



Empowering each other to serve the destitute elderly in the developing world.

March 2014

At Michael's House Inc., we realize that the work we do is only a drop in an ocean of need, and we realize our limitations. We are a very small charity (in existence since 2003) that has identified the need for intervention for people who are aged, have no family or other support and are destitute. We are not here to reinvent the wheel. We are not in the business of competing with other charities. We found a niche for elderly destitute people all over the developing world who, as we often say "are falling through the cracks." In other words, established charity workers in the field identify elderly people whose needs are desperate but who do not fall within the capacity of their particular mission. The charities do not have money to help these people.

They solicit help from us for these people and we do our best to respond positively. The needs are as idiosyncratic as the people are unique. In our mission, we have the flexibility without great bureaucracy to respond expediently to the need. We have a devoted caring group of all volunteers here in the USA who work together and meet once a month to facilitate the smooth running of our charity.

As we begin this eleventh year of service to the destitute poor, we are astounded to be able to say that **we have directly touched the lives of over 40,000 people**. We are so proud of this and realize that we could only do it with your unfailing support.

40,000 aided is only a miniscule number relative to the massive need. But we can say with assurance, based on our feedback from the field, that we have made a huge difference to each one.

THE IMPRISONED AGED – THE PROJECT AT MASAKA PRISON

Michael's House has decided to support the aged prisoners of Masaka Prison, located in south-central Uganda. Helen Ahearn, a recently retired administrator at Masaka Hospital, will administer this support as an advocate for the prisoners.

The abuse and injustice that occurs in Ugandan prisons has been documented by many organizations that monitor justice and human rights. Elderly people are especially vulnerable to false charges by corrupt neighbors or by greedy extended family who takes possession of the elderly person's hut and belongings. It is not uncommon for the accused to remain imprisoned for years without a hearing or being convicted of any crime.

Masaka Prison is overcrowded beyond reasonable capacity. Reports of Rwandan prisons routinely describe how prisoners are "forced to sleep in lines, on one side, so packed together that if one turned to his or her side, the entire row was forced to do so."

Prisons are notorious for beatings and torture. Food and medications are scarce. Soap, blankets, and clothes are nonexistent.



At many prisons, the prisoners sleep on the floor, so tightly packed they cannot turn except en masse.



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Elderly people without family or friends have no means of acquiring these items, making them more susceptible to disease and death. Children—whose sole provider is a jailed grandparent—are often also incarcerated.

Using donations provided by Michael's House contributors, we will provide funding for the purchase of soap, medicine, clothes, and food for needy elderly prisoners. Upon their discharge, we will also provide a small stipend to help them return to their villages and establish living arrangements.

“Let us touch the dying, the poor, the lonely and the unwanted according to the graces we have received and let us not be ashamed or slow to do the humble work.” Mother Teresa

Tricycles for Malawi

Sometimes the most poignant and needed aid can be invisible to us who live in developed countries. These needs are often unmet by large aid organizations or the government.

Michael's House recently approved the purchase of three specially made tricycles that can be operated using one's arms. The tricycles will be given to three elderly persons in a remote area of Malawi who are unable to walk. Dina, shown in the middle photo, broke her hip and now tends her small garden using her arms to scoot around on her bottom. The other two beneficiaries are Stephen, whose legs are permanently flexed by arthritis, and Wilson, shown in the top photo, who suffers from painful Spondylitis. Michael's house also approved funds for building a small storage area on the side of their small homes so the tricycles can be secured.

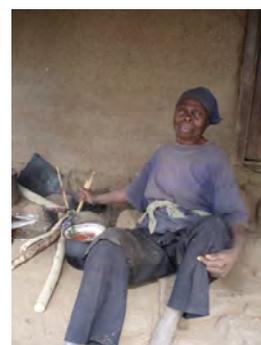
Michael's House identified the need for these tricycles through the Chipini Health Centre in Malawi. The Centre has a program where volunteer medical staff periodically visit the elderly in remote locations. Many of the elderly live alone after their children succumbed to AIDS or moved to the cities to find work. Many of the elderly care for their grandchildren.

The tricycles can be used on the relatively flat land and will give these individuals freedom and dignity not experienced in years. Transportation in this area is difficult. The main form of transport is the bicycle and even ambulance service is provided by bicycle. The photo lower right shows an elderly woman being transported to the Chipini Health Centre for care.

Thank you is in order!

To all of you who continue to support us, thank you. Everything you read in our newsletters and on our website and Facebook page to help the destitute elderly, is because of you. To the destitute receiving your help, it is a miracle.

Michael's House wishes to express its appreciation to three businesses that made substantial contributions this past year. Thank you to Hawkins Electric Service, Inc., Hawkins Construction of Washington DC LLC, and Rosedale Federal Savings and Loan Association. You will save and change the lives of thousands of destitute elderly people through your generous donations.



NEWS FROM HONDURAS

Everyone calls her “ABUELA” the Spanish term for “grandmother.” Her face is gentle with the well spaced and somewhat beautiful wrinkles on her smiling time-beaten face, the signs of the years she had experienced life through thick and thin. We used to pass her by along our way to or from work each day.

One day, our Honduran doctor asked our Home Visitacion Team if we could include Abuela among the people we visit because she lives alone in a rented room and has no family around. And so every month since then, Abuela is seen by the Home Visitacion Team and receives a bag of provisions that we give to those who need it as well as financial help to pay for her room rent. She also comes to our medical dispensary when she needs medical attention. Casa Visitacion now includes her among our list of beneficiaries supported by Michael’s House. There is no government program for the elderly.



Abuela’s full name is Maria Olimpia Leiva Rivera. Her identification card showed that she will be 90 years old in July this year. She was originally from Santa Cruz de Yojoa, a beautiful town near the lake and the thermal plant “El Cajon” some kilometres south of San Pedro Sula. She moved to Choloma area after her husband died many years before because her only son wanted to find work and had decided that there were more opportunities in the industrial town of Choloma. She says that she has no other relatives apart from her immediate family. And sadly, her only son also was gone suddenly when he accidentally fell off the scaffolding of a construction site and died leaving her alone to fend for herself. After giving him a decent burial, she continued to stay in their rented room finding manual jobs for as long as she was able. As time went by, she depended on her friendly neighbours and people of good will for her rent and sustenance. And now, Casa Visitacion is thankful to Michael’s House Funds for the Elderly, which enables us to help her with regularity.

Around September last year, her neighbour who occupied the house in front of her rented abode was attacked one night and killed by the intruders. She heard them asking one another if they should kill Abuela too but then they decided to leave without bothering her. Her immediate neighbour came to collect her later and brought her to their home because she was so agitated and fearful. For days, Abuela stayed with them until she felt well enough to return to her rented room.

Pondering on Abuela’s life, looking at her physically able to walk and move, her going out daily to find help from kind souls in this dangerous place of sector Lopez Arellano, one finds hope and faith in humanity.



The elderly receiving blankets from Michael’s House



The stove pictured is common to most houses. The wood-burning stoves made of clay have no chimney, hence the house is filled with smoke. The whole family is exposed to the smoke and toxic fumes. Michael’s House is providing funding for safer stoves.

Celebrating a Saint!

When Patrick was only a child, he was abducted by a group of kidnappers who trafficked in children. He was smuggled to a foreign country where he worked without being paid and was treated as an animal. His parents had no idea where he was or if alive or dead. He likewise had no way of communicating with them. He was a lost and abused child. No doubt he was exploited and molested. He did not know the language of his captors and masters. What a horror it must have been for him! What isolation and destitution he must have experienced.

By recalling his own experience as a bewildered destitute foreigner in Ireland with little hope of surviving, Patrick showed his empathy for society's less fortunate members: the poor, refugees and fellow slaves, many of whom lacked the ability to deal with captivity, abuse, neglect and dehumanization. After returning home to Britain, he later came back to Ireland to help the powerless and serve the poor and imprisoned. He lived to a ripe old age but never abandoned the destitute of Ireland.

On March 17 we celebrate the memory of St. Patrick. The day we honor his life has become synonymous with wearing outrageous green clothing, drinking pints of Guinness, being excessively inebriated and having woeful hangovers. Without taking away the joy and camaraderie that you may want to experience on the 17th, we should also remember Patrick's admirable character by following his example and adhering to his moral teachings: help the destitute.

This Patrick's Day and any other day, you can help the elderly destitute by donating to Michael's House. Sending the cost of a pint of Guinness (\$8.00) or any amount would be appreciated. This small amount will feed one of our destitute elderly for 2 whole weeks! You may mail us a check or donate through Pay Pal or the Network for the Good at our web site. www.michaels-house.org



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