



The PAACS Bulletin

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OUR MISSION

PAACS' mission is to glorify God by training and discipling African surgeons and related specialists to become Christ-like leaders and servants providing excellent and compassionate care to those most in need.

OUR VISION

PAACS envisions a growing number of African surgeons and related specialists living out the Gospel and ministering to the sick.

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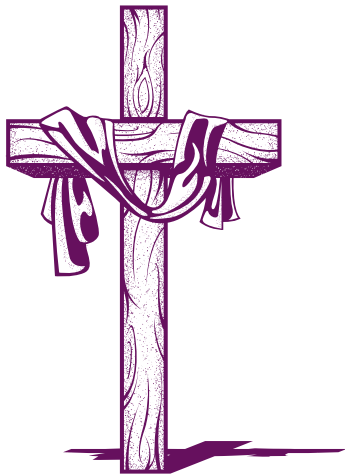
FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO



Susan Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer

Dear PAACS Family,

As Easter approaches, my thoughts have been focused on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. His ultimate sacrifice and triumphant resurrection not only provide us with hope but also embody the promise of new beginnings that His love offers to each of us.



Recently, I was blessed to attend the PAACS Junior Boot Camp Conference at the Brackenhurst Conference Centre in Kenya. We welcomed our largest group yet, with 41 eager trainees. It was meaningful for me to share the history and impact of the ministry they have now joined. Each day was a fresh start, blending spiritual growth with clinical learning—from morning Bible studies and worship to engaging lectures and hands-on sessions. It is always a joy to see the enthusiasm and dedication of our future leaders as they start their journeys with PAACS.

Our Global Day of Fasting and Prayer on March 10th was a significant event where over 50 participants gathered across two

sessions. This day served as a vital opportunity for our community to come together in prayer and thanksgiving, seeking God's guidance for all aspects of our mission. It highlighted our commitment to remain grounded in faith and prayer as we move forward.

Next month, our Board of Directors will gather in Chicago. This meeting will focus on ministry updates, board training, financial reviews, development of policies, and our forward-looking plans for PAACS. We will start intensely working on the development of our new 5-year strategic plan (2026-2031), which is set to guide our growth and sharpen our focus on the mission of PAACS. In addition, we are preparing for two fundraisers in April, taking place in Minnesota and Wisconsin. These types of events are essential for supporting and advancing our efforts and ensuring the continued success of our programs.

This Easter, let us fully embrace the spirit of renewal. Just as Christ was resurrected to a new life, so too are we committed to breathing new life into healthcare across Africa and spreading the hope found in Jesus. By training and discipling our residents, we empower them to become leaders who provide skilled and compassionate care. Your continued prayers and support make this possible and help to create new beginnings where they are most needed in Africa.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Susan A. Koshy".

Susan A. Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer

PAACS 11TH ANNUAL JUNIOR BOOT CAMP



**Keir Thelander, MD, FACS, FWACS, FCS (ECSA)
Executive Vice President**



Dr. Jack Barasa (PAACS Kijabe first graduate) who trained Dr. Beryl Akinyi, to Dr. Joseph Nderitu, who is now training the current trainees. So often we seek to rapidly entrust responsibilities to a younger generation expecting success, yet it seems the Lord's prescription requires four generations for sustainability.

Throughout the two weeks around 35 different PAACS' faculty members gathered to share their challenges, struggles, and to testify to God's provision and faithfulness. Hearts were laid bare as Program Directors expressed sadness over the disappointments of the previous year and rejoiced together over the growth of trainees who are now graduates spread across Africa. Faculty Development training also covered topics of program growth, the struggling trainee, research training, and much more. PAACS admin and presenters likely learned just as much as the faculty during the times of discussion and problem solving. Personally, these times remind me that these faculty members are my heroes in this world.

A growing family gathered at Brackenhurst Retreat and Conference Centre in Limuru, Kenya, from February 23-March 6, 2025, for two weeks of intense clinical learning and spiritual growth. Forty first-year trainees, the largest group ever, with one second year trainee attended to learn Point of Care Ultrasound (POCUS) leading to a recognized certificate, Advanced Trauma Care, Oncology, Urology, Pediatric Surgery, Introduction to Research, Endoscopy, and Anesthesiology. The trainees also rotated through over 15 hours of robust technical skills workshops in Orthopaedics, Basic Surgical Skills, and Subspecialty Skills. More than these skills, all enjoyed and experienced challenging morning worship in the Word with Pastor Ed speaking from the book of Colossians, "Jesus Christ Our All in All", complemented by a robust worship team of over 10 trainees and faculty led by PAACS Grad and Tenwek GS Program Director, Dr. Akinniyi Fadipe. A highlight of the week occurred around a "camp" fire during the annual barbecue on Friday evening, with people singing worship songs and dancing; fun was had by all. Each evening included presentations from the different PAACS training sites....all 16!! For the first time, a PAACS site, Kijabe Hospital, is living 2 Timothy 2:2 completely, with four generations of surgeons training from



PAACS 11TH ANNUAL JUNIOR BOOT CAMP

Then about 25 spouses also gathered to study the Word together, led by Suzanne Sutherland, where quite a few tears were shed while sharing and hearing about each other's challenges and triumphs. Not to mention the approximately 40 children who also gathered under the name, PAACS Kids, coined by a PAACS Kid in 2023. The kids' mornings were filled with sharing, fun, and hearing from older missionary kids about their experiences from decades ago, all were blessed. The younger kids even organized their own time of sharing when they didn't have an adult MK to share with them!! A huge shout out to the PAACS Kids leadership team headed by Joanna Thelander. One can only imagine how the Lord will use these young ones as they take over the reins of spiritual leadership in the coming decades.

All sensed a higher call the evening Dr. Tim Love, Jacques Bake's former Program Director, shared about the faithfulness and perseverance of Dr. Jacques Bake and his wife, Olga, whose commitment to HEAL Africa and the Lord compelled them to stay in Goma to treat the victims of the M23 invasion. In Olga's words, "we abandon ourselves to Jesus." Jacques and Olga are living examples of trust in God through adversity and risk. May we all daily abandon ourselves to Jesus. Please continue to pray for the crisis in eastern DRC.



On the last Wednesday evening the trainees encircled the faculty to lift us up in prayer and thank the Lord for our dedication and care for them. This time demonstrated a move of the Spirit through these 41 trainees. One cannot imagine how they may impact Africa for decades to come. We concluded with our usual habit of a communion service celebrating the death of our Lord until He comes again. Thank you to so many of your generous gifts which provide for such valuable and foundational events. Huge shout out to Dr. Drew Huang and Rachel Huth who were the workhorses in planning, organizing, and shepherding this conference. Please faithfully pray for the whole PAACS family.

GROWTH AND CONNECTIONS: ONE RESIDENT'S EXPERIENCE AT JR. BOOT CAMP

“Earlier this month, I completed an incredible training experience in Kenya as a first-year surgical resident with the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons.

It was an intense training program filled with hands-on learning, new challenges, and countless growth opportunities. I gained invaluable surgical skills, deepened my understanding of patient care, and received mentorship from some truly inspiring surgeons.

Beyond the skills acquired, I've made amazing friendships with colleagues who share the same passion for serving through medicine and surgery in particular. The support and camaraderie have made this journey even more rewarding.

I'm truly grateful to PAACS for this opportunity, to learn, to serve, and to be part of something bigger than myself.

Excited for what lies ahead in this journey...”

John Paul Efuatlath, MD
First-Year General Surgery Resident
Mbingo Baptist Hospital



SPIRITUAL DEAN REPORT



Ed Scarse, DMin, ThM
PAACS Spiritual Dean

SALINE PROCESS UPDATE



Program Director at Malamulo Adventist Hospital, Dr. Brent Sherwin, recently shared:

"We had the privilege at Malamulo Hospital of completing the Saline Process training with two cohorts of 25 people each from our hospital from January 20-22. The sessions were done by Dr. Rachel Nunn and Dr. Mark Topazian. Each cohort did training for 1.5 days. When I did my Saline Process training in February of 2024 at the Junior Conference one of the goals I had written in my workbook was to bring this training to our hospital. Because of PAACS vision for bringing Saline Process training to the PAACS hospitals this was made a reality with God's guidance. It was incredible to see our surgical team and people from a variety of departments at our hospital interact together learning how to share Jesus with our patients. We got very positive feedback from the participants and we are planning a follow up session with the cohorts in March. Thank you again to PAACS for promoting this training at our hospitals."

FRANCOPHONE BOOK DISTRIBUTION

PAACS has the privilege of once again partnering with Synergie Francophone, an organization that specializes in providing theological books to French speaking spiritual leaders in Africa. At the recent Junior Boot Camp for first-year residents, PAACS Spiritual Dean, Dr. Ed Scarse presented a set of four excellent books to eleven PAACS residents whose heart-language is French. They were extremely excited and appreciative to receive this special gift. Many thanks to Synergie Francophone for partnering with PAACS.



LITEIN'S INAUGURAL CLASS GRADUATES

Sandra Chao-Blasto
Administrative Assistant
AIC Litein Hospital

Saturday, February 22, 2025, marked a great milestone for the surgical residency program at Litein as the pioneer class graduated. Dr. Wycklife Ooko and Dr. Ruth Talaam celebrated their graduation with fellow residents, program faculty, Dr. Keir Thelander and Pastor Ed Searce, hospital board of management, hospital leadership and staff as well as their families.



In attendance were Dr. Russ White and Dr. Carol Spears from the Tenwek Cardiothoracic Centre and Dr. Akinniyi Fadipe and Dr. Mercy Mitei, from the General Surgery program at Tenwek Hospital.

“God is calling us to commit our life to God and for God. Pride and desire for prestige, money and positions of power, might block our love for God. We must resist the temptation to look to ourselves for our own abilities and especially you Cliff and Ruth. We need to commit to loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind,” Pastor Ed said in his address.

“It has been a long journey and we thank God for its completion. Each of our three faculty brought on unique perspectives into our training ensuring that we were not only surgically equipped but also spiritually fed and for that we are grateful,” said Dr. Talaam.

Dr. Ooko noted that within the five years there were moments of tears and feeling like literally giving up but he took time to encourage the program’s five residents, “My fellow residents, I can confirm to you that you are in safe hands. Keep on pressing on. Push through even in the tough times and trust in God,” he said.

The two graduates joined the surgical residency in 2020 having previously served as medical officer interns at Litein Hospital. They joined the hospital’s surgical department under the tutelage of Dr. Philip Blasto, Dr. John Kanyi and Dr. Valentine Mbithi who became not just their faculty but also their mentors.

Dr. Thelander urged the residents to be Christ-like in their service as they go out to become PAACS surgeons. “You have come a long way, you have accomplished a lot and you have become future teachers. Each time you take off your outer clothes and put on the PAACS hat you are doing it to serve just as Jesus washed the feet of the disciples. You represent PAACS-true, you represent Litein also true but the hat is your reminder that you represent Jesus,” Dr. Thelander said.

“I am thankful that Dr. Wycklife and Dr. Talaam chose to start the program with us, because many of the applicants have always chosen Litein as a second option to either Tenwek or Kijabe. They believed that we could make it happen by God’s grace. We are especially grateful to PAACS for all that you have done for us and all that you continue to do. For not only helping us to start a program but to be a part of the program. For guidance, prayers and encouragement for we have come a long way,” Dr. Blasto said during the ceremony.

OFFICIALLY PAACS GRANDPARENTS!

Sandra Chao-Blasto
Administrative Assistant
AIC Litein Hospital

Six years ago, Dr. Philip Blasto and Dr. John Kanyi began what seemed to be an audacious plan, to start their own surgical residency program at AIC Litein Hospital. They did not know exactly what they were getting themselves into but they knew that the PAACS training and love they received in the care of incredible mentors including Dr. Russ White, Dr. Carol Spears, Dr. Robert Parker and Dr. Andrea Parker during their own surgical residency program at Tenwek Hospital years before.

It was something they wanted, to pay forward the surgical training they had freely been given to the next generation of surgeons and hopefully the next group of trainers. So, it was a no brainer for them to bring in Dr. Valentine Mbithi as a third surgeon for Litein Hospital and a member of the program's faculty in 2019 and officially beginning the residency program in 2020.

"I am thankful to have maintained the relationship with my teachers many years later, Dr. White and Dr. Spears who have honored us by being here. Interestingly I have never seen or heard Dr. White raise his voice to anyone whenever you made a mistake he would just take a big breath in and you knew you had sinned. I am grateful to Dr. Spears who not only taught but also opened up her home to many of us and became a mother." Dr. Blasto acknowledged during the resident's graduation in February.

Speaking after the graduation, Dr. Spears noted that the three faculty had indeed come full circle.

"They have indeed blossomed from their residency years and to see each of them with their unique personalities. It makes me so proud and happy because I know they are training well-rounded residents."



KIBUYE WHITE COAT CEREMONY



Ted John, MD
Program Director
Kibuye Hope Hospital

In February, Kibuye Hope Hospital had a White Coat Ceremony for its new first year residents, Leilla Muhimpundu and Fine Ineza. One special fun fact is that **Leilla and Fine will be the first female general surgeons in Burundi when they have completed their 5-year program.**



There was also a foot washing part of the ceremony, with faculty washing the feet of Leilla and Fine. This is modeled after Jesus, who humbled Himself and washed His disciples' feet as a way of loving and serving them.



PRAYER & PRAISE

- Pray for God's favor over all PAACS training programs, that they will glorify God and be used to impact Africa for His Kingdom.
- Pray for God's wisdom and guidance for the Board of Directors and Administrative Staff as they travel to the Board of Directors Meeting in April.
- Pray for blessings on all PAACS partnering organizations, supporters, and prayer warriors.

Each month, we pray for residents by name. Please join us this month by covering these residents in prayer:

- Baptist Augustino Matonya
- Dickla Jackson Mollé
- Frida Kokushubira Fidelis
- Peter Ally Kayange
- Ernest Damas Babu
- Lilian Emmanuel Tarimo
- Benedicto Mwang'onda
- Joshua Mbelwa
- John Minja
- Loveness Kimaro



ARTICLES ON SURGERY, OB/GYN, AND ANESTHESIA

Compiled by Margaret Tarpley

- [The impostor phenomenon among surgeons and surgeons in training: a scoping review](#)
- [JAMA Surgery—The Year in Review 2024](#)
- [Omitting Sentinel-Node Biopsy in Small Breast Cancers](#)
- [The impact of sleeve gastrectomy on pulmonary function tests and physical activity one-year after surgery](#)
- [Axillary lymph node metastasis in breast cancer: from historical axillary surgery to updated advances in the preoperative diagnosis and axillary management](#)
- [Comparative Analysis of Traumatic Brain Injury Severity in Motorcycle and Car Accident Victims Treated at Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital](#)
- [Acute Kidney Injury: Magnitude and Predictors of Maternal Outcomes among Pre-Eclamptic and Eclamptic Women in Mwanza, Tanzania](#)
- [Navigating the challenges of surgical research in low-and-middle income settings](#)
- [Effect of flipped classroom to anesthesia crisis management simulation education: a quasi-experimental study](#)
- [Nutritional Considerations for ICU Patients. Part I: When, What, and How to Feed](#)

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