



The PAACS Bulletin

Monthly Newsletter • Issue 238 • May 2024



White Coat Ceremony for Dr. Trymore Sithole at Malamulo.



PAACS Soccer Match at Bongolo.



Dr. Ken Muma at APISA's Annual Meeting.

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PAACS

PAN-AFRICAN ACADEMY
OF CHRISTIAN SURGEONS

PAACS 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.

PAACS VISION

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

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO



*Susan Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer*

Dear PAACS Family,

As another fiscal year is coming to an end on June 30, 2024, our hearts are filled with gratitude for God's unwavering guidance and provision. Each step of the way, from supporting our programs and residents to managing our finances, we've seen His providence in action, affirming our commitment to follow His lead.

May marks the final application deadline for our incoming class which will begin in January 2025. We are both thrilled and humbled to have received 429 applications for approximately 50 available seats. This underscores the critical demand for our specialized training and discipleship, as we can only accommodate about 12% of the applicants. We are confident that God is guiding the right Christian physicians to our doors, and we eagerly anticipate the opportunity to select the most promising candidates for our training and discipleship programs. Please join us in prayer for the discernment and guidance of our interview and selection process, which will begin shortly.

On May 31 - June 1, our general surgery residents will sit for their annual PAACS exams. Then, on June 26th our anesthesiology residents will sit for their annual PAACS exams. We ask you to join us in prayer for these committed trainees as they reach this critical milestone in their training.

As we approach the close of our fiscal year on June 30th, we kindly invite you to support our efforts to meet this fiscal year's goals. The PAACS Board of Directors is scheduled to meet at the end of June to approve next year's budget, discuss potential expansions, and review other critical matters. Soon after, we will begin preparations for our external audit and start compiling our Annual Report. This report will showcase the significant impact your contributions have made on our residents, our programs, and the communities they serve.

Your unwavering support and prayers are the backbone of our mission and deeply appreciated. Let us move forward with renewed excitement and shared vision, as we continue to serve and grow in His name.

Blessings,

Susan A. Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer
Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS)

P.S. We are fast approaching the end of our fiscal year on June 30th. If you haven't contributed yet, please prayerfully consider supporting our mission. Your gift helps us provide essential training and discipleship to 172 residents, making a lasting difference across Africa. Thank you for your generosity and faith in our work.

GIVE TODAY



GREETINGS FROM THE LITEIN PROGRAM

Philip Blasto, MD

Program Director, AIC Litein Hospital

In 2024, we have many things that we are thankful for, both big and small, but the milestone of our first cohort of residents (Ruth and Wycklife) nearing successful completion comes first to mind.

It has been a long journey both for the faculty and the residents. It is exciting to see what the future holds for them. Successful residency training requires a lot of people and teams. We are thankful for all those who have contributed in any way, shape, or form, be it their time, skills, finances, prayers or even encouragement. With the surgical and spiritual growth of each resident, many patients have received physical as well as spiritual healing.

The last five or so years have brought with them ups and downs, mountain top and dark valley experiences, not only to the residents, but also the faculty. From approval to become a training site, admission of our first cohort of residents, passing of the first exams, growth in God's Word and in surgery, to becoming a program from a group of residents. The long days, tiring nights, and unexpected loss of patients are a constant reminder to lean not on our own understanding but to rely wholly on His grace and mercy.

At a personal level, we have seen the establishment of marriages, the welcoming of children, and shared in the bereavement of relatives. In all, we have seen God's guidance.



Litein Faculty with the first Cohort of residents (L-R) Dr. John Kanyi (Faculty), Dr. Ruth Taalam, Dr. Wycklife Ooko, and Dr. Philip Blasto (Faculty).



Litein residents (L-R) Dr. Peter Paul, Dr. Peter Ouma, Dr. Ruth Taalam, Dr. Wycklife Ooko, Dr. Nadine Ndechu and Dr. John Ngili.





LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY SITE VISITS TO GABON, CAMEROON, AND NIGER

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

On April 13th, immediately following the PAACS Conference and Board meetings, Dr. Mark Reeves (LLU representative to PAACS Board), Dr. John Tarpley (PAACS Academic Dean), Dr. Ryan Hayton (LLU accreditor and previous PAACS Program Director) and Dr. Keir Thelander (PAACS EVP) embarked on the final LLU site visits of this cycle.

After a long journey to Bongolo Hospital and a short stay, the team was pleased to see the program in a good place. A warm welcome by Drs. Zach and Jen O'Connor was followed by lunch and directly to the accreditation visit. The hospital has changed much since the previous visit in 2017 with additional buildings and addition soon of a 4th operating room. From Bongolo the team flew to Libreville and directly on to Yaoundé, Cameroon, where they were received by Dr. Laurie Elit (PAACS Faculty and Gynecologic Oncologist). It was great to see a friendly face in Cameroon.

Due to instability in the region the original planned Friday site visit was delayed to Saturday which allowed a visit to Nkwen Hospital in Bamenda where the team spent two nights. We appreciated the tour of Nkwen by Bongolo graduate Dr. Olivier Ndizeye, who is the sole general surgeon at this facility, as well as being Chief of Surgery. He is doing a yeoman's job. Saturday morning brought vehicles from Mbingo to Bamenda, signaling the road was open for traffic so the team set off. The joy on the faces of the team at Mbingo on our arrival was undeniable.

We were thankful to drop our belongings at the guesthouse and jump directly into the accreditation visit. Once again the hospital has essentially been transformed since the previous visit in 2017. In spite of the local conflict the team continues on with high quality training and delivery of surgical care. We were pleased to see another well-functioning program. After one night in Mbingo we moved on to Douala where Drs. Tarpley and Hayton flew directly to the USA and Drs. Reeves and Thelander took a flight Monday morning for Niamey, Niger. Though quite hot this time of year in Niger, the travel was very smooth.

We kept with the habit of arriving and going directly to the accreditation visit. Tuesday evening was a nice dinner with the whole PAACS Galmi team. Wednesday we completed the visit and were amazed at the ability of the team to run a program under such difficult circumstances, which added recent uncertainty governmentally to the baseline difficulties of surgical care in resource poor areas, on top of patients who come late with a myriad of problems.

After quite an epic journey given the circumstances in each of these countries, the team is thankful to have accomplished this safely, knowing that God was directing each step. We look forward to the next cycle which will begin in 1-2 years as we shift to a rolling visit of PAACS now 15 sites, rather than an every-5-year grouping. Much appreciation for LLU's partnership with PAACS and Dr. Reeves' personal unwavering dedication to these accreditation visits, which continue to propel each program to the next level. Blessings and appreciation to the Loma Linda University commitment to PAACS.



GLOBAL SURGERY LAB SYMPOSIUM - THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

*Jim Brown, MD
Former PAACS Program Director,
Mbingo Baptist Hospital*

Dr. Moses Kasumba, Mbingo PAACS graduate and previous PD of the PAACS program at Malamulo Adventist Hospital in Malawi, is currently a pediatric surgery fellow at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. His Program Director, Dr. Shahrzad Joharifard, was a surgical resident at Mbingo in 2015 alongside Moses during the fourth year of their residencies. They stayed in touch over the years and Dr. Joharifard invited Dr. Kasumba to complete a pediatric surgery fellowship at the university, where she is now on the faculty.

The University of British Columbia hosts an annual Global Surgery Lab Symposium. The title of the symposium this year was "Teaching Surgical Skills For Medical Deserts"- places where surgical access is limited. Dr. Joharifard invited Dr. Kasumba and I to give a joint presentation called "Training General Surgeons in Africa: Views From Two Generations of Program Directors."

Dr. Kasumba and I also participated in a panel discussion called "Perspectives on training surgeons in high-income and low-income environments." On May 1st, I also gave a presentation on training surgeons in Africa at the University of British Columbia's weekly Grand Rounds.

In all of these presentations, Dr. Kasumba and I shared the story of PAACS. At the Global Surgery symposium, Dr. Kasumba showed two PAACS videos, one from 2015 in West Africa and another more recent video from Malawi. Dr. Drew Huang, Associate Director of Education for PAACS, was also in attendance, asking many excellent questions from the audience and participating in discussions with the other participants.





CMDA NATIONAL CONVENTION

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

PAACS was pleased to have a booth at the CMDA National Convention in Asheville, NC. Nearly 1,000 attendees fully immersed themselves in activities of the CMDA event and the highly respected speakers. PAACS Executive Vice President, Keir Thelander, and his wife Joanna Thelander, a PAACS promoter, received approximately 100 people at the booth. They were privileged to engage in conversations with seasoned surgeons about short-term service. They also spoke to students and residents regarding possible long-term and short-term service. Some were introduced to PAACS for the first time, many had heard of PAACS, and some had even worked with PAACS in the past.

Additionally, the Thelanders joined Bill and Dorothy Ardill, long term missionaries in Nigeria, to share with interested med students, over dinner, about preparing to go long term. Overall, it was a wonderful time of fellowship and sharing with so many about how God continues to use PAACS for His glory throughout Africa. We are thankful for the ongoing partnership and collaboration with CMDA and look forward to future national conventions or many other CMDA events. If you are interested in having someone from PAACS participate or share at a CMDA event in your area, please don't hesitate to reach out to info@paacs.net.





PAACS PEDIATRIC SURGERY POST-GRADUATE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

John Tarpley, MD
Academic Dean

BethanyKids Kijabe, Mercy Ships, and PAACS were all represented at this year's annual meeting of APSA, the American Pediatric Surgical Association, in Phoenix. Pediatric surgery was the third discipline addressed by PAACS following general surgery and orthopaedic surgery. The 10th year anniversary of the BethanyKids pediatric surgery training program was celebrated in December 2016 in Kijabe, Kenya. Dr. Heuric Rakotomala of Madagascar was the first graduate in 2010.

Dr. Fred Rescorla of Riley Children's in Indianapolis, IN, was the visiting professor. Dr. Doug Barnhart of Primary Children's in Salt Lake City joined colleagues in Kijabe and covered the clinical service that week to enable the trainees to attend all the sessions. Dr. Dan Poenaru of the Montreal Children's Hospital McGill who helped launch the fellowship at Kijabe joined Dr. Erik Hansen and others for the week.

Half the population in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is under 15 years of age. There are few to no pediatric surgeons in many countries. Dr. Aiah Lebbie, (BethanyKids, 2013), is the only pediatric surgeon in Sierra Leone (population 9 million) in West Africa. Compare that to Tennessee which has a population of 7 million, of which 1.5 million children. Tennessee has 45 pediatric surgeons, giving them a ration of 1 pediatric surgeon for every 34,000 children. Kenya, for example, has a population of approximately 53 million and 25 million are children. They only have 25 pediatric surgeons in the country. That's a ratio of 1 pediatric surgeon for 1,000,000 children.

Attendees at this year's APSA meeting included Dr. Ken Muma of Kenya, (BethanyKids, 2014) and BethanyKids Program Director, Dr. George Ngock of Cameroon, (BethanyKids, 2017), Dr. Mehret Desalegn of Ethiopia, (BethanyKids, 2023), and Dr. Muse Freneh of Ethiopia, a PGY 5 at BethanyKids. Other PAACS related attendees included former Program Director Erik Hansen, prior short-term volunteers Sherif Emil of McGill in Montreal, and Alfred Chahine of Emory, and me. I went to "water friendships" and encourage folks to consider short-term and long-term service with PAACS in Africa. Dr. Mehret presented on "Standardization of Care in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Case for Hypospadias Surgery". Dr. Muse presented on "Addressing the Problem of Central-Line Associated Blood Stream Infections at a Rural Referral Hospital in a Low-Middle Income Country".

Ms. Rebekah Ledlie of BethanyKids administration in Toronto, Canada, and Dr. Ken Muma hosted a BethanyKids breakfast Friday morning which featured Drs. Ngock, Mehret, and Muse. Ms. Abby Nobili of Mercy Ships hosted a booth and a presentation by long-term colleague Dr. Sherif Emil who has not only trained PAACS BethanyKids trainees in Montreal, but also was the inaugural pediatric surgeon on Mercy Ships.

Dr. Muse received the Judah Folkman award for outstanding research presentation. Dr. Sherif Emil was awarded the Donald E. Meier Humanitarian Award. The late Don Meier was a long-term missionary general surgeon, then pediatric surgeon in Nigeria. He and his wife Patsy volunteered at multiple sites globally. See the Meier autobiography *Living the 6B Life: My Story as a Global Surgeon in Africa and Beyond*. Proceeds from the book go to PAACS and the NGO Water is Life Ethiopia.

The 8:00 am session on Sunday, the final day, was "The Role of Faith in Clinical Practice".

Stay tuned.



APSA-IPSO PROGRAM
MAY 15

APSA2024 ANNUAL MEETING



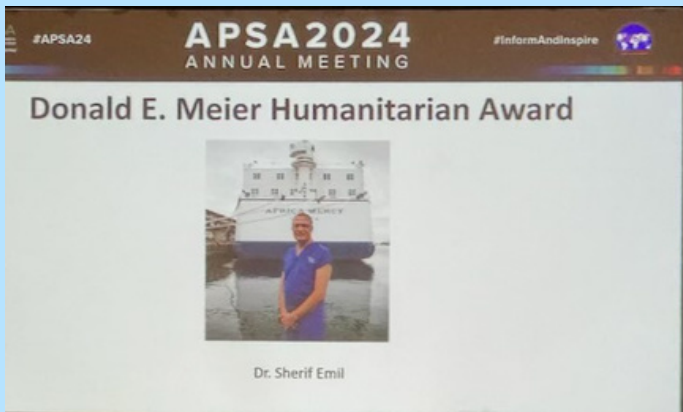
APSA
American Pediatric
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Saving Lives

ANNUAL MEETING
MAY 16-19

#APSA24

Phoenix, Arizona, USA • JW Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge Resort & Spa

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Donald E. Meier Humanitarian Award presented to Dr. Sherif Emil.



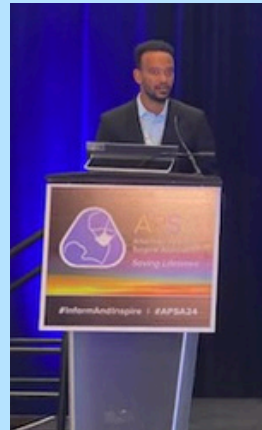
Dr. Muse French received the Judah Folkman award.



Drs. Erik Hansen and Sherif Emil.



Dr. Ken Muma speaking at the BethanyKids breakfast.



Dr. Meheret Desalegn and Dr. Muse French both presented at this year's conference.



Drs. George Ngock and Muse French at the BethanyKids booth.

Kijabe Hospital
Health Care to God's Glory

BethanyKids
TRAINING & RESOURCING MISSIONARY SURGEONS FROM ACROSS AFRICA

PAACS
PAN-AFRICAN ACADEMY OF CHRISTIAN SURGEONS

2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2027, 2028

Countries represented by PAACS graduates and trainees of the PAACS Pediatric Program at BethanyKids in Kenya.



MAINTAINING SPIRITUAL VITALITY IN THE MIDST OF BUSYNESS

*Dr. Ed Searce
Spiritual Dean*

As a surgical resident or faculty member there are not enough hours in the day. Yes, that is stating the obvious, but there are times when we need to recognize the elephant in the room. The question then becomes “How do I maintain a close walk with Christ while running hard?”

It really is a matter of priorities. That rolls off the tongue so easy, but setting and keeping our priorities in order is harder to do. Especially when there is a need to be met. Below are some biblical suggestions for you.

1. Recognize that my relationship with God is the most important thing in my life. *“Love the Lord your God with all you heart...soul...mind...strength”.* (Mk. 12:30)

2. Establish a particular time each day that you will set aside as your personal time with God. Of course, emergencies will crowd that space. When that happens, if it is truly an emergency, attend to it. What you are looking for is consistency with a bit of flexibility.

3. Spend time in worshipping via the Word. The Word is our guide to worship!

- Read the Word
- Pray the Word
- Meditate on the Word
- Ask God to press the Word deep into your soul and psyche
- Be sure to express words of adoration and worship

4. Pray for yourself and others.

5. Observe the sabbath principle. God has not designed us to run 24/7/365. To do so sets us up for burnout! When we set aside specific times to rest, God uses that to renew us physically, mentally, and spiritually.

We will look closer at the sabbath principle in next month's bulletin article.

WHITE COAT CEREMONY AT MALAMULO

The Malamulo PAACS General Surgery program had our White Coat ceremony for our newest resident, Trymore Sithole, on 29 April, 2024.

We had incredible participation from the entire hospital and PAACS team which made the event even more meaningful. We had a wonderful group prayer at the end for Dr. Sithole and his family. We continue to ask that God bless them during their time at Malamulo, Malawi.



BONGOLO HOSPITAL SOCCER MATCH

At Bongolo Hospital, surgical residents and faculty recently faced off on the soccer field in a thrilling match. Despite the morning rain making the field slippery, both teams showed resilience and determination.

In front of a lively crowd of children and supportive women, the match was intense from the start. The faculty team, led by Dr. David and Caleb, secured a narrow 2-1 victory, with Dr. Wilson scoring for the residents. Adding to the unity, Caleb, the son of Drs. Jen and Zach, crafted a special trophy for the winners.



Beyond the competition, the event highlighted the solidarity and teamwork that define the hospital community. The atmosphere was electric as spectators, including patients, staff, and local community members, gathered to witness the exciting showdown. Despite the competitive spirit on the field, the match also served as a refreshing break from the daily demands of hospital life.



It provided an opportunity for colleagues to come together, unwind, and forge stronger bonds outside of their professional duties. As players and spectators celebrated together after the game, it was evident that the true victory lay in the bonds of friendship and collaboration fostered by the shared love of soccer and medicine at Bongolo Hospital.





DR. CLARISSE GIRINCUTI

GENERAL SURGERY RESIDENT SIM GALMI HOSPITAL NIGER

Growing up in Burundi, Dr. Girincuti experienced a profound sense of emptiness, loneliness and a lack of love in the early years of her life and sought to fill that void. Thankfully, this journey led her to a community of Christian friends and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

As Dr. Girincuti's faith grew, God guided her towards a career in medicine. After seeing her remote community in the country of Burundi suffering significantly due to the desperate need for surgical care, God moved on her heart to become a part of the solution. During her internship at Kibuye Hope Hospital in Burundi, she met a graduate of the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS), Dr. Agneta Odera, a female surgeon. While working closely together, Dr. Girincuti was passionately inspired by Dr. Odera's kindness, humility, compassion, and incredible surgical skills. So deeply touched by her time with Dr. Odera, Dr. Girincuti felt called to follow in her footsteps towards a future in surgery. She applied and was accepted into the PAACS program at SIM Galmi Hospital in Niger, the same training and discipleship organization as her mentor. She was excited to be a part of a program that would train her as a skillful surgeon and cultivate a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

Dr. Girincuti faced many challenges after leaving her home country and community to pursue this path. Faithfully trusting the Lord, she fully immersed herself in the PAACS program and learned surgery while being disciplined to help others. Dr. Girincuti was tested when one Sunday, a non-Christian patient arrived at SIM Galmi Hospital with acute urinary retention. She was under a great deal of pressure and nearly forgot to pray before the procedure, a practice encouraged by her PAACS training. Realizing this, she promptly took that moment to pray alongside the patient. During their prayer, God asked Dr. Girincuti to share the Gospel with him. After hearing about the sacrifice and love of Jesus, the patient felt deeply moved by the message. Upon leaving the hospital, Dr. Girincuti and the staff directed him towards other Christians and churches in his community to help further his exploration into the Gospel and the need for Jesus in his life. Dr. Girincuti still faithfully prays for this patient and his journey towards a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Dr. Girincuti remembers how she used to feel shy and insecure about sharing the Gospel of Jesus with non-believers, but this moment turned her fear into fire. Her PAACS surgical training addressed this patient's physical needs and her discipleship training taught her to share the healing power of Christ.

She is blessed to witness the power of prayer each day during her residency at SIM Galmi Hospital in Niger. Her surgical skills and spiritual confidence in prayer with her patients became her greatest tools when facing challenging cases. She continues to joyfully spread the Gospel. Now, as a fifth-year resident, facing complex procedures alone, she turns first to prayer — a testament to her growing surgical skills, faith, and confidence. Her commitment to holistically treat her patients leaves a lasting impact, embodying PAACS's mission through her prayerful practice and her own touching testimony.

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 PAACS graduates that are serving God's people. Pray for God's protection, provision, and blessings to cover the PAACS graduates.
- Pray for PAACS residents as they sit for their annual PAACS exams.
- Pray for discernment and guidance during the interview and selection process for the applicants who will join PAACS in January 2025.

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

- Winnie Mutunga
- Leah Caren Oundo
- Vallery Logedi
- Brian Odhiambo Ooro
- Gidraf Gitau
- Moses Smart Mbayo
- Kevin Ochieng Odhiambo
- Hellen Gathoni Kihoro
- Yei P Wiah



ARTICLES ON SURGERY

Compiled by Margaret Tarpley

- [Living your ikigai: My journey into surgical ergonomics](#)
- [Mortality and morbidity after total intravenous anaesthesia versus inhalational anaesthesia: a systematic review and meta-analysis](#)
- [Survival bias in pediatric hemorrhagic shock: Are we misrepresenting the data?](#)
- [Management of Gallstone Pancreatitis. A Review](#)
- [Emerging treatments in HER2-positive advanced breast cancer: Keep raising the bar](#)
- [New insights into cancer epidemiology and survival in sub-Saharan Africa](#)
- [Differences between resident self-assessments and faculty-assessments on Anesthesiology Milestones and associated factors: a cross-sectional study](#)

Read more articles compiled by Margaret Tarpley by [clicking here!](#)

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