

NEWSLETTER  
VOLUME 31 NUMBER 1  
SPRING/SUMMER 2023

## SUPPORT GLOBAL LINKS



Donate Money



Donate Medical  
Supplies



Volunteer



## IMPORTANT DATES

### Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community

Saturday May 13  
Donations accepted through  
June 30

### Diaper Distribution

Saturday June 17  
In partnership with the  
Western Pennsylvania Diaper  
Bank

Visit [globallinks.org](https://globallinks.org) to get  
involved.

All photo credits Global Links unless otherwise noted.



Our program in Bolivia has a focus on primary care  
as well as maternal and infant health.

## INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL AID PROGRAM

# Global Links Team Traveled to Bolivia in February

A Global Links team from Pittsburgh traveled to Bolivia, a country we have been collaborating to improve health in since 2000, this past February. Throughout these two plus decades, Global Links has worked primarily with municipalities, as they are the ones who make decisions regarding healthcare infrastructure and healthcare budgets for their citizens. Our program in Bolivia is focused on their goals to support the improvement of basic health services, with a focus on primary care and maternal and infant care, in rural and primarily indigenous communities.

Global Links' role is to help provide the necessary tools so that health professionals can do their jobs,

which ensures the confidence of the community to seek services at the health centers. The municipalities and regional public health authorities provide the buildings and staff, but often have little resources left in their budgets after these expenses to make sure there are enough furnishings, equipment, and supplies to treat patients adequately.

For example, Dr. Marco Antonio Adrian Tarqui, Medical Director at the Centro de Salud Tapacari, which received beds and other materials from Global Links shared, "This new clinic was built three years ago, but couldn't open until Global Links' donations arrived to properly equip the facility to meet national

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standards... This is the first time that Tapacari has received this type of help. It is so important [to have adequate equipment] for more remote places because patients walk three to four hours to reach this health center... Thanks to these donations, we can provide quality care and the patients have beds to stay in [locally] rather than just sending them to the hospital [far away] in the city."

Global Links staff were able to participate in the arrival of one of our container shipments to Pojo, Bolivia

where the contents were divided amongst the health posts in smaller surrounding communities. People from each of those communities came to the celebration and community event with their vehicles, whether those were an ambulance or a truck, to pick up the supplies and furnishings which had been designated for their community. In addition to allowing full transparency for everyone, seeing the equipment, supplies, and furnishings in person can instill trust in people to actually visit the health post when they have health needs.

In addition, Global Links has been involved in providing locally sourced "Baby Bags" for expecting mothers in Bolivia. Supplies are bought and made for the bags in Bolivia, helping the local economy and women owned businesses. Our staff was able to help distribute some of these supplies—one woman stopped to pick hers up before taking the several hours-long ambulance ride to her cesarean section appointment in the nearest hospital!

Evaluation trips also provide the opportunity to meet with the staff at



One woman picked up her Baby Bag before taking the several hours-long ambulance ride to her cesarean section appointment.



Our Pittsburgh team working alongside our Bolivian colleagues and partners this past February.



Surgical instruments and linens can be in short supply at facilities, preventing staff from doing their jobs to the best of their abilities.



Trying out the baby scale from Global Links in Pojo, Bolivia.





Global Links staff and partners bedecked with necklaces made of local produce and crops in a show of appreciation during the container arrival celebration.

facilities we hope to work with in the future, like Hospital San Juan de Dios in Camargo. Dr. Rafael Angel Castillo Loza, Director and General Surgeon there, shared a recent harrowing experience, “We had a patient already sedated in the operating room...when our sole laryngoscope’s light stopped working, making it impossible to intubate the person. Our choices were to cancel the surgery, have a tracheostomy or fix the laryngoscope. We used our ambu [bag by hand] to breathe for the patient manually, while sending someone [off-site] to change the battery and bulb, which worked [out]. This situation was stressful and frustrating to not have adequate equipment to do our jobs.” The Global Links team also noticed how

“disposable” surgical linens were being washed, hung out to dry, and re-used in order for surgeries to continue. When health professionals are equipped with the tools they need to provide quality services and health centers are well furnished and have the supplies needed to care for patients, word travels fast. People will come to use the services. Improved access to health resources, ultimately means, improvement in the quality of life of these communities and a decrease in preventable deaths. Look for more stories from the trip to Bolivia by reading our monthly email newsletters and by following Global Links on our social media channels. •

## Global Links Medical Backpacks

In many areas around the world, a combination of rough terrain, scarcity of financial resources, and lack of transportation make regular healthcare visits an unrealistic possibility for everyday people. Or, a natural disaster or other emergency disrupts healthcare. As a result, many people’s health challenges and illnesses can worsen due to delayed diagnoses and care. Global Links’ Medical Backpacks can help by equipping providers and community health workers with basic supplies in a transportable format, allowing healthcare workers to go where the people are. Designed with rural communities and emergency response in mind, the Medical Backpacks contain essential supplies and primary care tools that comply with Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) standards. **Contact [ima@globallinks.org](mailto:ima@globallinks.org) for more information.** •



The Global Links shipment to Pojo, Bolivia included our signature Medical Backpacks. Executive Director Angela Garcia shows the community all the supplies contained within.



## DOMESTIC MEDICAL AID PROGRAM

# Asthma Care for All

This year's relatable World Asthma Day (May 2) theme is "Asthma Care for All." And in the USA, May is Asthma Awareness Month—a time to educate each other about how respiratory conditions and overall health worsen when breathing treatments are delayed

or unavailable, which can result in preventable visits to the ER. You can help by donating your no longer needed nebulizer. Learn how at our website under the "Ways to Give" tab and then "Donate Nebulizers."

Our Breathe Hope Project recovers gently used nebulizer breathing machines from people across the USA and shares them with our partner organizations in communities with

need at home and abroad. If you are a licensed clinic provider, you can become a Global Links Breathe Hope partner. You can provide your patients in need with a refurbished nebulizer with new tubing and masks. For more information, please email us at [breathehope@globallinks.org](mailto:breathehope@globallinks.org).

## MEDICAL SURPLUS RECOVERY PROGRAM

# Got Surplus?

Do you have home medical and mobility equipment in good condition that you no longer need? We are especially in need of knee scooters and rollator walkers. Do you work for a senior center or medical facility with surplus mobility equipment? We are very interested in any manual wheelchairs you are no longer using. Do you work for a business, university or medical facility with desks and chairs you no longer need? We can put these donations to good use improving health. Contact us at [medicalsurplus@globallinks.org](mailto:medicalsurplus@globallinks.org) to learn more or visit our website on the "Our Programs" tab and then click "Medical Surplus Recovery."



Family Volunteer Day participants cleaning and testing nebulizers this past December.



Global Links especially needs your manual wheelchairs, rollator walkers, and knee scooters.

Photo by CGN089 courtesy of Shutterstock



# Would You Like to Make a Difference Volunteering?

Our Community Engagement Program provides a supportive and educational environment where hands-on in person or remote service has a profound impact on the lives of those in need. Volunteers of all ages and abilities sort, assess, and prepare the medical materials used in our programs, turning our region's surplus into life-saving and life-improving donations. We also provide programming and presentations for the civic and academic community. Your workplace, group, club, family, or place of worship can get involved in

many ways. **Visit our website at the "Get Involved/Volunteer" tab to learn how.**



## Become part of our Global Givers Community

**Want to streamline your charitable giving?** Consider becoming part of our Global Givers community of monthly donors. Monthly giving is a great way to include charitable donations in your budget. Sign up is quick and easy – and of course you can adjust your donation or discontinue it at any time. **Visit our website at [globallinks.org](https://globallinks.org), and select "Monthly Giving" under the "Ways to Give" tab.**

**Global Links is honored to have won the 2022 Pittsburgh Rotary Club Excellence in Ethics Award in the Large Nonprofit category.**



## Donor Spotlight: Patti Rambasek and Rik Laird

For more than 17 years Patti Rambasek and Rik Laird have helped to improve health in communities with need by supporting Global Links. The couple are avid birders and world travelers, and Patti served on Global Links' Board for several years. Having had a home in the Dominican Republic, the couple are acutely aware of the need for healthcare in communities lacking resources. While Patti and Rik are looking forward to the next 20 years of their busy lives, they've decided to include Global Links in their wills, with the goal of continuing to improve Health for All beyond their lifetimes. Said Patti, "We research organizations

before deciding to include them in our estate planning. We trust Global Links, and know they are thoughtful and efficient in how they steward financial resources." Rik added, "We want to extend our legacies for the causes we care about. We hope our estate contribution inspires others to support Global Links." Thank you, Patti and Rik, for your continued commitment and support.

**For more information about including Global Links in your will, or to inform us that you've already done so, please contact Kimberlee Love at [donorsupport@globallinks.org](mailto:donorsupport@globallinks.org), or call 412-361-3424 X 203.**

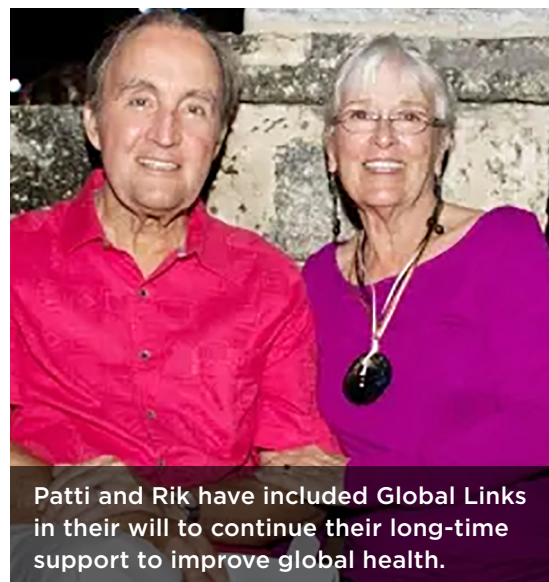


Photo courtesy of Patti and Rik



## Global Links

700 Trumbull Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15205

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**GLOBAL LINKS**  
*Sharing Surplus. Saving Lives.*

## ABOUT GLOBAL LINKS

Global Links is a Pittsburgh-based non-profit dedicated to improving health in communities with need. For 30+ years, Global Links has been collaborating with partners to improve health for vulnerable populations by sharing surplus rescued from the US healthcare system to support health programs globally and locally.

## We Believe in Health for ALL.

Global Links affirms our foundational commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. These important themes are at the forefront of our minds and our work and are woven throughout all we do. Respect for all people and the environment guides our mission. We recognize everyone has value and deserves to be included equitably. We recognize everyone is our neighbor and we are dedicated to helping all people live with dignity, independence, mobility, and in good health. We will call out inequities and injustice and work to lift up all.

**GLOBALLINKS.ORG**

**INFO@GLOBALLINKS.ORG**

**+1.412.361.3424**

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Global Links at the 2022 Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community.