



## WORLD MEDICAL RELIEF, INC.

*Serving the Sick & Poor Locally, Nationally, and Internationally Since 1953*

### EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM NAMED FOR MIKE BAYDOWN

From the Washington Monument to Wrigley Field, many places we cherish are named in honor of people. Despite their importance to individuals, communities, and nations, we may not know the stories behind the names these special places hold. In preparation for the naming of an integral space at World Medical Relief, we wanted to share the story of the dedicated man who's been part of our work for nearly 30 years.

On Saturday, March 20, 2021, World Medical Relief will name its Executive Board Room for Mike M. Baydown, who is currently in his

second term as Board of Directors Chairman. From his first meeting with our CEO, Dr. George Samson, who was then the manager international programs, Mike felt a remarkable connection to the organization, its mission, and its people, both volunteers and staff. As an appointed Honorary Consul General for Liberia, he had reached out to World Medical Relief after being asked by the country's foreign minister for help with healthcare and education during the first Liberian civil war.

As Mike noted, "At that time... very little was

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Honorary Consul General, Mike M. Baydown, in Liberia.

## CEO NOTES

George V. Samson, Ph.D.



## COUNTRIES

*Served In 2020*

Armenia  
Belize  
Côte d'Ivoire  
Ethiopia  
Ghana  
Israel  
Kenya  
Kurdistan  
Lebanon  
Pakistan  
Philippines  
Senegal  
Sierra Leone  
Somalia  
Sudan  
United States  
Yemen

With the end of the pandemic in sight, I am happy to report to you that with the help of so many dedicated volunteers, we are back on track to ship at least one container per week. New partnerships have been formed and we are preparing for shipments to Mali and Cameroon while continued efforts will be made in Nigeria and Yemen. Recently, we have also assisted Sierra Leone.

While still plagued by illiteracy, poverty and hunger, the present peaceful atmosphere in Sierra Leone has helped the country in its rebuilding after a brutal civil war that ended in 2002 destroying the country's infrastructure and hampering its political, social, and economic development. We are delighted that we can assist.

Looking back to 2020, despite all the challenges, 53 40-foot containers left our loading

docks and we supplied 5 medical missions. With these shipments, 803,728 pounds were kept out of the landfill while assisting thousands of people who live in abject poverty in areas afflicted by war or natural disaster.

These shipments would not have been possible if it wasn't for the many hands that helped. While we had limited capacity to host volunteers due to the Covid-19 precautions, 1,320 volunteers continued to support the mission with 13,487 hours of their time.

Locally, 13,393 low-income people received durable medical equipment, affordable prescriptions, medical supplies, new twin size blankets, crib blankets and hygiene kits. We also distributed 92,255 PPE items. All this amazing work was done in collaboration with 156 community partner agencies.

Most recently, we received the wonderful news that a new foundation - the Molinello Family Foundation - is supporting the local blanket relief program and we also received a generous grant from the Village Club Foundation for crib blankets. Longtime funders, the Rhoades Foundation and the City of Detroit, renewed their support for the prescription program.

After a quarter decade of service to World Medical Relief's mission, it is my distinct pleasure to celebrate Mike Baydoun, current Chair of the Board of Directors, this month, when World Medical Relief's board room will be named in his honor. Without people like Mike, I could not do my job as the CEO of this agency and I am eternally thankful for his support.

I am looking forward to see you in person hopefully later this year! In the meantime, please be safe and stay well!



George Samson (CEO), far left, Richie Connor (warehouse staff).

## CONTINUATION OF EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM NAMED FOR MIKE BAYDOUN

being done in the health sector (which), along with the education sector, was heavily impacted. The people most hurt were the very young and the very old. For nearly seven years, there was a complete breakdown of health-related assistance."

"One of the organizations that was able to help was World Medical Relief... They opened their doors and, for several years, (it) was the main source of medical supplies and equipment for Liberia. I credit World Medical Relief with saving tens of thousands of lives. Ever since then, I've been committed and do whatever I can to support this great organization."

After helping him obtain life-saving items for Liberia, the bond he felt with World Medical Relief grew stronger. Mike was asked to join the Board of Directors; of which he is now Chairman. In addition to his Board position, Mike was awarded one of the organization's highest honors: the Irene M. Auberlin Award, named for the founder of World Medical Relief, which is presented to an individual who has displayed an abiding commitment and dedication to helping fulfill our mission of relieving human suffering throughout the world.

Mike is the CEO of both Tri-Star International, specializing in international trading, recycling of consumer goods, appliances, and steel, and Tri-Star Real Estate Development Company. He holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Detroit and a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of San Diego. He also received the General Civil Mediation training from the Michigan State Court Office and is a Wayne County Sheriff reserve police officer.

As a key World Medical Relief supporter, Mike was instrumental in securing the organization's new headquarters in Southfield. He facilitated 43 humanitarian and diplomatic missions to the continent of Africa and built and equipped 15 hospitals and clinics. He also regularly lends a hand with logistics and the acquisition of large donations like hospital beds.

In addition to the Irene M. Auberlin Award, Mike's



Honorary Consul General, Mike M. Baydoun and his daughter Yasmeen with Governor Whitmer.

service to others has been rewarded with numerous honors, including recognition from the Kiwanis Club as an International Distinguished President and an outstanding service award from the Wayne Mediation Directors. For his humanitarian efforts, Liberia, named its Mike M. Baydoun Health Center in Marshall, Liberia in his honor.

Speaking about his role at World Medical Relief, Mike said, "In Islam, we are taught that if you save one life, you save humanity. This organization saves lives and makes an important impact. I'm a small part of this effort, volunteers and donors make a real difference."

World Medical Relief is honored to celebrate the naming of the Mike Baydoun Board Room this month with Mike and his family. The event will take place on Saturday, March 20, 2021, and begins at 11 a.m. For those interested to watch, please join the live broadcast on Facebook (Facebook page: World Medical Relief, Inc.).

If you would like to honor Mike before, during, or after the event, please consider a donation to the World Medical Relief endowment at the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan. Contributions to the endowment ensure the mission of World Medical Relief in perpetuity. To contribute in honor of Mike, please visit <https://cfsem.org/world-medical-relief/>

If you are interested in naming opportunities at World Medical Relief, please contact Director of Development and Community Affairs, Josephine Jabara at 313.866.5333 EXT. 243 or [jjabara@worldmedicalrelief.org](mailto:jjabara@worldmedicalrelief.org).



St. John Armenian Church members, including Greg Baise, volunteering their time at World Medical Relief.

## CONTAINERS OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES DELIVERED TO ARMENIA

When Greg Baise became involved with World Medical Relief, he saw the possibility of sending medical supplies to Armenia, although the country wasn't currently served by the organization. That desire to help disadvantaged Armenians remained, something he poetically calls "a really far away dream."

Conflicts, including the deportation and genocide of hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, beginning in 1915 and lasting throughout World War I, have plagued Armenia for centuries. Following the genocide, waves of Armenians left for countries across the globe, including the United States and Canada. More recently, Armenian independence left the country free from both Soviet rule and protection. Struggles over Nagorno-Karabakh,

a largely Armenian district of Azerbaijan, caused clashes between groups in the region to escalate into war.

A 1989 blockade initiated by Azerbaijan crippled the Armenian economy and the war resulted in even more Armenian deaths. By the mid-1990s, these atrocities again led thousands of Armenians to emigrate. In the late 2000s, Armenia signed agreements with both Azerbaijan and Turkey, hoping to end the strife over not only land and resources, but issues related to the Armenian Genocide. Neither accord held and fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh continued.

When Armenian President Serzh Sarkisyan announced, in 2013, that the country would join the Russian-led Eurasian Customs Union, the news surprised many inside and beyond Armenia's borders, as the country had been in years-long talks to join the European Union (EU), hoping to bring it closer, diplomatically and economically, to the West. Although a limited agreement with the EU was reached in 2017, internal political struggles, as well as continuing clashes over Nagorno-Karabakh, have plagued the country for the past three years, culminating in war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in September 2020. Although short-lived, the war overwhelmed Armenian forces and the republic's straining economy, which was burdened by the COVID-19 pandemic and the influx of refugees fleeing regions now under Azerbaijani control. It is this history, past and recent, that drove Greg's dream of helping those in Armenia.

As a pharmacist and member of St. John Armenian Church, located on the Southfield/Detroit border,



Greg & Edith Baise at World Medical Relief, happy to volunteer time at World Medical Relief.

he knows helping others strengthens both our community and world. Greg has been a longtime volunteer at the oldest free clinic in the United States, Cabrini Clinic in Detroit, MI, serving the needs of the underserved and underinsured.

In August 2017, the parish had its first volunteer day sorting supplies at World Medical Relief. Amidst the parishioners, Greg organized items along with his wife Edith and their grandchildren. As the church began regularly volunteering, Greg's dream of helping in Armenia became a focused goal, which solidified when he was elected first to the WMR Advisory Board and later to its Executive Board in 2020. His medical background gave him insight into not only the problems those without adequate healthcare face, but also what supplies and equipment cost.

Through the Knights of Vartan, a non-political, non-sectarian, non-denominational fraternal organization established in 1916 in the U.S. in response to the Armenian Genocide, members are encouraged to take leadership roles in cultural, educational, religious, and charitable organizations worldwide. These roles allow members to impact fellow Armenians worldwide as well as non-Armenians everywhere.

In June 2020, Greg approached Kazar Terterian, the highest-ranking officer in the Detroit chapter, with the proposition of donating medical supplies to Armenia through World Medical Relief. The puzzle pieces fell in place when a generous Knights of Vartan benefactor helped with the funding needed to subsidize the container and its shipping. Shipping management, even in the age of technology, is often challenging. The COVID-19 pandemic compounded the usual challenges, including packing the container, which had to be done following health and safety protocols. Working with half of the usual number of volunteers, the container was safely packaged with no fear of exposure to the disease and shipped.

After leaving World Medical Relief, the container traveled to New York to begin its overseas journey. Again, there were challenges, but the well-connected Knights of Vartan handled these

skillfully. Kazar reached out to Peter Abajian, Executive Director of the Berkeley, CA-based Paros Foundation, which implements "humanitarian, educational, cultural and development projects" in Armenia. Peter, a University of Michigan alum and a member of the Knights of Vartan, handled shipping to Yerevan, Armenia, its final destination, by way of the Black Sea port of Poti, Georgia. While the ongoing war complicated shipping, transport to Armenia is often trickier than to other nations because the country is landlocked on all sides. As Greg noted, "That we were able to do this in spite of all the potential dangers and logistic challenges is a testament to Peter and the success of the Knights of Vartan mission." That the first container arrived in the Armenian capital on November 26, 2020 - American Thanksgiving - was no accident in Greg's mind.

A second container arrived in Yerevan on January 31, 2021 and a third arrived in late February, sponsored by St. John Armenian Church itself. For Greg, this is all part of God's plan. He points to the priests of St. John Church as not only shepherds of their flock, but of the world at large. "Their awareness of the world's needs... became a way for us to demonstrate our faith," said Greg. It was this forethought from the Southeastern Michigan Armenian community that put faith into action: "These shipments are the result of the vision of our Detroit, MI Knights of Vartan, looking to meet the charitable needs of the people in Armenia. Today, because of the hard work and dedication of our organization, combined with the resources of World Medical Relief, that dream has been realized."



Volunteers, including Greg Baise, helping to prepare a container for shipment.

## NEW PROGRAM BLAZES A TRAIL FOR DIABETES PATIENTS

In March of 2020, World Medical Relief's Affordable Prescription Program was expanded with the Pathway to Better Health for Diabetic Clients. A year later, Pathway's first year is wrapping up with successes to report.

The premise of the proposed venture was that World Medical Relief would not always be able to fill the insulin prescriptions because of budget limitations (insulin is still very expensive). Research also showed that diabetics are often not aware of the resources available to them or they have problems accessing these resources. Furthermore, since diabetes is a complicated illness, many people have trouble managing their blood glucose levels because they lack understanding of their disease or the use of the tools they need to manage it.

### MUCH WAS ACCOMPLISHED IN THIS FIRST PROGRAM YEAR

With the help of volunteer Tom Lombardi, an Access database expert, a database was built to keep track of the clients' progress. Intake, program and exit surveys were designed as well as the written communication templates.

A modular online learning system was designed with an alternate paper version for those patients who do not use a computer. Here too, volunteers were crucial for making it happen. The website based learning system was designed by the Kappa Psi Fraternity of the doctoral pharmacy students at the Wayne State University. Peggy Julian, a recently retired telephonic case manager at Blue Cross Blue



Karen Bush, local program manager with Tom Lombardi.

Shield with 25 years of public health experience, helped to adapt these materials into a presentation apt for the audience.

Clients received much phone support during the "Pathway" by Ieshia Dawson, the diabetes coordinator, who frequently checked back with them to see how they were doing. She would review what was learned from the educational packages but also not shy away from helping the client how to cook healthy with the content of his/her fridge. The majority of the clients report after going through the learning modules and the follow up phone calls from the coordinator, that they better understand what foods they should eat and what to avoid and that in general they understand their illness better.

Client Arlice S. a senior, has been on the Affordable Prescription Program for two years. She says that she doesn't know what she would have done about her medications if it wasn't for the program. She had been trying to find some support to get her health insurance switched over to a new provider, but she did not have a clue on where to start. With the help of Pathway, Arlice finally switched health insurance providers, now receiving her diabetes insulin medication at no cost for her prescription. She is still receiving other medications through World Medical Relief because it is more affordable than from the regular pharmacies. Arlice notes that, "she is getting older and that her income is not much and that she appreciates any help that is given."



Ieshia Dawson, diabetes coordinator



Bernie Beutel in the Philippines

## **BERNIE BEUTEL**

*A life of community service*

Bernie Beutel likes to surround himself with people – especially upbeat people – “it keeps him young”, he says.

After a long career of teaching music in the Warren Consolidated Schools, Bernie joined Wayne State University’s College of Education as field instructor, where he observed and supervised students graduating from the teaching program.

During his teaching career, Bernie had a side job photographing weddings and portraiture and volunteered his photography services with the American Red Cross. At the Red Cross, Bernie also participated with its annual blanket relief where people donated blankets and the Red Cross would donate them to the area shelters. In 2010, the Red Cross turned the program over to World Medical Relief and Bernie says, “he went right along with the blankets”. During the kick-off lunch, he shared one of his other talents – cooking – and served up a large pot of delicious macaroni.

At the Detroit Zoo, Bernie was also a proud member of the “Mob Squad” educating visitors along the winding pathway inside the kangaroos and wallabies’ habitat.

Bernie retired after 15 years with Wayne State and decided that he needed other volunteer work, “be-

cause it is very important to keep active”. He has been delivering Meals on Wheels for The Helm in Grosse Pointe ever since. In the winter months, Bernie would fly overseas as he loves to travel especially visiting Thailand and the Philippines.

Bernie continues to photograph for World Medical Relief where he snapped many shots of agency happenings through time. He documented numerous annual galas but also the open house for the new pacemaker reconditioning center in 2018 and the launch of Pathway to Better Health for Diabetes Patients program in 2020. The latter event was a “full circle” of sorts as the one of his former music students from the Warren School days, Joseph Javier, now a doctoral student at Wayne State University School of Pharmacy, is one of the student leaders involved in the diabetes project.

World Medical Relief is an agency he stands behind 100 percent, Bernie says. In fact, he shared with its staff that he included World Medical Relief in his will. Bernie invites others to follow him in this legacy giving. He says, “It is very necessary that other people do the same as the important work needs to continue.”

Are you interested to include World Medical Relief in your will? Your estate planning documents should be drafted or amended with the help of an attorney; however, to get you started, a helpful checklist and sample bequest language can be found at <https://www.worldmedicalrelief.org/charitable-bequest>.



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## VOLUNTEER SATURDAYS

**Mar. 2021:** 13, 20, 27

**Apr. 2021:** 10, 17, 24

*(closed on Apr. 3)*

**May 2021:** 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

**Jun. 2021:** 5, 12, 19, 26

**Jul. 2021:** 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

**Aug. 2021:** 7, 14, 21, 28

## 2021 GALA

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