Leprosy Victims in Liberia Walk Again

It’s Thanks to These Amazing Shoes — Just $10 a Pair!

When you see the feet of a leprosy victim, you wince at how painful they look — swollen, cut, toes missing, and covered with large ulcers. Yet they’re not painful at all, and that’s the problem, as the doctors at Ganta hospital in Liberia know all too well.

Ganta hospital is one of the only leprosy treatment centers in Liberia. At any given time, about 40 people are receiving treatment for the disease, and the staff goes into local villages to look for people who need treatment and to check on patients.

Some of the most amazing work done at the hospital, though, is caring for people with disabilities. Doctors provide ulcer care, reconstructive surgery, and rehabilitation, treating about 50 people at a time. As part of the rehabilitation, doctors provide these special shoes that help leprosy victims walk.

The feet of leprosy victims are often completely numb from nerve damage. So when their feet become cut or damaged, they can’t feel it. Walking is difficult, and with each step, they risk further damage to their feet.

But these special shoes change all that. These shoes protect feet from cuts, ulcers and infections. They also have special insoles that help leprosy victims walk more easily. So people with leprosy can get around to take care of themselves, get food, and work.

These shoes open up a whole new world. And the best part is, just $10 will provide a pair for someone who’s suffering. Think how much good your donation will do.

Maybe even worse, the nerve damage that leprosy causes has left her with numb patches on her body. She can hurt herself without even realizing it.

Her fingers are severely clawed, nothing more than small stumps. Simple things like using a fork to eat are all but impossible.

She spends a lot of time in her wheelchair. Walking is a challenge and a risk because leprosy has further damaged her foot. If she were to stumble or hit her foot, she could cause even more damage.

Her fingers are severely clawed, nothing more than small stumps. Simple things like using a fork to eat are all but impossible.

The feet of leprosy victims walk more easily. So people with leprosy can get around to take care of themselves, get food, and work.

This man is affected by leprosy and works making special shoes at Ganta hospital in Liberia. Your gift will provide similar shoes that allow victims to walk and work while their feet remain protected.

Give Now — Beat Leprosy and Its Stigma!

YES! I want to help put an end to leprosy and its stigma by providing care and the cure for suffering people. Enclosed is my gift of:

- 1 $25
- 2 $50
- 3 $75
- 4 $548 to cure and care for one person
- $_______ to help as much as possible.
- I want to join Miracle Partners and give $_______ monthly.

Name:

Address: ____________________________________________________

City: ___________________ State: ______  ZIP: ______________

My email address is: _________________________________________.

Thank you! Please make your tax-deductible check payable to American Leprosy Missions, and mail it with this reply form in the enclosed envelope to American Leprosy Missions, P.O. Box 5002, Hagerstown, MD 21741-5002. Or donate securely online at www.leprosy.org. If you have questions, call us at 800.543.3135.

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The Stigma of Leprosy Causes as Much Damage as the Disease

This Young Girl Courageously Battles the Emotional and Physical Trauma

The first time leprosy came, I got blisters,” Patience said. “My family didn’t do anything. They were all afraid of me.”

A young girl of 16, Patience has been devastated by leprosy and wounded to her soul by its stigma. Late afternoon approaches at Ganta rehab hospital in Liberia, and Patience sits in her wheelchair out on the porch. The occasional cool breeze brushes against her cheek.

She spends a lot of time in her wheelchair. Walking is a challenge and a risk because leprosy has left her with foot drop, a condition in which nerve damage affects the functioning of the foot. If she were to stumble or hit her foot, she could cause even more damage.

Her fingers are severely clawed, nothing more than small stumps. Simple things like using a fork to eat are all but impossible.

For Patience, the stigma of leprosy is as devastating as the physical effects. But you can help people like her with your support.

Right: You can help stop the stigma of leprosy from killing another victim like Pauline. She died after her family refused to feed her because she had leprosy.
From the President’s Desk

What I Discovered in Nepal

Dear Friend,

I’ve just come back from Nepal, a rugged and beautiful country where the people are kind and open.

On a previous trip, our group trekked to a remote village, and that’s where I met Thamini. What I learned shocked me.

Thamini told me that she raised a machete over her head and swung it down, slicing off her own foot! It was an act of desperation. You see, once Thamini learned that she had leprosy, her life changed in an instant. She had a wound on her foot that would not heal, and the ulcers from leprosy caused a foul smell.

If it were another disease, people might have felt compassion for her. But because it was leprosy, the reaction was fear, scorn and hatred.

Thamini’s children were taken from her. Her husband left her. And she was thrown out of her village.

Cast out from her home, Thamini made her way to the river some distance from the village. All alone and fending for herself, she foraged for food, doing whatever she could to survive.

One day, when some men were cutting wood in the forest, Thamini asked to borrow a machete. They gave it to her and left. It was then that she cut off her own foot. Miraculously, she stopped the blood, and the wound healed.

Thamini feels wanted now. We support her care and restoration. Her community now knows that leprosy is not some curse and that you can’t readily catch it from another person.

Thamini’s story is a continual reminder to me of why we do what we do at American Leprosy Missions: We work so that a little girl out there doesn’t someday have to cut off her foot to be reunited with her family.

In the Gospel of Luke, John the Baptist sends his disciples to Jesus to ask, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” And Jesus replies, “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, people with leprosy are healed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.”

Just as Jesus did, you can bring healing to people who are suffering. Your support cares for and cures people with leprosy and can even help end this disease and its stigma once and for all.

Thank you and God bless you,

Bill Simmons
President and CEO

Profile in Caring:

Linda Lehman, OTR, MPH, C. Ped., Technical Director, Programs

A dedicated healer, Linda began her work with American Leprosy Missions in 1984. She’s a gifted therapist and internationally recognized expert in disability prevention. She also has a great deal of passion for her work, which entails community-based rehabilitation, field-based training, and preventing disability.

She works with partners focused on leprosy and Buruli ulcer programs in Latin America and Africa. Born in Carlsbad, New Mexico, Linda was an exchange student in Japan, received a B.S. in occupational therapy from Colorado State University, a master’s degree in public health from Emory University, and then completed her pedorthotics specialty and certification.

“My mission is to be a channel of God’s love in word and deed to those affected by disability and disease, so they can live lives of dignity and hope,” Linda said.

Isn’t it good to know that your generosity is backing the work of caring professionals like Linda? Your gifts send her and her colleagues around the world to help people in need.

(continued from front page)

The Stigma of Leprosy ...

As a hospital worker sits with her to feed her, she talks and laughs with the others — a welcomed moment. But then her face grows solemn as she looks off. How much more suffering lies ahead?

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Or donate securely online at www.leprosy.org. If you have questions, call us at 800.543.3135.

For more information: please visit our Web site at www.alm.org.

One ALM Way, Greenville, SC 29601
800.543.3135 | www.leprosy.org

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