

Living Hope

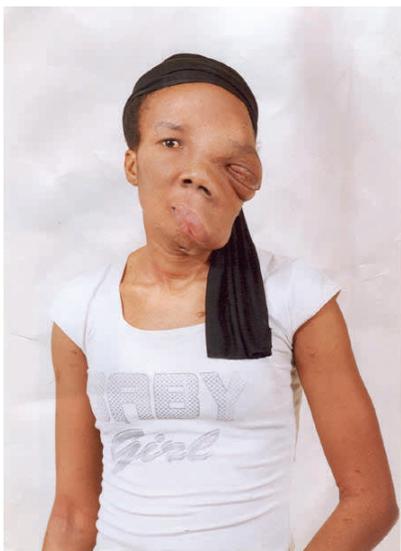
The Fight Against Cancer Continues: The Story of Esther and Precious

"God is working on My miracle" – Esther Achogbuo

Miss Esther Achogbuo is a 28 year old lady who had had a facial tumor for 25 years. The growth began appearing on her face when she was three years old. Esther comes from a poor home and lives in an environment that does not have access to a doctor or medical expertise that can help her. Thus, for 25 years, the mass continued to grow to the extent that it covers a little over half her face, completely blocking her right eye and nostril. The tumor has blinded the eye and is so heavy on her face that one side is pulled down as is evident in the picture below. This disease has alienated her from her peers and her community in Obinze located in Owerri West area of Imo State, Nigeria.



Esther Achogbuo prior to her operation in 2006



Esther Achogbuo, Post op, September 2007

Esther's older sister heard about Dr. Okere and his medical team and decided to visit Dr. Okere at his home at night. She had this to say on meeting Dr. Okere, "We heard that you have solutions to many illnesses our people suffer from. Today, God has given us the opportunity to see you; please help Esther get well. We decided to visit you at night because Esther is ashamed to walk in the day. Please pardon our late visit."

Dr Okere replied to Esther and her sister, "Only God can provide the solution to this tumor; He will use us as a vessel to search for surgeons and people who will be willing to take up this case." Our contact with the Mercy Ships headquarters in the United States through the Next-Right Thing organization began the process.

Mercy Ships is the leader in using hospital

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President's Message ...



Kennedy K. Okere, MD

New every year is God's love.

Each year, it never ceases to amaze me how God brings progress to this mission. Every new mission year, we accomplish much more than the previous year. This is not done just by our might, but by God's Spirit.

Mission 2007 marked new events in HIMM's history. During the mission, many of our patients shared testimonies of how they experienced the Grace of God and his miraculous healing through us. They also shared testimonies of the healing of their body and soul. Testimonies such as these encourage us to continue doing what God has set apart for us to do.

Other important events include the safe arrival of the medical equipment and ambulance, donated to us by the Rotary Club of Savannah, Georgia and Memorial Health University Medical Center (MHUMC), Savannah, Georgia respectively, which we shipped to Nigeria. As mentioned in the 2006 edition of our newsletter, the equipment will be used in our new free medical clinic, the Horizon Medical Center (HMC), located in Ihiagwa town, Imo State.

Our vision for implementing a medical program which will allow resident physicians, medical students and nurses from the United States to learn tropical medicine during their training is gradually being realized. We are close to building a stronger relationship with MHUMC to begin the program and we are building mission quarters for our missionaries which is currently located close to the HMC building.

Something I would like my readers and supporters to know is that, though we go on one mission trip a year, we really hold missions all through the year. After each mission trip, we work on as many unusual encountered cases as we can, i.e., cases that cannot be solved during the mission trip such as surgical removal of tumors. HIMM in partnership with Next-Right Thing and Mercy Ships organizations in USA has sponsored the surgical removal of tumors on two young ladies from Nigeria. The two ladies received their surgery and are feeling better. Details of their story are included in this newsletter.

Our children are our future; they are the hope of tomorrow. With this in mind, HIMM has been involved in activities to educate kids on the medical profession. We have set up a scholarship program for kids graduating from Baptist High School, Umuohi Imo State, Nigeria in an effort to encourage young ones in rural Africa into the medical field. In the United States we have engaged in speaking to high school students concerning considering medical careers and missions both home and overseas. I was given an opportunity to visit Beach High School in Savannah to give this presentation.

I wish to thank our individual donors, corporations and organizations who have continued to support our efforts in bringing rural health care to under developed areas. We invite people with skills and a heart for mission to take part in Mission 2008 coming up in March next year.

High Chief Kennedy Kelechi Okere, MD

President

HIMM Partners with Federal University of Technology Owerri

HIMM has been working on implementing projects to improve medical and health education in American, African and Caribbean based higher learning institutions and in rural African and Caribbean areas. The project will include educating and updating health and medical students on medical and public health issues and enable the professionals to travel to rural areas to educate the locals in those areas on preventive medicine and public health. The projects will also expand student knowledge about major diseases and latest medical technologies used to prevent and/or cure such diseases. HIMM has partnered with the Federal University of Technology (FUTO) to begin implementing the program in Nigeria.

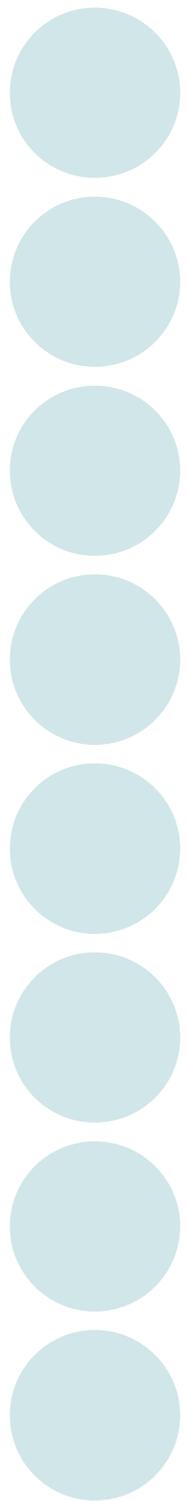


The Vice Chancellor of FUTO, Prof C.O.E Onwuliri met with Dr. Kennedy Okere and discussed implementing the project concurred that the program stress on medical research and public health. Prof Onwuliri was Dr Kennedy Okere's academic adviser and good friend during Dr. Okere's undergraduate studies in Zoology at the University of Jos, Nigeria. It is quite interesting to see the teacher and the student work together to help rural communities. We hope to involve more local and overseas institutions in this program.



This is just the beginning; HIMM will continue to partner with universities and teaching hospitals in Nigeria and United states to realize the organization goal of upgrading or updating medical and health education.

Professor Celestine Onwuliri has requested, and HIMM has accepted, to include the campus premises as one of the mission sites for Mission 2008.



HIMM Local Outreach Program Expanding



Beach High School, Savannah GA

The first local outreach program HIMM executed was in March 2004 in Imo State, Nigeria where we visited an orphanage to access the state of the area, played with the kids, gave them toys and donated money for facility repairs. We wish to let our readers know that not only are communities abroad important to us, but our community here in the United States is also important. Thus, promoting education in the US is part of HIMM's mission objective. We must prepare young men and women who in the near future will take up the baton of healing the sick and helping the less privileged in our society.

HIMM has been involved in seminars, workshops and mentoring programs for high school, pre-med and medical students. We have had a pre-med student accompany us on a mission trip to Africa. Chiaka Igweonu was a pre-med student when she accompanied the HIMM team to experience medicine in rural Nigeria. Chiaka who is a medical student in the University of Florida had this to say about her trip, "My first medical mission trip with Horizon International Medical Missions was an encouragement and wonderful experience which I will never forget."

We educate our local church members and different social organizations in United States on issues like Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension, the need for cancer screening- breast and Prostate, colon and skin. We also serve as consultants for those traveling to different parts of the world for mission trips.

Dr. Okere visited Beach High School, Savannah, Georgia and gave a presentation on the medical profession as a career choice. Dr Okere challenged the student to develop interest in the medical field. He shared his personal testimony of the rough road to becoming a Medical Doctor while coming from a poor financial background. Many students were encouraged and asked several questions.

At the Baptist High School Umuohie, Umuneke-Ngor Okpala in Imo State, Nigeria, of which Dr Okere is a member of the Board of Governors, HIMM has established a scholarship fund for the best graduating student in science. This scholarship fund also includes contributing towards medical school tuition for the best graduating student.



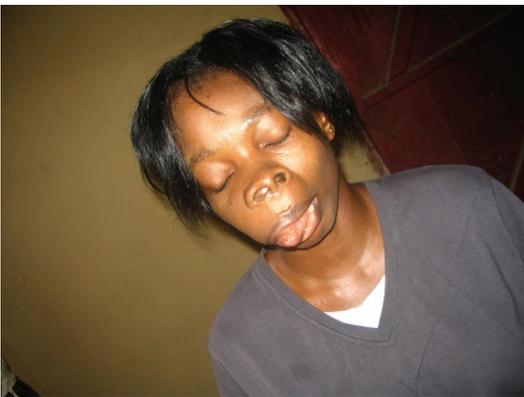
Dr Kennedy Okere and Beach High School Students on Career Day

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ships to deliver free world-class health care to rural and poor communities, world wide. The ship, which was docked in Liberia, accepted Esther's case for surgery. Special thanks to Chris Obiamiwe of Liberia, and his family who served as hosts to Esther. HIMM flew Esther to Monrovia where she went through the first stage of her surgery.

Although all is not complete, Esther is optimistic that she will be well after her next surgery scheduled in 2009 in Republic of Benin. She had this to say, "I am not there yet but I am grateful to God and HIMM for their effort to make me look better, my miracle is on the way."

"Thank you for bringing me out from my hiding place..." – Precious Anurunkem



Precious Anurunkem, March 2006

Miss Precious Anurunkem is a 30 year old lady from Eziobodo, Owerri West, Imo State, Nigeria. Since she was 12 years old, she has had a tumor growing on the hard palate in her mouth. She went to the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) to undergo surgery to remove the tumor, but the operation was unsuccessful. Over the years the tumor continued to grow from the hard palate extending between her teeth and through her lips, making it difficult for her to chew and properly and close her mouth. Tumors like this make the patient become socially unacceptable in small communities – Precious was no exception. She would shy away from people and prefer to stay on her own. Precious heard about HIMM Mission 2006 and heard that her community, Eziobodo would serve as one of the locations for the free

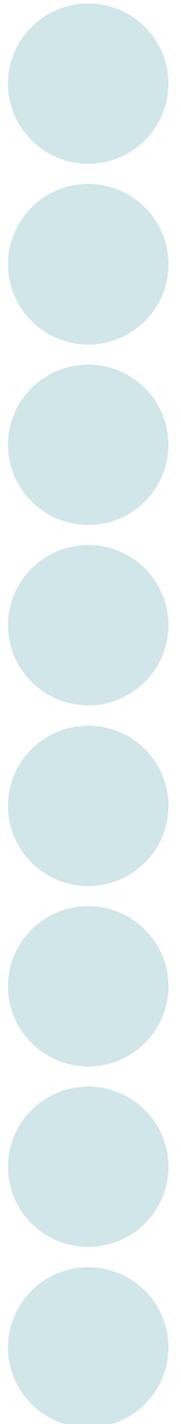
medical clinic. So, she visited the mission site to request for help.

HIMM presented Precious' case to Mercy Ships in USA and they accepted her for free treatment. Precious traveled to Monrovia, Liberia where the ship was docked and she underwent a successful operation to resect the tumor.

Today Precious is planning to take the entrance examination to study International Relations in a Nigerian University. Post operatively Precious father said, "On behalf of my family and the entire Eziobodo people I say thank you to God, HIMM, and Mercy Ships for giving my daughter a chance to live a normal life and continue her studies. Precious can now appreciate how wonderful God has made her when she looks in the mirror." HIMM gives special thanks to all who contributed to Precious' round-trip flight ticket from Nigeria to Liberia.



Precious, Post Op, September 2007



Update on Medical Equipment & Ambulance Shipped to Nigeria

In 2006 Memorial Health University Medical Center (MHUMC) and the Rotary Club of Savannah, GA donated an ambulance and a 40 ft container of medical equipment to HIMM to equip our new medical center being built in Ihiagwa, Imo State. We are happy to announce that the ambulance and equipment have safely arrived in Nigeria.

Our main concern about shipping the donated equipment was securing funds to pay for the shipment and pay for all other fees that would be incurred in transporting them to their final destination. We were able to secure the funds needed not only for shipping, but also for custom clearing the forty foot long, high cube container and transporting the equipment to Imo State.



Ambulance in Container, Lagos

As mentioned, the equipment will be used for daily operations at HMC. The ambulance will serve as the key vehicle we will use to transport emergency cases to the Federal Medical Center, Owerri or other neighboring medical facilities that will be able to provide extensive care to patients.

We still have some finishing touches to perform on the clinic. In addition, we are building a missionary housing facility where missionaries will stay during mission trips. We believe that erecting this facility will be more cost effective for the missionaries.

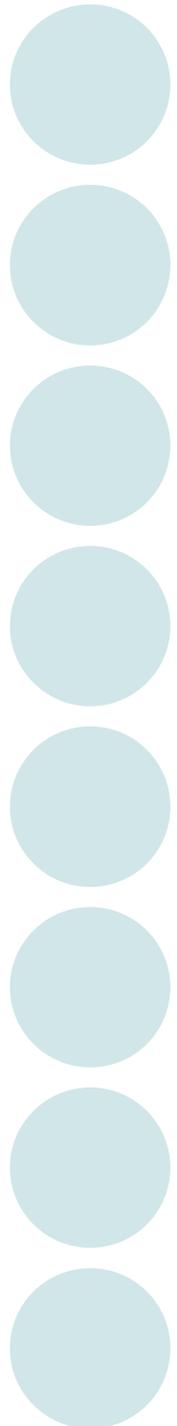
Again, we express our gratitude to MHMUC and the Rotary Club of Savannah for their kind donation of the ambulance and medical equipment and all the support they have given to HIMM.



Workers Offloading Ambulance from Container



Workers Offloading Medical Equipment



Supporter's Corner: A Testimony from Julie Paskauskas

God reminded me yesterday in church about something he had put on my heart last spring/summer. Kennedy Okere had come back from a mission trip and was giving us his report with the power point pictures. He showed a child who had a cleft lip and talked about how it only takes \$300 to have it surgically corrected, which for them might as well still be a million... I thought wow I wish we had an extra \$300 to give a child that gift. God reminded me that I had just forked out that much for spa treatment that I thought I had to have and how much better it would make me look in my bathing suit for the summer...ouch, I'm worried about my legs when there is a child suffering with this malformation that I can't begin to imagine. I knew that before I had anything else like that done I was supposed to give a donation to Kennedy. Well I had paid up front for my treatment and didn't have anything else done so I didn't ever act on that prompting other than our change bank. Fast forward to this summer when once again I'm thinking about swimsuit weather. I used a gift card that Jay my husband had given me to the spa at the beginning of the summer and had scheduled a follow-up appointment for tomorrow. I promise we're going to the good part. 😊

Yesterday in the church God reminded me of the above. I knew I had to cancel my appointment. I told Jay during the ministry time to make sure I would follow through with it. It's a good thing because all morning I was trying to justify in my head why and how I could give and still keep my appointment. It was just so clear that He just wanted to know if my heart was willing and would I be obedient. I worked today at Southcoast so I made my phone call in between patients and cancelled it. At lunchtime I was telling my good friend Anita about all of it knowing she would find it comical that I was this vain. Well she began to ask me all kinds of questions about Horizon; this is on our way back from the post office where she insisted on paying for some of the postage on the Bibles we sent to the New York prison (she was so intrigued by that as well). Well at the end of the day she handed me a check for \$300.00 made out to Horizon and said she wanted to be part of what God is doing for children in Africa. She then told me I was off the hook; a child would be able to have the surgery so I should call the spa back. My reply was no, now at least two kids will have a procedure that changes their lives for eternity verses a procedure for me that as my good friend Terri told me would only last for the summer and probably only be noticed by me. 😊

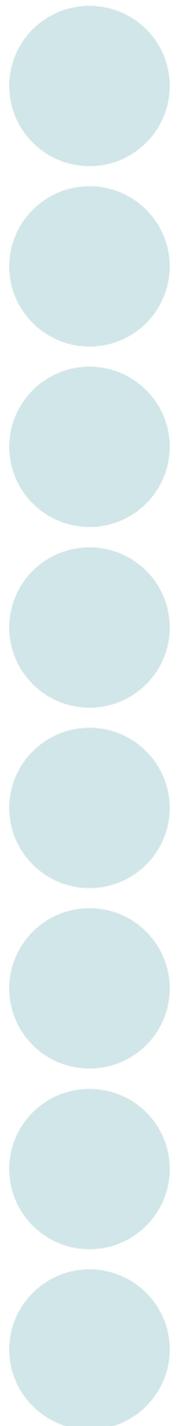
All afternoon/evening I thought about what you said about those around us getting wet ... If I hadn't cancelled that appointment I would have never told Anita the story and she would not have had the opportunity to give. In that simple act of obedience it spilled onto my co-worker. The fountain is flowing and it's going to the uttermost...New York...Africa....

God is so cool!

Julie is a Member of the Sycamore Network—
Southwest Community Church, Savannah, GA



Julie Paskauskas, 2007



Upcoming Mission 2008

Mission 2008 will be taking place in March of 2008. At the moment, volunteers from different walks of life have indicated their willingness to travel to Imo State, Nigeria for the mission. Our evangelical team will also accompany us in this mission. We would like to travel with a camera crew and anchor person that will be able to cover mission activities and create a documentary video for us. We are also seeking for volunteers – nurses, doctors, EMS workers, medical assistant workers, and nutritionists. We also need fund raisers for the purpose of this mission.



If you are interested please send email to kennedy@himm.org or call 912-308-8799.

Items Needed to Travel for Mission 2008

- Valid International Passport
- Valid Nigerian Visa - .HIMM can help in obtaining the visa
- Round Trip Flight ticket approximately \$1,700.00
- Two hundred dollars (\$200.00) for feeding
- Malaria prophylaxes- see your doctor or contact Dr. Kennedy Okere as above
- Summer cloths and scrubs for the field work



"Touching the World with Medicine"

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We Touch the World with Medicine

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