

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026



HOSPITAL SISTERS
Mission Outreach



LETTER FROM Erica Smith, Executive Director

For nearly 25 years, Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach, founded by the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, has supported hospitals and clinics in 102 low-resource countries across Africa, Asia, Central/South America, and Eastern Europe. Many of our global recipients are hospitals operated by Catholic Sisters, building and strengthening health care as Sisters in America have done for more than 150 years.

These Sisters, along with all our global partners, rely on essential medical items from Mission Outreach to deliver care every day—often under extraordinary constraints—to a combined service area of 28,000,000 million patients who may otherwise go without even basic health services.

Please stand with us, and Catholic Sisters world-wide, who are serving their communities in this incredible health care ministry. Your support of Mission Outreach gives them resources to deliver dignified, high-quality care and strengthen their health systems. Together, we can realize a future where access to health care is not restricted by geography or income, but open to all. Thank you for sharing the gift of quality health care with people around the world.

Erica Smith

Erica Smith
Executive Director

Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach Team

Nick Amdor, *Warehouse Supervisor*
 Hannah Cline, *Foundation Specialist*
 Luis Cueto, *Warehouse Associate*
 Vicki Detmers, *Recipient Services and Operations Manager*
 Joe Hardwick, *Volunteer Coordinator*
 Rose Kibet, *Operations Specialist*
 Ratish Kumar, *Biomedical Engineer*
 Carolyn Oldenburg, *Foundation Director*
 Jay Rees, *Inventory Specialist*
 Erica Smith, *Executive Director*
 Michaela Szpulak, *Volunteer Specialist*
 Kenneth Ware, *CDL Driver/Warehouse Associate*
 David Wilcox, *CDL Driver/Warehouse Associate*

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Our Vision

Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach values ethics, quality, and sustainability.

Equipping health care workers in low-resource settings with usable medical supplies and equipment is complex. Our commitment to our international partners:

- We provide **responsible donation alongside health-related capacity sharing services** to ensure the donations made are usable, repairable, and sustainable.
- We invest in our partnering hospitals and health systems and develop **multi-year collaborations** to support the sustained development of stable health systems in low-resource communities.
- We share **knowledge and educational resources to build employable skills in medical support professionals** in our partnering communities.

We are driven by the needs of our partners.

After several decades of work with our partners, we understand the common needs and opportunities. Always in ongoing dialogue with the evolving needs of our partners, we focus on:



GLOBAL PHYSICIANS, NURSES SAVE PATIENT LIVES WITH MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

In America, we take for granted that when we have a health emergency, hospital clinicians will have the medical supplies and equipment they need to diagnose and treat us. In many areas of the world, however, physicians and nurses may not have access to even basic resources necessary for them to deliver optimal clinical care to their patients.

For the hospitals around the globe that work with Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach, equipment and technology for Labor and Delivery are often neither available nor affordable. Fetal monitors, ultrasounds, birthing beds and infant incubators/warmers are highly requested items from almost every hospital who receives a shipment from Mission Outreach.

This year, Mission Outreach received special donations of maternal/infant equipment from HSHS, Avera, SSM Health and Ascension. At one hospital that received a donation of fetal monitors, within a month clinicians reported improved birth outcomes and reduced risk for delivering mothers because of the new tools.

Such basic medical equipment empowers physicians and nurses to save the lives of mothers and babies. The World Health Organization lists lack of equipment as a contributing factor for disparate rates of infant and maternal mortality in low- and middle-income (LMICs) countries, where all of Mission Outreach's international recipients are located.

LMICs experience a high burden of maternal and newborn mortality. Globally, an estimated 2.4 million newborns died in 2020 with almost all these deaths (99%) occurring in LMICs (Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 66.3%). In Tanzania, for example, the neonatal mortality rate is 24 deaths per 1,000 live births compared to 5 per 1,000 in the United States.

Putting usable, quality medical equipment in the hands of clinicians can reduce preventable deaths of mothers and children, benefiting both families and entire communities.



Each year, Mission Outreach receives numerous requests to ship equipment for the care of newborns. In 2025, hospitals in Tanzania and Ukraine were among several that were equipped with infant warmers to ensure newborns maintain a stable body temperature.



HONDURAS HOSPITAL RECEIVES A “BOATLOAD” OF SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT FROM MISSION OUTREACH

In September 2025, a 40' container of medical supplies and equipment arrived at Clínica Evangélica Morava in Ahuas, Honduras. Items had to be transported via boat in several trips across a lagoon. We received this letter from Rick Nelson, who works with Clinica Evangelica Morava:

“We left Ahuas at about 2 p.m. last Monday and made four trips across the lagoon, returning with three boatloads of donations. Around midnight or 1 a.m. on Friday morning we delivered the final load to the facility in Ahuas.”

I realize that you send supplies all over the world and that you must receive thank you notes frequently. I feel inadequate in just repeating those same words, “Thank you”. They seem inadequate to express our appreciation for all the work that you did to get supplies to the Clínica Evangélica Morava in Ahuas. The many beds especially will help to upgrade older equipment. Older metal beds have rusted. Older wooden units are simply inadequate. The Hospital Administrator, Alex Ordoñez, was amazed at the number of syringes. An individual syringe may be an inexpensive item, but the many boxes will help Alex and the clinic to significantly reduce costs. With your help, we will be better able to treat the thousands of patients that the hospital sees annually.”

Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach, as a Christian ministry, has been blessed. You, in turn, have been a blessing to others. You have allowed me to share in those blessings as together we continue to minister in Christ's name.”



Workers from Clínica Evangélica Morava in Ahuas, Honduras, transport medical supplies and equipment from Mission Outreach across a lagoon to their hospital.



PARTNERSHIP WITH ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE OF NURSING ADVANCES GLOBAL NURSING SKILLS

Each year, about 2 million medical professionals in the United States participate in global medical mission work. Nurses are at the forefront of this valuable and lifesaving service. Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach partnered with St. John's College of Nursing to provide 40 students an opportunity to learn about global health as a part of their community health curriculum.

Nursing students spent a day at Mission Outreach, where they explored the topics of mother/baby health, ethical medical mission work and global health equity. As a bonus, the students heard presentations from Hospital Sisters of St. Francis who served as nurses and administrators in global medical missions in Haiti and Japan.



St. John's College of Nursing students assemble kits as a part of their global health experience work at Mission Outreach.

HEALTH CARE ON THE UKRAINE WAR FRONT LINES

Hospital receives vital medical supplies, equipment from Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach

Helping during times of crisis is hard, particularly sending large shipments of medical supplies and equipment. Knowing what to do, when to act and how to respond is the difference between aid that supports people enduring war or natural disaster or compounding a dire situation with unusable cargo. Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach provides responsible crisis response and recovery support to global partners who have established local relationships and logistical networks to ensure items are received efficiently.

Our health care colleagues in Ukraine inspire us – amid a grueling invasion that is in its fourth year, the Ukrainians remain determined to defend their home and maintain quality health care for all their citizens.

Recently we received an especially meaningful photo and letter from our shipping partner Razom about a Ukrainian hospital that is using medical items donated by Mission Outreach:

“We have a first batch of photos from a recipient [a non-profit municipal hospital in the Sumy region]. This hospital is 14 km from the border with Russia and is constantly under attack by shaheds [low-cost “kamikaze” drones used extensively by the Russian army and designed to attack from a distance], missiles, and even ballistic missiles. The hospital also has been having issues with energy and has more hours without light than with. Despite these daily attacks, constant challenges with power availability, and lack of available telecommunications, the hospital continues to operate daily, providing vital services for patients who remain in these regions. The doctors and nurses who remain there are heroes!”



None of us may be able to stop this war, but we can help those who are enduring it. That is how our team feels about our work with Ukraine, and all our global health care colleagues serving in places of violence or crisis. Since 2023, Mission Outreach has been providing requested medical supplies and equipment to Ukrainian hospitals and clinics. We have completed 17 shipments to Ukrainian recipients at a value of \$3.4 million. As long as our Ukrainian neighbors – and anyone else in the world – need our help, Mission Outreach will continue to support those who serve others, even in the darkest of times.

Ukrainian hospitals strive to stay operational, even in war zones, and depend on donations of medical supplies and equipment. A Ukrainian patient receives physical therapy using a walker provided by Mission Outreach.

Medical Mission work, when supporting the local health care network, can enhance access to critical services, provide training opportunities for local clinicians, and make life-changing surgical procedures possible for children and adults who may not be able to travel long distances. In 2025, Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach supported 95 medical mission teams who served throughout Central/South America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. **Here are a few of the letters we received:**

HONDURAS



From: Matt Miller, DNAP, CRNA, Operation Hope Medical Missions

“I wanted to let you know that our recent spring surgical mission trip to Comayagua, Honduras, at Saint Benedict Joseph Medical Center was a huge success. We were able to bless 98 patients with free life-changing surgeries. It was an amazing trip and Mission Outreach played a crucial role in helping our team with obtaining the necessary supplies. We are so blessed by your support and we couldn’t do it without your team! So, thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!

Our team looks forward to working with HSMO for our next trip!”

COLUMBIA



From: Marjorie Sasso Burke, Silver Service Children’s Foundation

“We want to thank you for all your help with the instruments and supplies. Everything all worked out. We saw 48 children in clinic. Twenty children had either eye muscle or ptosis surgeries. All the children are doing well. The instruments for the Fundacion Hospital filled up two carts. They were very pleased with the donation. We absolutely could not have done it without your help.”

GEORGIA



From: NLI Medical Center and Mike Mheidz
Zugdidi Hospital, country of Georgia

“On behalf of our clinic, we would like to express our gratitude for your donation. The inventory you sent will be used for the health and well-being of our patients. Your medical instruments found a new home in Georgia to save many lives! May God bless you, and we hope for continued cooperation in the future.”

IMAGING EQUIPMENT DURING SURGERY MEANS BETTER PATIENT OUTCOMES

C-arms are important for surgery – especially surgeries involving the joints and spine. The machine, which provides detailed images of the surgical site area, allows surgeons and clinicians to see bones, joints and soft tissue in “real time” (as the surgery is happening). St. Joseph Hospital in Moshi, Tanzania, has a surgery department with several rooms; however, they did not have a C-arm. This piece of equipment was a missing component for an otherwise outstanding team of surgeons, nurses and other clinical support professionals.

When a hospital in central Illinois was updating its surgical facilities last year, they donated a C-arm to Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach. The need for a C-arm at St. Joseph Hospital – and the clinical team’s ability to successfully receive, use and maintain the equipment – meant they were a great match for this critical resource.

Biomedical Engineer Ratish Kumar tested and prepared the C-arm. Our operations team (which includes Recipient Services Manager Vicki Detmers, Volunteer Coordinator Joe Hardwick and Michaela Szpulak, and our army of volunteers) ensured we sent the appropriate supplies and surgical instruments to support a robust surgical department. The C-arm was ready to go to Tanzania.

C-arms are both delicate and heavy. There are two major pieces to the C-arm, and even the slightest damage could render it unusable, and it weighs about 2,000 pounds. How would Mission Outreach make sure it endured the truck, rail and sea journey to make it to St. Joseph Hospital in one, working piece?

Colleagues at St. Joseph Hospital in Tanzania with the C-arm.



Enter our warehouse team. David Wilcox hand-built a crate to keep every part of the C-arm protected throughout the entire journey. Jay Rees and Luis Cueto packed the crate with supplies and scrubs to further stabilize and cushion the machine. Nick Amdor and Ken Ware designed the packing of the container to ensure even weight distribution, and all the pieces – including hospital beds, fetal monitors, IV poles and hundreds of boxes of supplies – arrived in excellent condition.

The journey from Springfield to Moshi, Tanzania, is 8,281 miles. The C-arm was first loaded from the Mission Outreach warehouse into a 40’ container in December. It was then transported by train to the port, where it was loaded onto a ship headed for Dar Es Salaam. Then, after being received into the port and passing inspection, it was loaded on another truck and driven eight hours to St. Joseph Hospital. On May 12, the container was opened and unloaded. The C-arm went from the container to a forklift to a truck bed, taken across a bumpy street, was unloaded by hand and wheeled into the operating room, where it was installed.

The journey isn’t over – while the C-arm is functional, St. Joseph is continuing to make updates to their operating room electrical infrastructure to support it (and other surgical equipment) for years to come, and Mission Outreach is helping them modernize their surgical services. However, the team celebrated this advancement of a new C-arm. It was a long 8,281 miles getting the C-arm from here to there, but for the surgeons who will use it to give their patients the best surgical outcomes possible, it meant the world.

EDUCATING FUTURE LEADERS IN BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

The Illinois College engineering department has joined with Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach developing medical devices that are cost-effective and sustainable in low-resource settings and have the power to prevent serious brain damage in infants.

As a part of the engineering capstone project, students are researching and designing a low-cost phototherapy unit that is highly needed for hospitals in low-resource areas to prevent a serious condition that commonly affects infants.

Neonatal hyperbilirubinemia, or jaundice, is the yellowish discoloration of the skin and sclera (whites of the eye) in a newborn. This is due to an immature liver that results in excessive amounts of bilirubin in the brain. Without treatment, newborns experience kernicterus, a serious condition that can lead to seizures, hearing loss and intellectual disability. Early diagnosis and treatment are vital to prevent permanent brain damage.

The cure for jaundice is well-known and simple with the appropriate resources, namely phototherapy. Phototherapy units expose

infants to artificial or natural light to break down the buildup of excess bilirubin pigment. However, many hospitals and clinics in poorer areas lack the ability to access or afford phototherapy units. Engineering students at Illinois College want to take action to address this inequity.

The students will build the phototherapy units compatible with electrical needs in the low-and-middle income African countries’ needs and infrastructure. The innovative project is low-cost, easy to use and will result in medical devices that can be shipped by Mission Outreach to hospitals and clinics throughout Africa. Each phototherapy unit is currently estimated to cost about \$500 to build and ship.

“It is such an incredible opportunity to partner with young academics and be involved in the research and development of medical devices that are improving children’s and families’ lives,” said Ratish Kumar, Biomedical Engineer at Mission Outreach.



Above: Ratish Kumar (left) with IC engineering student McKenzie Murray and IC professor Dr. Lisa Murray.



Scan to
watch the
video



"It was the most expensive lunch I've had in a long time," Joe White joked, sharing the inspiration for a recent contribution from Joe and his wife, Kelly, to support maternal and child health projects at Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach. He recently was invited to have lunch with the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis and sat between Sister Ann Pitsenberger and Sister Ritamary Brown – both of whom volunteer at Mission Outreach.

"When Sister Ann and Sister Ritamary told me about the Clean Birth Kits and the impact they're making, I felt inspired to help," Joe said. "Kelly and I believe in the work the Sisters have done, and this is an area where I could see the opportunity to make a real difference for others."

Joe and Kelly's contribution to Mission Outreach will help save the lives of mothers and babies in low-resource areas around the world by providing high-quality, safe medical supplies and equipment to doctors, nurses, and midwives. Clean Birth Kits contain the medical supplies needed to deliver a baby – supplies that are not available in many low-resource areas globally.

Since start of Clean Birth Kits last year, Mission Outreach has created and shipped more than 700 of them to Tanzania, Peru, and Kenya. The goal is to distribute 1,000 Clean Birth Kits annually.

Thanks to people like Joe and Kelly – and who they sit by at lunch – Mission Outreach will have the funds to provide this life-saving resource for mothers and babies around the world.

28,000,000 REASONS VOLUNTEERS SERVE

Last year, volunteers donated roughly **10,000 hours of work to Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach.** With about 100 regular volunteers and 80-90 one-time volunteers annually, donated hours of work totaling 10,000 hours. That's the equivalent of five full-time employees.

According to the IRS, that equates to a collective in-kind donation of \$361,400. All non-profits who benefit from volunteers can count their time as an in-kind donation at a rate of \$36.41 per hour. That means if Mission Outreach had to pay for the services our volunteers provide, we would need to add \$361,400 to our budget – the cost of sending seven global shipments of 40' containers of needed medical supplies and equipment.

While the monetary value is impressive, it's not why our volunteers give their time to Mission Outreach. They do a lot of interesting and meaningful tasks. Our volunteers serve in our sort room

to inspect, pack, and inventory medical supplies to be shipped globally. They help in our warehouse to pull orders and stock the shelves. Volunteers are community ambassadors who share our story and invite others to join us, as future volunteers and supporters.

Volunteers have 28,000,000 other reasons for why they're here. Each year, Mission Outreach shipments reach hospitals across the world. Last year we completed 125 orders of critically needed medical supplies and equipment to partners in Africa, Central/South America, Asia, and Ukraine. Our recipient hospitals and clinics, in some of the poorest areas globally, provide quality clinical care to 28,000,000 people.

Each of those reasons is a person, somewhere in the world, whose life may depend on the clinical care they need. That's why our volunteers give their time and talent to Mission Outreach.

LEAVE A legacy of healing

People like you have named Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach as a beneficiary of their estate, ensuring that vulnerable patients around the world experience dignity and hope through quality care.

Legacy gifts of every size make a lasting impact. Your compassion can heal for generations.

To learn more about including Mission Outreach in your estate plans or to notify us of an existing gift, please contact Carolyn Oldenburg, Foundation Director, at 217-492-6129 or carolyn.oldenburg@hshs.org.



AROUND MISSION OUTREACH



Laudato Si garden

Inspired by the example of St. Francis of Assisi's work "Canticle of the Sun," we honored our patron saint with a statue in our new Laudato Si garden that was donated in memory of Joan Geoghegan. The garden features native plants that support pollinators and butterflies. The Hospital Sisters Mission Outreach community blessed the garden and enjoyed watching it grow – especially as our first butterflies hatched a few months later!



Welcome

This year Mission Outreach welcomed four people to our team! From left to right: Rose Kibet, Operations Specialist; Michaela Szpulak, Volunteer Specialist; Carolyn Oldenburg, Foundation Director and Hannah Cline, Foundation Specialist.



The gift of sight: Lucy's Lenses

According to the World Health Organization, more than 800 million people globally have a near vision impairment that could be addressed with a pair of reading glasses. This startling fact spurred action this year at Mission Outreach. To kick off our ongoing collection efforts, the local Knights of Columbus #16126 collected 200 pair of reading glasses during drives at Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church.



Good as gold award winners

Our 2025 "Good As Gold" volunteer award winners were Chris Ahr and JoAnn Hamende. Congratulations and thank you!



Helping mothers and babies thrive

The members of the Tri-County Chapter of The Links, Inc. have assembled more than 500 Clean Birth Kits, a new initiative at Mission Outreach.