



Empowering each other to
serve the aged poor in the
developing world

February 2013

2012 was a year filled with both growth and participation in many exciting projects in varied countries throughout the developing world. We would like to share some of the photos and stories from those accomplishments.

Exactly Who Are The Aged?

The mission of Michael's House Inc. is to "serve the aged poor in the developing world." Occasionally we have requests from charities asking assistance for people who may seem, at least to us, not to fall under the category of "old". This often leads to a discussion of who are the old. Perceptions of aging are themselves problematic. A universally applicable definition of what constitutes old age is notoriously obscure. The aging process itself is a biological actuality, but is also clearly subject to the constructions by which societies make sense of old age.

Chronological age, the pre-eminent indicator adopted in the "developed" world, has far less importance in "developing" countries. In the developing world other socially formed meanings of age are more significant, including the roles or the loss of roles which are a result of physical and mental decline, change in status (such as the death of a spouse) or familial isolation. In many countries old age is seen to begin at the point when active contribution is no longer possible.

It is difficult to apply our concept of "old" to poor people in societies where life expectancy is in the upper forties. So in our consideration of old age at Michael's House Inc., we defer to the experts in the field. We must have a paradigm shift, let go of the arbitrary defining age of 65 and help all those who are weary and worn out. We hope you agree.



Old woman in
Togo waiting to
die, made as
comfortable as
possible with no
mattress, no
pillow, just a thin
blanket on the hard
floor.

Honduras

Michael's House Inc. has been involved in Honduras for one year. The request for aid came from the Irish Medical Missionaries of Mary at San Pedro Sula where the medical team have built Casa Visitación as a center where various clinics and therapies are available. Health committees have been established in seventeen villages, involving a lot of travel to these rural mountainous districts. Activities include training of health formators, supervision of home pharmacies, counseling and building self-esteem, complementary therapies, work with prisoners and the elderly aged. San Pedro Sula was in the epicenter of Hurricane Mitch, which ravished the country in 1998, leaving over 11,000 people dead and all but destroying major cities such as San Pedro Sula and even Tegucigalpa. The elderly, especially those with no families, suffered horrifically in this natural disaster and continue to suffer.

Michael's House Inc. provides monthly funding for essential medications for the aged in Honduras.



Aurelia Garcia Lopez is a 44 year old single mother who has had 2 strokes in the past 5 years. She has 5 children and 7 grandchildren. We help her with food, clothes and medication.



Erlinda Hernandez lives in a remote community in Honduras, close to the Salvadoran border. She suffered a stroke last year. We provide the money for her monthly visits to a hospital in El Salvador.

Ethiopian Medical Project (Scotland)

This project is under the direction of Jo Middlemiss and Maureen Burnet in Scotland who travel to Ethiopia to do their work. In 2012 we were able to build a house for a destitute elderly woman caring for her orphaned grand-children and we were able to fund a number of gynecological surgeries for indigent women.

We will continue to partner in this project and supply funds to purchase Pessary Rings to help women suffering from uterine prolapse. The Ethiopian Medical Project buys Pessary Rings, which in most cases help to avoid necessary surgical repair. One of the great sadnesses of this condition is that the women are ejected from their family homes, as they can no longer fulfill their marital functions.



Women in need of Pessary Rings

Past the man as he prayed, came the crippled and the beggar and the beaten. And seeing them... he cried, "Great God, how is it that a loving creator can see such things and yet do nothing about them?" God said, "I did do something. I made you." ~Author Unknown

Ethiopia

In 2012, we partnered with Help Age International to improve the living environment of slum dwellers by building two ventilated pit latrines in Addis Ketema a sub-city of Addis Ababa. These small free-standing buildings are used in rural and low income urban communities, with significant use in the developing world. Michael's House contributed the funds toward the construction of these latrines. The latrines allow for safer and more hygienic disposal of human waste than open defecation.



Site One –

The four-seater latrines in Addis Ketema currently serve 18 slum dweller households with an average of five people per household.

Approximately 90 people use the latrine daily.

Site Two –

The four-seater latrines at General Wingate Technical and Vocational Education Training College have been divided by gender with two toilets for men and two for women. Up to 100 students and staff of the college use the latrines per day.

Uganda

We have continued to send monthly support to Dr. Maura Lynch and her social workers at the Kitvu Hospital near Masaka where she does cataract and fistula surgeries at a very minimal cost for the elderly poor. In 2013, we will also be subsidizing 30 elderly AIDS patients who have no living relatives and are unable to pay their monthly medicine bills.

Tanzania

We continue to support the grannies in Tanzania and send regular pensions to help with their expenses for food, medicines, and daily necessities. Occasionally, one of our grannies die and another who has been on the wait list is added for support.



Thailand

Michael's House continues to partner with Baan Suksek, an elderly outreach project and gives donations for specific requests.



Togo

In 2012 Michael's House was able to fund hemoanalysis equipment to be used in a clinic setting in Togo for the elderly poor. This machine can assist in the diagnosis of anemia, infection, diabetes, liver and kidney failure.

I hope you can see from this brief summary of our work in 2012, how incredibly valuable your support has been. Lives are being changed because of your generosity. Hope is an amazing gift to share with another human being.



3rd Annual Michael's House Golf Tournament

This year our fundraiser will be held at Whiskey Creek Country Club on Tuesday May 14th. Please remember that we not only need golfers, but we are also looking for sponsors at many different levels. Contact Eric Shatzer with questions please at 877-210-0900. More info soon!



Your continued support makes it all possible and secures one daily meal for the elderly poor. They have come to depend on the love and generosity from those of us more fortunate on the other side of the world. We cannot let them down!

**Donate on the web or make checks payable to: Michael's House Inc, Post Office Box 856
Burtonsville, Maryland, 20866**

Visit us on the web at www.michaels-house.org