

M A M A P r o j e c t

# MAMA News

*Women Friends Miles Apart*

**Global Vision For Local Health**

**Christmas 2017**



Photo Credit: MAMA



There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up - John Holmes

**Dr. Priscilla Benner's reflection During MAMA Banquet November 2017**

Back in the early 1980s, none of us ever intended to start something that would come to be known as MAMA Project. It all started so innocently. I was practicing medicine in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania.

in Honduras was organizing a mission trip. She almost didn't sign up for fear of getting malaria, but she did go, and came with her heart forever changed. She heard stories from families and communities struggling to survive against adversity that was shocking and unjust. And she brought her camera. Armed with her pictures and stories, she made slide shows and put them to music that reminded us to see the world through God's eyes.



My husband Dave was pastor at Finland Mennonite Church. We had a family of small children and my little sisters were students at Wheaton College in Illinois. I, for one, was not looking for more adventure. Life was good and full.

But then one day, my sister Ruth saw a notice that one of her fellow students, a missionary kid who grew up

She broke our hearts.

We started a few years of talking, dreaming, studying and then planning. We started to look for partners to work with to make a difference in communities where children are chronically malnourished.



MAMA Project  
Mujeres Amigas (Women  
Friends) Miles Apart  
Nutritional Rehabilitation  
Trainings for Medical &  
Dental Brigades  
Cross Cultural Training  
De-worming & Vitamin A  
Donating Medical &  
Dental Equipment & Supplies  
Community Development  
Scholarships  
Child Survival Training  
Advocacy

The MAMA News is a quarterly newsletter available for free to anyone who would like to receive it. To add, remove or change your address on our mailing list, contact us at:

MAMA Project,  
2781A Geryville Pike, Pennsburg, PA 18073  
(215)679-4338 or [info@mamaproject.org](mailto:info@mamaproject.org)  
[www.MAMAPROJECT.org](http://www.MAMAPROJECT.org)

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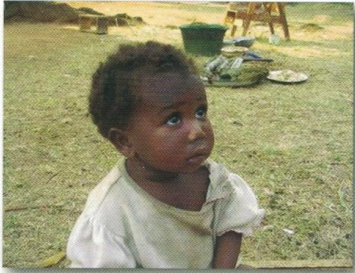
All donations given to MAMA Project are Tax-deductible and a receipt will be sent to the donor.

All Photos were taken by MAMA Project staff or Service Team Members



## MAMA Project

Where would we start? We thought of many options. Haiti? No, we don't know French or Creole. Africa seemed too far away. Latin America? There was war all around. It was a very risky for people who wanted to work for justice. We could be called communist and find ourselves in physical danger. I want to make a confession. As I began to feel a very strong that I felt was a call from God to find a way to work in Central America, I was fighting with God in my prayers. I was very, very fearful. My prayers went like this. "Here am I, Lord, Please send my Sister. She wants to go. I'll help pay her way." Well, you know how that argument with God worked out. We both went!



Although I eventually took the lead, as the vision emerged as what has become MAMA Project, my two sisters Ruth and Julia became very involved. Ruth was part of planning and promotion, and from the earliest days was on the MAMA Committee that was formed by the Franconia WMSC (Women's Mission and Service Commission) and The General Conference WIM (Women in Mission). We eventually found our partners with the Honduran Mennonite Church Women's Society. Ruth and Julia both spent months in Honduras. Ruth and Dan supervised the construction of the Nutrition Center in San Francisco de Yojoa. That center has been visited by many mission teams, who use it as a headquarters to visit mountain villages around San Francisco .

That center is also the site where village leaders receive trainings, and poor mothers with malnourished children come to receive help and training. It is where medical equipment donations arrive and then go out to facilities that serve the poor.

Now, many of you have been on trips to Honduras. Others haven't visited Honduras, but without your prayers and many kinds of support, MAMA would have just stayed a vision of a few. We have been at this project for 30 years,

and many people have participated in trainings and in our work, and have adapted MAMA Project ideas to the work that they do in the communities in other places, and countries.

We teach parents how to better care for their children, de-worm communities, bring medical brigades, and address malnutrition in our center, and in the communities. We developed fortified food supplements, like the supper bars and now promote home food fortification. We promote water filtration and purification in the home. We evaluate communities for malnutrition and teach others how to do the same. Take a look at our display table to see some of the tools that we created for our work, and now share with others.

It is very gratifying to see the changes in communities and in families. It is wonderful to see strong young people who we met as poor sick children at risk of not surviving. It is wonderful to see this program coming to a mature stage, that it was able to be born as a separate organization. Ruth is now on the Board of Healthy Ninos.

Speaking as a Board Member of MAMA Project, to Board Member of Healthy Ninos. My message is simple. Take good care of the baby!!

Now Don't get the idea that MAMA is going away, or that our work is finished. We are alive and well. We are not in a post-partum depression after giving birth to Healthy Ninos! MAMA is continuing to do all of the things in poor villages that we have done in the past. Our Vision and Mission are the same.

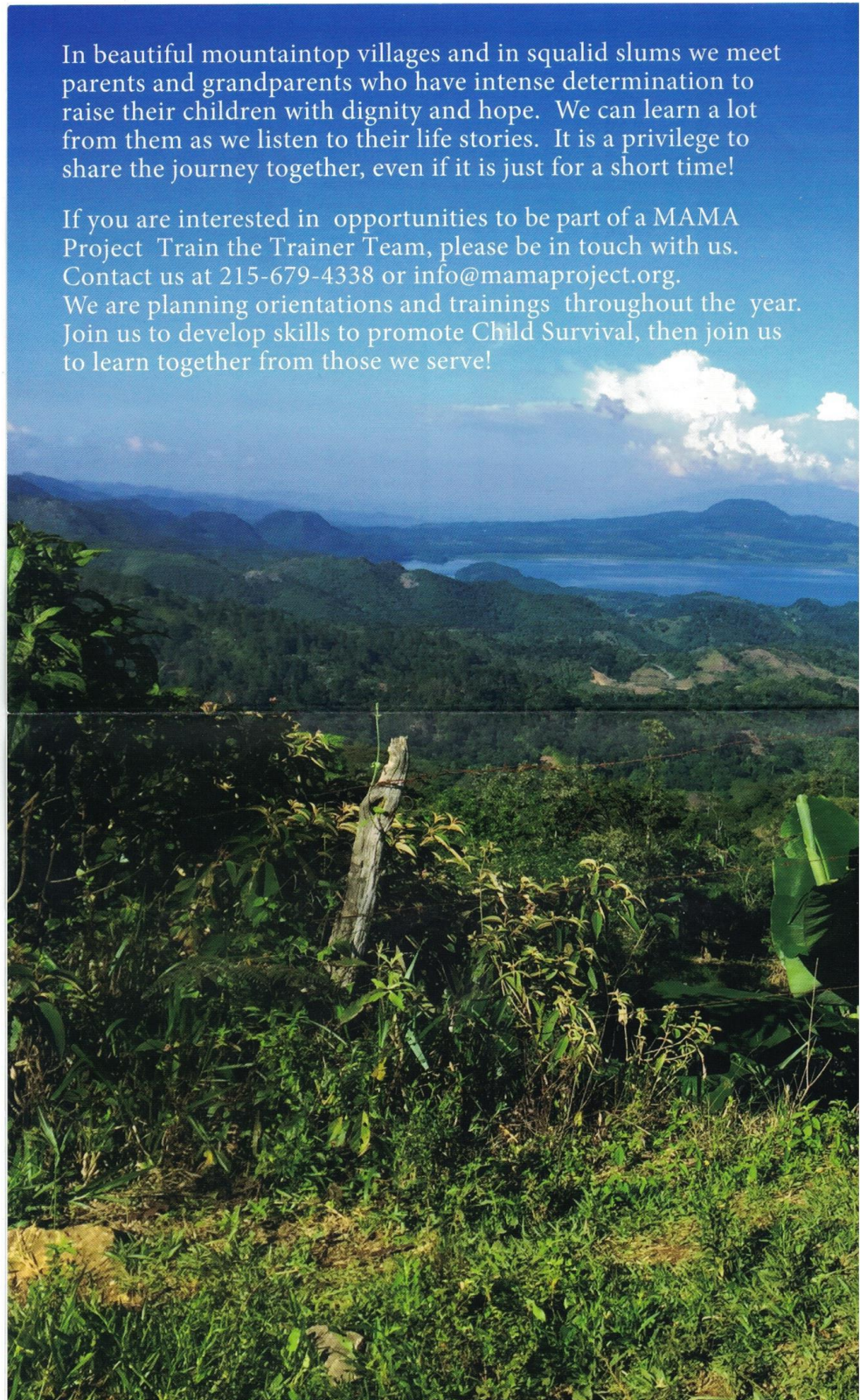


MAMA is intentionally expanding to other parts of the globe where malnutrition continues to be a very serious threat to Child Survival.



In beautiful mountaintop villages and in squalid slums we meet parents and grandparents who have intense determination to raise their children with dignity and hope. We can learn a lot from them as we listen to their life stories. It is a privilege to share the journey together, even if it is just for a short time!

If you are interested in opportunities to be part of a MAMA Project Train the Trainer Team, please be in touch with us. Contact us at 215-679-4338 or [info@mamaproject.org](mailto:info@mamaproject.org). We are planning orientations and trainings throughout the year. Join us to develop skills to promote Child Survival, then join us to learn together from those we serve!





## MAMA News Round Up MAMA Kenya

My name is Evelina Ndilu. For the last four months I have been an intern at MAMA Project preparing for the launching of MAMA Kenya. At the MAMA Banquet in November, I was privileged to have a chance to share the story of Kibera Slum where I have volunteered the last 10 years. I have worked with many programs in Kibera, I have worked with youth, children's scholarships, the disabled, those with HIV/AIDS and with a Women's Economic Empowerment Program.



I told the story of Magu, a 16 year old intelligent young man who I met in the course of the work to rehabilitate street children. Magu had run away from home and turned into a hardened criminal while in living in the street. The situations that surrounded the life of this once hard working young man are heart-breaking. He was born into a very humble home. When he was only 4 years old, his father took a second wife, despite their poverty, and sent him, his mother, and 3 younger sibling out of the house. To fend for her children, his mother got into prostitution and gave birth to two other children. She now had 7 mouths to feed. After the birth the last child she was tested and found to be infected with HIV and had AIDS. Unfortunately the last two children were tested to be HIV positive. She therefore stopped working as a prostitute and look for manual jobs like doing laundry for people at a pay of \$3/day. To supplement her income, she tries to save \$50 buy vegetables at wholesale price to sell at the roadside. If she sells out, she can make a \$4 profit.

Magu watched as his mother become bed ridden many times and he had to take up the responsibility of taking care of her and his younger siblings. At the young age of 13 when she could not care for her family, he resorted to stealing food and then became an expert pick-pocket.

Their house has no running water, nor electricity. They buy water at \$0.48 per 5 gallons and they can only afford to buy 40 gallons to be used sparingly for three days in cooking, cleaning and drinking. Clothes are washed every other week. Since the houses in Kibera have no toilets, they share pay toilet per 10 families or at night relieve themselves in plastic bags. There is no garbage collection in Kibera. Thus garbage litters the entire area and pollutes the Nairobi River passing by where those who have no money to buy water get their water.

Although her children are in HIV treatment, and need good nutrition, Magu's mother often cannot feed them all day. They go to bed hungry. She sought child support

through the court from her ex-husband but he too cannot provide for her because as a "tout" collecting minibus fares he earns only \$1.50 after 20 hours of work.

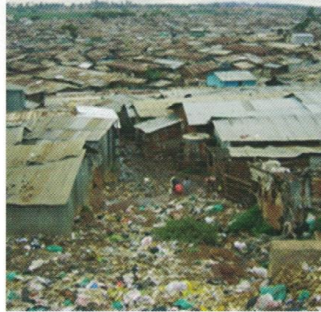
Magu's family live in Kibera slum which is the largest slum in sub Saharan African with a population of between 500,000 and 1 million people. Their house is a 1 roomed shack made of corrugated sheets which is 6 feet by 6 feet and serves as a kitchen, living room and bedroom. They must pay house rent of \$18 per month. She is perpetually in arrears and has to go through some nights in the cold when the landlord locks them out. It usually takes the intervention of the local chief to get her back into the house. For Magu, the easy way out was to run from home to avoid seeing the suffering of his mother whom he loved so much.

The story of Magu and his family illustrates the plight of thousands of families who live in Kibera. Malnutrition, sickness, and death are constant dangers faced by the residents of Kibera. There is great need to introduce water purification and chlorination, de-worming and vitamin A, home food fortification, education on nutrition and deworming as well as education for children and empowerment for mother economically to be self-reliant.

We are now going to launch MAMA Kenya, starting in Kibera.

We will work closely with the Ministry of Health (MOH), and institution with feeding program such as churches, schools and orphanages, we will contact medical camps to deworm and give vitamin A to the community. We will train volunteer Community Health Workers at the community level to help building capacity on Nutrition, Sanitation and Child Survival.

For long term we will empower the women to produce fortified peanut butter to be used by the program and sold to other organization and hospitals. We ask for prayers as we walk this mile and invite all of you to walk together a mile or two to see the realization of our dream for Kibera.



Kibera Slum,  
Nairobi, Kenya

When I return to Nairobi in December, I will be working as the MAMA Kenya representative. We have been diligently building our plans to start MAMA work in Kibera Slum. Donations designated for MAMA Kenya will support these efforts. We are eager to share MAMA Kenya collection canisters with anyone who wishes to collect funds for this outreach. If you are interested to specifically supporting MAMA Kenya, please contact the MAMA office, to learn more. If you send a check you can mark "MAMA Kenya" on the memo line. Thank you!-Evelina

# M A M A P r o j e c t

## **Support MAMA Project this Christmas**

Donations sent to:  
MAMA Project  
2781A Geryville Pike  
Pennsburg, PA 18073

If making online Purchase, shop through  
Amazon Smile  
or Goodshop

(see [www.mamaproject.org/donations.html](http://www.mamaproject.org/donations.html)  
for more information)

## **MAMA At a Glance**

**HELP PROMOTE MAMA:**  
Share the VISION with your friends and family!

Bake sales, spaghetti dinners, volleyball or other sports tournaments, Sunday School & Bible School projects are a few of the many activities that have supported MAMA in the past.

We are very grateful that many of our friends have remembered MAMA in their planned giving, or given to MAMA to honor a loved one.

## **Thank you!**

### **Are you interested in helping MAMA.?**

Become a MAMA Volunteer:

#### **Help Pack Micronutrients....**

They say time is money! You can help MAMA by offering your precious time to help us pack Micronutrients.

Micronutrients are taken to countries where MAMA has partnerships. Call us for more details.  
215-679-4338

### **Partner with MAMA**

MAMA Project has active or developing partnerships in:  
India,  
Honduras,  
Haiti,  
Kenya and  
Tanzania.

We are looking for more partners. People who are working or want to work for Child Survival!

Please check our website to explore our Child Survival Trainings and Materials.

Contact us!!!!

## **Mark your calendar for these events:**

December 9, 2017: **Training for MAMA India** Contact: Lori Schrock 301-245-4064 Accident, Maryland

March 17, 2018: **Child Survival Training Workshop** Contact: MAMA Office 215-679-4338 Pennsburg, PA

April 28, 2018: **MAMA Annual Banquet & Silent Auction**  
5:30 pm at Finland Mennonite Church, 1750 Ziegler Road Pennsburg, PA 18073

## **Yes, MAMA is moving our Traditional Fall Annual Banquet & Silent Auction to the Spring!**



Let us pray for the poor...

Let us pray for all nations and people who already enjoy the abundance of creation and the blessings of prosperity, that their hearts may be lifted up to the needs of the poor and the afflicted, and partnerships between the poor and the rich for the reconciliation of the world may flourish and grow.

