of why we do what we do: to bring hope where it is needed most.



Squamous-cell carcinoma



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MISSION:318

UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

MARCH 13, 2025 - MISSION:318 GIVING DAY

<https://gofund.me/7f2f6fae>

**Medical Mission - Aleman, Dominican Republic
May 4-9th, 2025**

**Commissioning of Maternal Child Clinic - Sefwi Bekwai, Ghana
Late Spring 2025**

**Operating Room Consult - Cap Haitien, Haiti
Early Summer 2025**

**Medical Mission - Aleman, Dominican Republic
September 7-12, 2025**

**Exploratory Surgical Mission - East Africa
Fall 2025**

**Surgical Mission - Yendi, Ghana
January 2025**

Inquire online at mission318.com