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## Partnering for Progress aids people in Kenya

By Erin Rebar - Intern

Partnering for Progress (P4P), a Spokane-based relief program that provides aid in education, nutrition, health, clean water and economic development to an impoverished region in southwest Kenya, has accomplished much for a nine-year-old organization, according to part-time executive director Dia Maurer.



**Wayne Krafft teaches a teacher in Kopanga.**

government organizations. Together they become a catalyst for change, breaking the long-standing cycles of poverty and disease, said Dia, who learned about the program from her dentist, who told her while he had a drill in her mouth.

Although she has operated strictly on the U.S. side of the project, Wayne Krafft, a P4P volunteer and chemist, has traveled to Kenya several times with the organization.

Wayne learned about P4P through his wife, Patti, a nurse practitioner who worked with one of the original founders of the program, Stacie Mainer, ARNP, to help establish a self-sustaining health clinic—the original focus of the organization.

“Roads are scarce in that part of Kenya, and luxuries often taken for granted in the United States, such as electricity, are a rarity,” said Dia, describing the lack of infrastructure.

P4P recruits medical, education and engineering volunteer teams to travel to Kopanga to provide on-site health care, training, education and project development in collaboration with community health providers, school leaders and local water committees.

Organizers work to understand the needs of the communities through communication with local, regional and

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The clinic, he explained, was a tiny shack with dirt floors, no power and no running water.

“Working there fit my wife’s skill set,” he said.

When he was first approached about joining the P4P team, Wayne wasn’t certain there was much he could contribute, given P4P’s focus on the health field.

“I’m a chemist by education and work in the environmental field,” he said.

Eventually, he found he could contribute to the cause by applying his skills in chemistry and ecology. In 2010, he made his first trip to Kenya and began working on a new project—developing clean sources of drinking water.

“I realized that we just can’t go over for a couple of weeks a year, do some health care and make any significant changes, Wayne said.

“We actually have to change the community, and we have to do that in a multi-faceted way if we want to have any real impact. Water and sanitation were an outgrowth from health care,” he said.

In southwestern Kenya, finding water isn’t the problem.

“Water is plentiful there,” Wayne said, “but it is all hand carried. It’s drinking out of mud puddles. It’s drinking from streams—the same ones that the horses, cows and everything else drink from. There’s not much in the way of outhouses, so outdoor sewage runs into the water. People drink that water and get sick.”

Wayne’s involvement requires working with the people in a two-faceted way. First, he helps villagers understand what pathogens and water-borne diseases are by introducing them to French chemist Louis Pasteur’s studies. Then he brainstorms with his team to come up with solutions that work.

P4P educates villagers about differences in cleanliness between water sources, and coming up with simple, low-tech solutions to obtain clean water.

“The problem is,” Wayne said, “if someone is carrying a five-gallon bucket, how far is he or she going to go to find clean water? Especially if the person carrying the water doesn’t understand that there’s a real difference between clean and polluted sources.”

Dia, whose passion for P4P is evident in her voice, is overjoyed with what the organization does.

“One of the efforts we have engaged in this year,” she said, “is encouraging people to help us sponsor scholarships for children. We have \$100, \$300 and \$500 levels. A \$500 scholarship will support a child through a year of high school at boarding school. That’s room, board and education. I think that’s important for people here to know because it’s affordable, and it changes a life.”

Dia serves as a communication hub for P4P. She coordinates P4P’s seven committees of volunteers and helps them collaborate on what they do.

She also supervises P4P’s full-time staff member in Kenya—a Kenyan who works on the ground with the people P4P serves.

Dia has always been drawn to international work. Before P4P, she worked for Habitat for Humanity’s international program, because she feels like she is blessed to be born here.

“It fits into my faith system, that we are all God’s children and to the least of these we should give because we have been given much,” she said.

Her faith journey has taken many twists and turns through her life. She has been Methodist, Lutheran and Baptist, and is now Presbyterian. “God has been the constant in my journey,” she said.

“P4P involves people of many faiths,” she said, “and some of no particular faith, but they come together out of a passion to reach out to others who weren’t born with the blessings we have. We did nothing to deserve to be born here and now. It’s a gift for us to be able to share.

P4P’s “Into Africa Auction” will be held on Saturday, Oct. 1, at 5:30 p.m., at the Mirabeau Park Hotel, 1100 N. Sullivan Rd. in Spokane Valley.

That event raises 40 percent of P4P's revenue in one night.

"There's always room for more help. There's a ton of work to do," Dia said. "We need a videographer and a web designer for communication. Those things need to happen to keep the funding rolling along so the work can be done.

"P4P is about sharing the gifts we've been given with people who are less fortunate," she said. "They want better lives for their children, good health and sustainable incomes. They want to be well-fed and healthy."

**For information, call 720-8408, email [info@partneringforprogress.org](mailto:info@partneringforprogress.org) or visit [partneringforprogress.org](http://partneringforprogress.org).**

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