

FROM ENTHUSIASTIC DONOR TO DEFENDANT IN A LAWSUIT

St Lucia Nursing Home and Orphanage creation, Connie Naber and Karama Connection involvement and the current status of legal actions. (updated 05/2011)

In 2003, W. Mwashala RN saw the urgent need of her own family, as well as neighbors and other community members, for nursing and palliative care. Seriously chronically ill people were admitted to hospital for a very brief stay to stabilize them and then discharged to die in the community. No palliative care was available and most family members did not know how to care for terminally ill persons or were terrified to do so. At first Mwashala consulted with families and offered direct nursing care in peoples homes. Because the need was so great, using her own limited personal resources, she rented a house to be able to care for numerous people at a time. St Lucia Nursing Home and Orphanage was born. St Lucia's core mission and values were defined as intensive nursing and palliative care delivered with ongoing family involvement toward the goals of stabilization and return to community.

With proper nutrition and good nursing care many people gained sufficient strength to return home. Others died leaving their children who were HIV+ who had no family or whose family out of fear refused to care for the ill child. Over the years, St Lucia Orphanage Program has cared for 156 children. Some children have died from opportunistic diseases. Some have died of AIDS. Others have been reunified with extended family members.

St Lucia has attracted both private and Governmental donors who have funded a variety of programs. For several years there was a large group of non-medical community health workers whose role was to follow up on former patients/orphans, teach their families about patient care and encourage people to be tested. 100's of people have been served.

For a time, a day care program for 55 children who were living with elderly grandmothers was successfully operating. An outpatient clinic providing testing and counseling was of interest to donor for a period of time. Intermittently, there were donors who supported the children's' health care and school expenses. For 3 years, St Lucia was the recipient of Global Fund monies to assess and provide for the needs of 7070 of the most vulnerable children (as defined by them) in the greater Arusha area.

St. Lucia learned many important lessons from directing and operating these and other programs, including: the willingness of many extended family members to care for orphans once they were medically stabilized; the importance of good follow-up care in the community with former reunited orphans and nursing home patients; the transient nature of donor funding and dependence on donors special interests; and the potential

impact of offering brief services to a very large number of persons rather than offering long term services to only a very few.

In 2005, an American woman, Connie Naber, volunteered in Tengeru, Tanzania and met Winfrida Mwashala. She was, according to her website, very touched by the people served by St Lucia and the work that Winfrida was doing. She went back home and started an organization to help. In response to a journalist's question: "what keeps you inspired? Definitely Winfrida. I'm not doing the hard work; I'm just raising money." (www.Karama Connection "The Compassion Cure" in www.readbreathe.com).

Over the years, Karama Connection held numerous fundraisers to raise funds to purchase land and to erect a building to replace St Lucia's rented space. The celebration occurred in spring of 2007 with Mama Kikwete, Tanzania's First Lady, officiating.

Other donors, both public and private, donated funds to buy cows and other animals, erect barns for animals, plant a garden, build a cooking house, sponsor some of the orphans, etc. Karama Connection funds paid staff salaries, purchased a van and supported its' operating expenses.

During this 4 year period there were differences between St Lucia and Karama Connection about whether St Lucia and Mwashala should be working part time Directing the Global Fund project; differences about Naber giving an unaffiliated woman staff salaries instead of payment through previously established correct accounting procedures; differences about whether Winfrida could continue her nursing education so that she could better help her people; differences about how many volunteers could be at St Lucia at one time and who needed to vacate their office so volunteers could take over the space; differences about the appointment of specific individuals in specific job functions, to name just a few of the numerous differences. Throughout this entire period of time it was expected by donor C.Naber that W. Mwashala donate her time to St Lucia and not receive a salary. And throughout this time there was an acceleration of abusive telephone calls and emails addressed by Naber to Mwashala, to her husband and to some staff.

Failing to reach agreement that a contract or letter of agreement delineating the separate roles of donor, staff and Board of Directors was essential, the St Lucia Nursing Home and Orphanage Trust Board of Directors officially notified Constance Naber and the Board of Directors of Karama Connection, effective from February 2010, that the working partnership was dissolved due to irreconcilable differences. No support funding has been received from Karama Connection since that time.

Beginning mid November 2010, Connie Naber arrived in Arusha and fraudulently assumed the role of Director of St Lucia. She:

- directly paid staff salaries, not through accountant so that they could be properly accounted for

- fired staff; hired new staff
- hired a security company with directions to disallow entrance of W. Mwashala, St Lucia's Director, and to have her arrested and jailed which in fact occurred
- hired an Advocate who coached a child to "tell the Police that Winfrida beat her" (as later told to Mwashala and others by the child) resulting in a Police investigation and court hearings; Naber's Advocate was attended at the Police Department by an Aunt who, after hearing the Court's information gathering, withdrew all charges
- arranged for the abduction of one of the orphans who was receiving treatment in hospital; he was taken to his village from which he had been estranged for over 5 years and, lacking any medical treatment, in the company of strangers, died 2 days later
- visited the pediatricians of the hospitals most used by St Lucia for the orphans' treatment and the Commissioner of Social Work of the District and slandered Mwashala
- as told to Mwashala and others by staff uninterested in a legal suit, C. Naber and her Agent gathered a group (The group included a part time volunteer, individuals who quit their job during or the last day of their probationary period who were therefore ineligible for any benefits and an individual who demanded reimbursement for relocation expenses but who was already living in Arusha where he was to be employed.) of former staff together to submit a Labor Dispute over not having been paid PPF (similar to Social Security) due to them that allegedly Nabor had sent to Mwashala - this case was recently settled in favor of St Lucia and dismissed
- called numerous former volunteers and people planning to volunteer in the USA, England and elsewhere slandering Mwashala and discouraging people from volunteering and from donating
- contacted the Ministry of Health of Tanzania and the Arusha newspaper reporting many deaths of children at St Lucia. In fact there is a very proud history of only a few deaths over the past 6 years - only 4 children have died while in St Lucia's custody - 2 of chicken pox, 1 previously detailed and 1 due to chronic Otitis media and Tuberculosis. It is important to note for those without medical background that HIV+ children are very vulnerable to opportunistic diseases and it is a testimony to their good care that so many have survived and been able over the years to be reunited with family in the community
- arranged the removal of children from their homes, whose health was stabilized and were recently reunited with family, to an unknown location without authorization of appropriate officials and also attempted to enter St Lucia property demanding that orphans be given to an agent of Naber
- attempted to put the land, the building and the name St Lucia Orphanage into her own name (Lucia is the name of Winfrida's deceased mother) Now Naber is advertising that orphans - recently taken from their family members - will be housed at an orphanage named Karama in Moshono which is where St Lucia is located.

Numerous of these incidents occurred even after 23 December 2010 when the District Court of Arusha in the United Republic of Tanzania issued an injunction order Civil Case No.28 " restraining the Respondents", (Constance Naber and KK Security), "their agents, workmen or any other person from interfering with the smooth running of the Applicant's Trust and operation of the children's nursing home situate at Moshono - Arusha." This case is currently being adjudicated.

Four months later, end of April, Naber filed an objection to the Court order and asked that the injunction against her be removed. Given all the evidence of interference by her personally and her Advocate and other hired agents, the Court dismissed her request. The case will reach its' final disposition soon.

At the end of April, delegates of the Ministry of Health conducted an investigation. All Nabers accusations were investigated through meetings with numerous institutions/individuals; no evidence was found to support Nabers accusations. St Lucia's policies, documentation and care were thoroughly reviewed. The work of St Lucia was viewed positively as well as positive statements about the clean site.

It is requested that anyone interested in supporting any function of St Lucia, any sponsorship of individual orphans, any sponsorship of orphans reunited with their family do so directly with St Lucia Nursing Home and Orphanage and not through Karama Connection nor to C. Naber as an individual. You may contact us through our email or website and we will provide you with an easy way to submit any donations.

St Lucia is very proud of its history of accepting responsibility for acutely ill and dying children and successfully stabilizing their health so that they may be returned to extended family members and grow up in village life, cared for by family members and not be stigmatized because they are living in an orphanage for HIV positive children. We hope that you will share our vision of success.

We welcome any inquiries and will answer your questions and address your concerns to the extent that we are able to do so while the remaining lawsuit is still being adjudicated.

