

Providing Aid in Wau, South Sudan

Michael's House is responding to the crisis in South Sudan by providing aid to the destitute elderly and their dependent grandchildren in the city of Wau. The country was ravaged by strife and civil war for much of the last century. South Sudan attained independence and peace from Sudan in 2011 only to enter into another conflict in 2013 between the supporters of the president and rebels led by the former vice-president. The conflict among the different political and ethnic groups resulted in the killing of tens of thousands of South Sudanese and has displaced more than 1.9 million people. Many children witnessed their parents being killed and their homes looted or destroyed.

The city of Wau is presently calm with most of the fighting now focused in the oil fields to the north-east. However, the conflict has almost totally obliterated the local agriculture industry. Not only are the fields barren with no crops planted, most of the local farming population have fled the area. Plans are being developed to restore the agriculture capability, but this will take a number of years to begin to sustain the population.

Because of your support, Michael's House is able to fund food for approximately 1,200 of the most desperate while large scale funding is sought. We are providing dura (sorghum), the staple cereal of South Sudan, beans, sugar, oil, salt, and soap for personal hygiene and laundry.

The Elderly People of Wau



Elderly resident of Wau in her hut.



Elderly people of Wau.



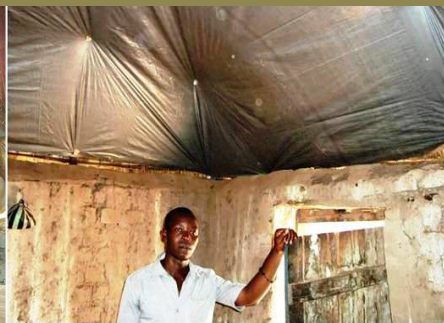
The elderly often care for their grandchildren.

Michael's House is also funding repair of the roofs and purchase of cooking pots. The roofs of many huts are in terrible disrepair as the wet season approaches. Roof repairs require large tarpaulins anchored by ropes and nails which are covered by layers of long grass. Michael's House is also funding new huts for homeless families.

Repairing Huts In Preparation for the Wet Season



Damaged hut roof.



Interior of hut repaired with tarpaulins.



Finished hut roof with grass attached over the tarpaulins.

Making a Difference Across the World

K
E
N
Y
A

Michael's House provides funding for the Kariobangi Cheshire Home in Nairobi, Kenya. The home provides residential and day care for the most impoverished elderly from Nairobi's slum areas. Each Tuesday, the home's clinic treats up to 120 leprosy patients. Leprosy is caused by bacteria, and the disease does require regular maintenance for skin lesions. For them, even the smallest task, like eating, can be difficult. The disease can lead to the loss of fingers, toes, hands, feet – even sight.



Left:
Elderly woman receiving care funded by Michael's House at Cheshire Home for Aged in Kenya.



Right:
Kirambi Rwandan elderly with new clothes and food.

Ethiopian elderly living near Buccama in Southern Ethiopia receive pensions from Michael's House for food and essential expenses.

E
T
H
I
O
P
I
A



Atare Abota – She is 62 years old and blind. With her pension, she no longer needs to beg for survival.



Gobane Anebo - She is 75 years old and lives with her grandchildren. Her husband died 45 years ago. Neither her or her grandchildren ever attended school. They are able to survive with her pension and the little income from her small garden.



Mina Misebo - He is 73 years old and lives with his wife and two children. He has been blind since age 51. Their pension and small garden provide subsistence.

Michael's House provides blankets and mattresses to needy elderly who live near the city of Choloma in the mountains of Honduras.

H
O
N
D
O
R
U
S



Serendipity: How a Two-Week Trip Inspired the Creation of Michael's House

We have all heard the word *serendipity*. It seems like a new age word, but it first appeared in 1754 and basically refers to the faculty of making fortunate discoveries by accident. It is like going out to find something we think we know we need and being led by chance to something that would avail us better.

In 2003 I decided to go to Ethiopia for two weeks to see if I could help destitute and sick children. I had definite ideas that I wanted to help this population because their plight was omnipresent in the media. I was limited financially and time wise. But I was anticipating retirement and knew that my situation would be more fluid later. So in my not unusual stubbornness and tunnel vision, I had to identify, and or connect with some reliable charity dealing with children, present my enthusiasm to help, and take on a role that would fit into my then available parameters. All in two weeks!

I spent every day visiting children's aid agencies, international charities, hostels, and clinics. I was overwhelmed by the innumerable charities caring for children's needs. Coupled with that were literally hundreds of mainly Europeans and Americans arriving daily to adopt babies and young children. It was staggering and quite impressive to see so many people willing to help these children.

Towards the end of my visit, I was a little despondent that I had not connected with any of the busy children's agencies. I was walking alone and almost aimlessly when I witnessed a massive crowd of people standing on both sides of a busy road. I thought it might be some kind of parade starting or a demonstration. But the mystery unraveled when a large truck stopped on the road and began to unload sacks of grain. Mayhem ensued. Hired men with sticks were trying to ensure that each person only got one sack. But it was futile. The chaos was too much for them. Those, especially the young able bodied, could grab two sacks while the weaker struggled with one. I even saw some young men quickly returning, bullying, and beating their way to grab a third sack. It was bedlam and the survival of the fittest. The whole distribution was over in about twenty minutes. Then all was silent. The sun was almost set.



Michael Craig, Founder, Michael's House

I was just about to leave that place when out of the corner of my eye, I saw movement on the far side of the road. ***Then I saw that it was old people in deplorable conditions. Some were crippled, some were blind, some were scooting on their buttocks. Emaciated and with so many limitations, they were timidly making their way to forage the residue of grain that had fallen to the ground. They were using every ounce of energy they had. They scooped up handfuls which they carefully secreted in the folds of their clothes and rags. Some of them just put fistfuls directly into their hungry mouths. These were the elderly street people for whom nobody was responsible.*** Sadly, I realized that, as in all species, there is a hierarchy of scavenging. Here it was at work. They were all alone. At this point, it came to me that I was stubbornly searching for the two weeks thinking I should be helping children. But right here was a problem crying out for help. This was serendipitous.

On reflection, I was reminded of the Biblical story of the man who sat near the Sheep Gate at the pool of Bethesda. Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed lay around the pool. One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. When the Healer saw him and knew how long he had been ill, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?"

"I can't, sir," the sick man said, "for I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred up. While I am trying to get there, someone else always gets in ahead of me." This was a type of intervention he never dreamed about. The Healer said "get up and walk." And he did!

Surely, this is what we at Michaels House are all about: Being cognizant and sensitive to the many destitute aged in the developing world who wait, often in vain, for a hand up, for relief from their pain. We reach out to those who are so near and yet so far away from help!

A serendipitous moment twelve years ago is now unwavering commitment by our donors and volunteers. Many crying out have received our hand—but more wait. Together, we can reach them with food, relief, and hope, so they may live out their remaining years with dignity.

Michael Craig, Founder, Michael's House

Providing Pensions in Tanzania

Pensions are provided for these needy elderly in Tanzania. Michael's House also provides medicine for elderly at the nearby hospital in Singida. Singida is located in central Tanzania, and the per capita income is one of the lowest in the region. Among the challenges is changing beliefs and traditions that sometimes result in older people being charged with allegations of witchcraft.



Why I Support Michael's House

As I reflect on my 12 years of involvement with Michael's House, I realize the incredible boomerang effect of giving whole heartedly to this worthy cause. The elderly poor are a forgotten population. They are not the "go to" one thinks of when deciding how to help those less fortunate. Which is precisely why I have loved this project.

The elderly poor ARE the ones who fall between the cracks as far as World Charities are concerned. I have seen first hand the unbridled joy and gratitude experienced by those who have felt discarded by society, when they receive caring support. And as I grow older myself, I can imagine the fear of being homeless, hungry, sick and alone. Imagine lacking a meal, a bed, medicine, clothing, and a feeling of even mattering to anyone. Imagine sleeping on the street as an old person. Being able to touch the life of a fellow human being, thousands of miles away, brings them hope but it also brings me hope and joy as well. What goes around truly comes around. But that is merely a nice perk.

Why should I give to Michael's House? Why do I give to Michael's House? Maybe just because I can.

Lynda Mischler, Vice President, Michael's House

SUPPORT

Your support makes all that we do for the destitute elderly possible. 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 (www.michaels-house.org) or make checks payable to: Michael's House Inc., Post Office Box 856, Burtonsville, MD 20866. Michael's House is a U.S. based 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Contributions to Michael's House in the United States are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by law.



You can follow Michael's House on facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/michaelshouse01>