

**TINY FEET, BIG STEPS  
NEONATOLOGY CONFERENCE 2023**



***October 2023***

Dr. Stephen & Jodi Swanson  
ELCA Global Personnel



Dear Augustus Lutheran Church,

It's that time of year again when the leaves are changing colors... and the ***Tiny Feet, Big Steps 2023*** neonatology conference is coming up! This is the 3rd

annual conference we have hosted in Arusha and every year it grows. Our title this year no longer refers to advancing care in "Tanzania" or "East Africa". Rather, it is "*Tiny Feet, Big Steps-- Advancing Care of Critically Ill and Premature Babies in Africa*". We are excited to have ~100 hospitals joining us from 15 African countries October 23-27!

The past few months were spent in MN and GA as we took care of dental and medical appointments (Caedmon had a repeat knee surgery), visited friends and family, and had important time with grandparents while working remotely. Emails and text messages kept Steve especially busy though there were times to relax and unwind away from every day work in the hospital and regain some balance. It was so good to be near the lakes, to walk, swim and play with family and be encouraged by many.

Now that we have returned, we are in full motion. It is challenging to stay in a place of peace when the world around us and the daily challenges we face feel daunting. As we work, we remember Psalm 90:17, "...establish the work of our hands. Yes, establish the work of our hands." Our hearts and spirits are encouraged by our favorite artist, Steve Bell, to work in the world with kindness. He sings of God's work through us in the world in this way:

*Ours are the hands through which he works  
Ours are the feet on which he moves  
Ours the voices through which he speaks  
To this world with kindness*

*Through our touch, our smile, our listening ear  
Embodied in us, Jesus in living here*

*Let us go now, enspirited  
Into this world with kindness*

That is our heart, our prayer.

NICU Conference



If you like numbers (which I do!!), here are a few...

- 109 doctors and 128 nurses registered to attend, all of whom work in NICUs
- 100 hospitals
- 15 African and 2 Asian countries
- 5 full days of teaching (and 1 evening banquet!)
- 52 lectures and 24 skills workshops, covering everything from the neonatology basics (thermoregulation, respiratory support, growth and nutrition, sepsis) to complex topics (neonatal seizures, insertion of chest tubes, advanced resuscitation in babies, etc).
- Instructors coming from 23 institutions including speakers from South Africa, Botswana, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya
- Special sessions on sharing difficult news to grieving parents and how to care for yourself after a death.

This conference has become the largest neonatology training conference hosted in East Africa. It has nearly doubled in size from our first conference in 2021. We are grateful for the sponsors and donors who helped us cover the \$100,000 budget, so that we could assist doctors and nurses in attending from across the continent.

Follow the conference news!



These links are specifically related to the work in neonatology that we are involved with in Africa.

[Instagram:](#)

[Facebook:](#)

[YouTube:](#)

There will be social media updates and these accounts will follow the daily training at the upcoming conference and the lives that have been touched through this work. Follow along!

### 3 wonderful doctors





Over the past years, I have had the great joy of working with some amazing Tanzanian doctors. Often discovered during their internship year, they have joined our team of pediatrics, and after a few years of mentorship are supported to go on for an additional 3 - 4 years of pediatric training outside of Tanzania.

This year we are supporting (through your donations):

- Dr. Andrew Mwajonde (top), in his 2nd year of pediatric residency at Univ of Nairobi in Kenya
- Dr. Deborah Mwaipopo (bottom left), now starting her 1st year of pediatric residency at Univ of Nairobi
- Dr. Hilda Ruhimingunge (bottom right), who will start her residency at University of Stellenbosch in South Africa in Jan 2024. Hilda is a recipient of a generous ELCA scholarship!

All of these wonderful doctors are committed to returning to Arusha, and one day join our team of pediatricians! Nothing brings me more joy than mentoring them, and helping them pursue further training in pediatrics.

## Kid's Korner

Indya was back in MN for a short 5 weeks before heading back to Arusha and resettling at school in Kenya for her Sr. year! She is once again immersed in her studies and equally immersed with friends. Though she is a STEM girl, Art and

Pottery rank at the top of her list of favorites. A whole group of friends were just here for mid-term break which was a load of fun! They thrifted through the local market and swam in the clear hot springs and had all sorts of yummy food in our favorite restaurants. I think late night tea by candlelight while lying on the kitchen floor will long be remembered.

Hannah is also in her Sr. year, at St. Olaf College and just turned 23! Field Botany seems to be a favorite class of hers, but Film Photography is outranking them all! Her applications for vet school have all been submitted (no small feat!) and she is really enjoying time with her friends.

Last, but not least is Caedmon. His update is the most complicated! He had a fall while free climbing back in April and shattered his patella (knee cap) as well as incurring some other minor injuries, finished his semester after surgery in Madison, and then suffered a reinjury mid-July. Long story short, he had another surgery, this time in MN, and has a star mesh plate holding his patella together. Unable to traverse campus, he is enrolled in classes online part time, living with Grandma Val and will be returning to us in Tanzania mid-November. We would really appreciate your prayers for a complete healing. It has been more than a year since he left home and he is looking forward to being back in Arusha, hanging out with the dogs and a close friend. He plans to be back on campus in Madison for Spring Semester.

---

We would welcome your donation to help with the cost of the conference and the training of these pediatricians! The conference is subsidized through our Pediatric-NICU account to make it affordable for the nurses and doctors in the region. Some health care teams are sponsored by their hospitals, but many of them are not and would be unable to attend a conference like this without considerable help. It's a wonderful way to invest in global healthcare! Just click on the link below.

*Let us go now, spirited  
Into this world with kindness.*

**Steve & Jodi**

Care of hospitalized newborns and children, and training of doctors and nurses, is supported through your donations.

[www.tanzanianchildren.com](http://www.tanzanianchildren.com)

or

<https://give.ghm.org/nicu>



## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



We are supported through the gifts of churches with the ELCA. Churches and individuals can donate to our support through the ELCA: [elca.org/missionarygiving](http://elca.org/missionarygiving)

Find our names under the drop down tab, Designation: ELCA Missionary Sponsorship

---

### For more information and videos:

[www.tanzanianchildren.com](http://www.tanzanianchildren.com)

or

[Neonatology Africa](#)

Funds are received through Global Health Ministries (<https://give.ghm.org/nicu>) and directed in entirety towards clinical pediatric training of doctors and nurses in Tanzania, care of babies in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), medications, bed fees, and food for malnourished children.

### Our mailing address is:

Steve and Jodi Swanson  
c/o Michael Swanson  
16608 Early Dawn Trail  
Lakeville, MN 55044

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

This email was sent to [office@augustrappe.org](mailto:office@augustrappe.org)

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

Steve and Jodi Swanson · c/o Michael Swanson · 16608 Early Dawn Trl · Lakeville, MN 55044-6063 · USA

