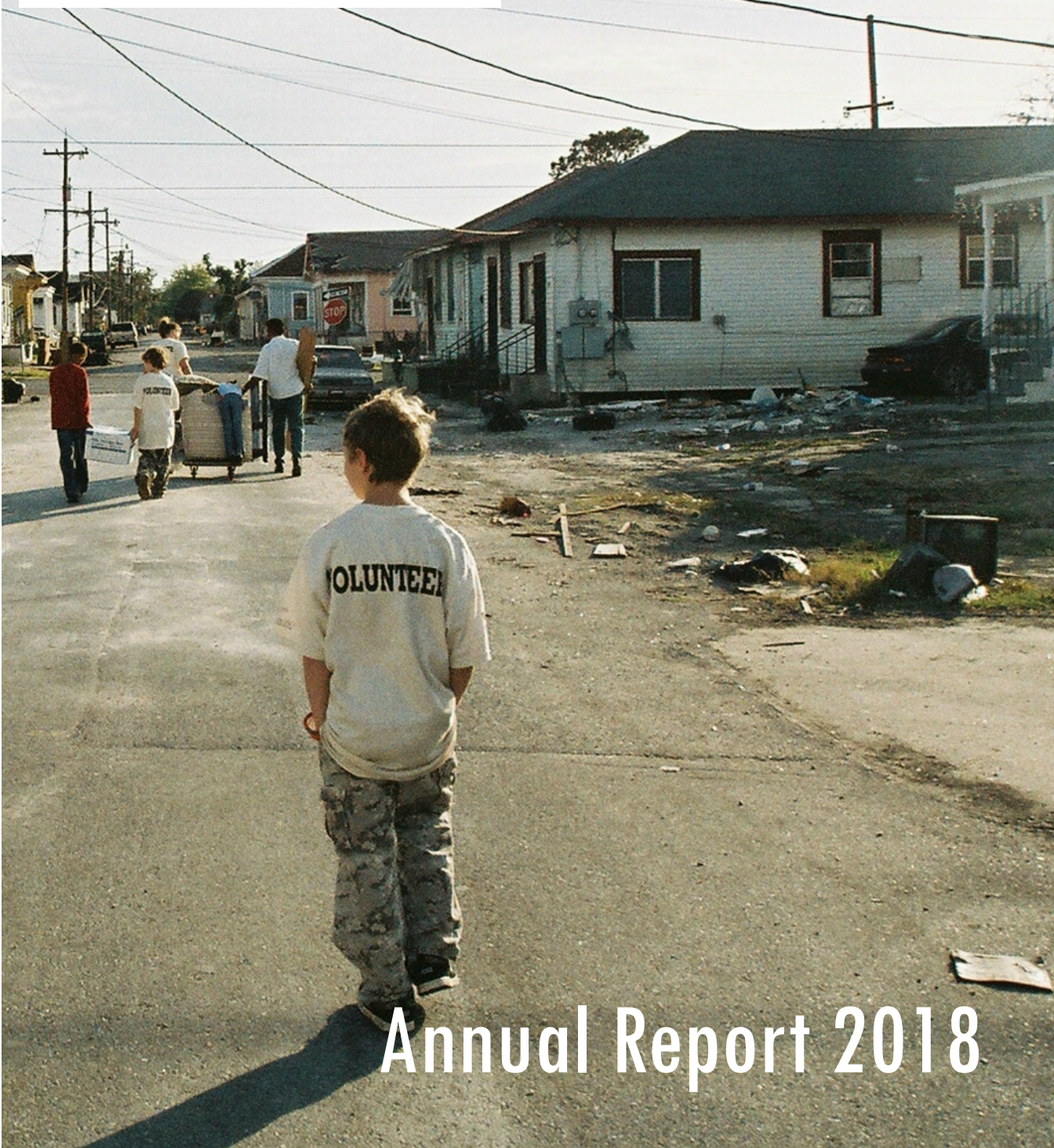





Headwaters
RELIEF ORGANIZATION



Annual Report 2018



Headwaters grew from the belief that together we make a difference, together we are better. We believe the opportunity to serve others is an honor and a gift.

Believe that you can be the hope for someone else

Believe that every individual has something to contribute

Believe in taking a stand

Believe the best of others

Believe that passion is persuasive

Believe in embracing diversity

Believe in doing the right thing because it is right

Believe you have the ability to inspire

We thank you for your support and belief in us,

Rebecca S. Hage Thomley

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Supporters

For Headwaters Relief Organization, 2018 was characterized by an expanding footprint from both a geographic standpoint and with the scope of services we were able to provide to people. We know there is so much more to accomplish on the projects and missions in which the organization is already engaged. We made multiple visits to support people in Haiti, Puerto Rico, New Orleans, Greece and Liberia while being on standby to respond to current natural disasters and occurrences locally, regionally and nationally.

Board of Directors

Daniel G Leitner, President
CPA, Hermanson and Leitner

Amy Kelly, Secretary
Founder and CEO, Jett Makeup

Mary Anderson
Community Volunteer

Brad Benesh
Senior Vice President,
North American Bank

Dave Comb
Golden Valley Fire (retired)

Tony Vannelli
Principal, TDB Builders

Kathy Holz
Community Volunteer

Judy Guerrero
Psychologist, Park Nicollet Clinic

Dale Ballman
Medical Sales

Susan O'Keefe
Vice President Account Services,
KNOCK

Looking ahead, there will be new engagements such as the planned sponsorship for the residential home in Liberia to provide safe shelter to girls. This will provide them with an opportunity for formal education and a better way of life. There is also a new opportunity to work in conjunction with a hospital medical center in Liberia to establish a blood collection and distribution center.

Headwaters Relief is only constrained by the volunteer and financial resources available. Funding to cover our program activities has historically been sourced from various fundraising and special events, but mostly support has come from a small circle of private donors providing monies and volunteering their time to offset expenses. On a forward-looking basis, Headwaters is seeking to find new strategic partners and ideas for fundraising and recruiting volunteers. It is the vision of our board that we convey the message to all businesses and persons, that Headwaters is founded on the premise that it will be an organization that exists to provide an opportunity for people to give and volunteer and to have more direct and hands on involvement. Headwaters is an organization that will be transparent to its supporters and volunteers. In addition, it is a more nimble, creative and cost-effective organization than some of the larger non-profits due to a high level of input and assistance from volunteers on the board and throughout the organization. So, it is important for Headwaters to add new partners who in return can experience the intrinsic rewards of becoming engaged and involved.

In summary, we wish to send a message and a call for assistance to those who will join the Headwaters team and help us continue this important work.

Warm Regards and Best Wishes,

Daniel G Leitner

Board President Headwaters Relief Organization



I started volunteering with Headwaters Relief Organization 9 years ago, after the earthquake in Haiti. I was drawn to their focus on people—dignity, empowerment, inspiring change. The pure and simple focus on serving people because we care about people, was so refreshing and continues to be at the heart of Headwaters' mission.

I am now the Development Director for Headwaters and it has been a full year for us—responding to local disasters, building a house in Puerto Rico, opening a girls home in Liberia, our continued work in Haiti with public health initiatives and sponsored children, mental health training in Greece, Flint, and Puerto Rico, two new books for children, a peacebuilding partnership, and so much more.

The stories of the people we serve motivate me every day. To help refugee children get an education, to provide kids in developing countries with enough food to eat, to come alongside homeowners who have experienced great loss and let them know they are not alone, to give volunteers the opportunity to be part of something that is enriching their lives as much or more as the communities and individuals we serve this is why we exist. I feel so fortunate to be at the center of so much generosity. I am moved by those who give so sacrificially to support a child in Haiti or who are the first to volunteer when disaster strikes. These people continue to be an inspiration to us, and I am honored to know them...to know you.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Headwaters, thank you for helping us continue to serve those who need us most.

With sincerest gratitude,

Lauren Lombard
Development Director



Dear Friends,

When I started volunteering with Headwaters Relief Organization back in 2015, I asked myself why volunteer? I wondered, how I could be of use, when I felt myself incompetent, incomplete and a struggling amateur. Today, as the Medical Director of an organization which cherishes volunteerism, I have found that volunteering for me is not only about what I had to offer to others, but more about the changes it brought within myself.

Volunteering is offering your time and talents and expecting nothing in return. It is to help those less fortunate, advocate for worthwhile causes and invigorate the global community. It provides a sense of purpose, adds meanings to our lives, makes us more satisfied individuals; in short, it helps us see the better side of ourselves.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all the medical and nonmedical volunteers and donors who have continued their support throughout the year 2018. This year, we conducted medical and surgical camps in rural Haiti, and distributed free medical and surgical supplies. We not only provided mental health support to Syrian and Afghan refugee families in Greece, but also to the staff working to support them. We continued the development of our series of children's story books. Our book "The Savage Wind", aimed at providing psychosocial support to communities in Puerto Rico was well received and has been distributed widely.

Among our initiatives, we were able to create new partnerships with stakeholders in West Africa. We are developing training programs for nursing and medical staff in Liberia and are supporting the establishment of a much needed blood bank in the country. We have aligned our programs to contribute towards achieving the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. We have also started monitoring growth and development of the children in the schools and orphanages that we assist in Haiti. This will allow us to be more vigilant in our efforts and intervene acutely if needed. Nationally, we have designed new programs for our clinic in New Orleans. We are also setting up mental health support facilities for people who experienced Hurricane Maria on St. John US Virgin Islands.

As we all know there is much more to be done. New emergencies will always unfold somewhere in the world. As is the case in any disaster, the poor, needy and the rural populations will be the hardest hit. Our job is to remain prepared. There will always be a call for local, national and international disaster work.

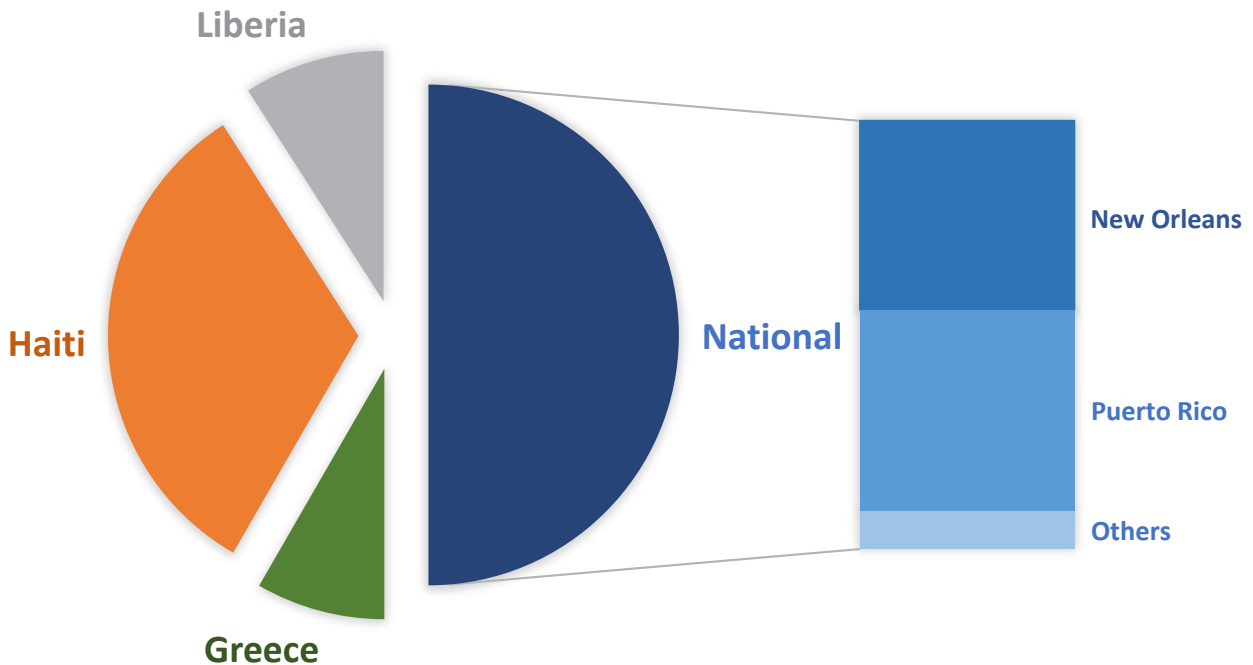
Thank you again to all of the volunteers, donors, friends and families. We have been both humbled and inspired by your unprecedented contributions.

Dr. Roshan Khatri
Medical Director



2018 at a glance...

Headwaters Relief Organization grew out of a grassroots response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Since then we have evolved and diversified in ways unimagined at that time. Our early efforts included assisting with clean-up and re-building of homes locally and nationally. Today our services have expanded to include public health, education, psychosocial and medical support and international responses.



Over **35,653** volunteer hours donated in 2018

Haiti

January

Headwaters Relief Organization took a new team of volunteers to Haiti. This group of volunteers raised a significant amount of money in support of our projects in Haiti both before and after this trip. These funds have been spent for specific needs at the orphanages we help support. Projects funded included food and clothing purchases, a medical trip in March, purchase of beds and mattresses, a washing machine for one orphanage and repair of a transformer for another.



Detroit

March

Headwaters Relief Organization conducted Psychological First Aid training for community leaders in Detroit and Flint, Michigan. Detroit has experienced several years of flooding. Flint, Michigan continues to recover from water contaminated by lead in 2014. Headwaters received a National VOAD grant to fund the PFA training and a health fair in October 2017.

Haiti

March

Headwaters Relief Organization traveled to Haiti with a medical team performing clinics in remote part of Haiti and seeing nearly 400 patients in 4 days. Members of the team also conducted research studying the impact of disaster on children, a research project being done in conjunction with Georgetown University. The team of doctors were also able to visit our sponsored orphanages to see to the medical needs of the children who live there.



Greece

April

Headwaters Relief Organization returned to Greece to continue its work with refugees in camps in Lesvos and Athens. Headwaters' volunteers created "Home Is Where The Honey Is", our fifth children's book. Through storytelling, the book addresses normal emotional responses to disaster while building coping skills and supporting the development of resiliency. Headwaters was able to use the book, along with a caregiver's guide, throughout the island of Lesvos as well as in Athens with a number of partners including the Melissa Project—a coalition of immigrant women who helped write the book.

Puerto Rico

June

Headwaters Relief Organization's first visit to Puerto Rico was in October, following the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria. Headwaters subsequently received a number of requests for mental health assistance and other support and volunteers returned in June to visit an orphanage that had had its roof blown off during last year's hurricane. During the October visit, Headwaters had presented the orphanage with a donation from generous donors who wanted to support the efforts in Puerto Rico. This donation went towards rebuilding the roof. Headwaters had also produced a new book to support the children and communities in Puerto Rico. Headwaters volunteers distributed 600 copies, after doing trainings with groups from FEMA and the local government.



Blue Earth, Minnesota

July

Headwaters Relief Organization volunteers responded to flooding in southern Minnesota, helping to clear out homes of debris brought by flood waters.



Tracy, Minnesota

August

Headwaters Relief Organization responded to more flooding due to excessive rainfall, this time in Tracy. A team of volunteers spent the day removing damaged appliances and a collapsed wall in a home. Our clean-up efforts were undertaken in coordination with other Minnesota Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD).

Liberia

September

Headwaters Relief Organization traveled to Liberia in September to prepare for the opening of a home for girls in Monrovia, Liberia, to be called the Aunty Annie Care Center. The Home will be for young girls, prioritizing those who have lost their families to Ebola. While Headwaters volunteers were in Liberia, they met with Madame President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. She shared with them about her work, her legacy, and her passion for children's education. The volunteers also established partnerships with the administration of The John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital in Monrovia.



New Bern, North Carolina

September

Headwaters took a team of volunteers to respond to Hurricane Florence in New Bern, North Carolina. The team worked in partnership with All Hands and Hearts Direct Response. The team assisted with debris clean-up, sheet rock removal and "gutting" of the homes so that repair of the homes can begin.

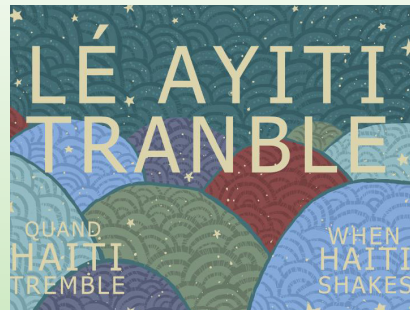
Puerto Rico

September

Headwaters volunteers returned to Puerto Rico to provide psychosocial support and re-building with assistance from partners. We were accompanied by a team of builders and volunteers from TDB Builders. TDB has been a strong partner of Headwaters over the years and has led re-building projects after natural disasters both nationally and internationally. Headwaters and TDB worked in the community of Barrio Real to re-build a home for an elderly man whose home was partially destroyed during Hurricane Maria. Headwaters' mental health volunteers also provided psychosocial training to community leaders and other professionals in the capital city of San Juan.



Using children's story books in disasters



Storytelling and Public Health

Storytelling as a form of communication, dating back to ancient times, has been passed on from one generation to the next. Today, with mass media, computers and the internet, the art of good storytelling is more important than it has ever been before. Effective stories are capable of triggering empathy and understanding which are likely to drive committed action and sustainable behavioral change.

Storytelling has been long realized as a method of articulating life experiences in a meaningful way in psychology and other related medical fields. However, storytelling in public health is an emerging concept and is as complex as public health itself. The art of storytelling as a powerful multidimensional tool for community based public health approaches, strategic advocacy and effective communication has recently being recognized.

Storytelling and children in disasters

It is generally accepted that children are one of the most vulnerable groups in disasters, however the pivotal role they can play in reinforcing resiliency post disaster hasn't been sufficiently explored. Our experiences in the field have shown that adults and families with or without children will come together and unite in the protection of children in times of disasters.

With a story very similar to their daily lives, told in their own language, accompanied by visually representative art work reflecting their experiences, a process of learning and empowerment is started. These stories can assist children in eliciting their thoughts and helping them recognize distortions and make sense of their world. In this process children are supported in reinterpreting a situation of adversity and positively redefining their own experiences.

With our children's books, we initiate a process of active engagement through children that includes other members of the community. We are able to engage not only the children but their families, teachers, caregivers and their communities in discussions and healing. Story books can support the development of coping techniques and build resiliency in children and their communities.



Our Books

We have developed six children's books with their caregiver guides so far. Four of these books are related to natural disasters of Haiti, Philippines, Nepal and Puerto Rico, one book in response to the Ebola crisis in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia and the last one for refugee camps in Greece and Jordan.

Our stories were created to assist the community by empowering them to support their own recovery. Interwoven into the story lines are concepts that we want to communicate. The best way to tell that story is through the words they can understand, through their eyes and with images to which they can relate. Stories are remembered for a reason, they stimulate empathetic responses, the more meaningful the story, the greater the impact, and more because the listeners will eagerly share it.

These books can be used individually or in a group teaching format therefore making it possible to be used by schools, families and communities in an attempt to serve as many children and community members as possible. Training on how to use the book has been designed to be applicable to caregivers with any background from the community. These books do not require any prior mental health training or specialized professional background to be used effectively.

Our books are written for children and may appear to be contextually very simple. The subject matter and subtle messages however are far more complex. Through engaging caregivers, teachers, parents and even teenagers, support is provided to them as well. This is possible in part because emotion and the physical impact of an unexpected traumatic event is very similar across all age ranges. As they teach the children that their reactions are normal responses to abnormal events, they are also able to understand and cope with their own responses. Communication is opened, and support is provided at multiple levels. The community becomes involved and proactively supports itself, rebuilding not only their present situation but building future resiliency.

In the end, our story books are based on an understanding that, resilience while complex, can be fostered and developed through strategies and active engagement.



Puerto Rico

Aunty Annie Care Center

A concept of safe-haven for orphan girls in Liberia

Headwaters volunteers responded to the Ebola crisis in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ghana in 2015. Since then, Headwaters has launched multiple public health and educational programs in Liberia.

Why Liberia?

Liberia, located in Western Africa, is a tropical country, full of lush rainforests and farmlands. It is a culturally rich country, comprised of people from many different ethnic groups who practice different religions and cultures. Headwaters' has several outstanding volunteers from West Africa, whose families extended a warm welcome to the volunteers and introduced the group to the culture and hospitality in the region. Despite a tumultuous history of governmental restructuring and civil wars, today the political situation is fairly stable.



Liberia's history of deadly civil wars, decades of violence and modern plagues left many children orphaned. After the recent Ebola outbreak struck, the number of orphaned children skyrocketed. Children lost not only their parents, but often their entire extended family. Confounding the orphan crisis are high rates of maternal mortality and poverty rates.

Concept of Child Care Center

It is estimated that Liberia has over 100,000 orphaned children. Of particular concern are the high numbers of young orphan girls. Liberia also has a history of human trafficking, and girls are prime targets. Although Liberia's government is making efforts to decrease the incidence of this abuse, Liberia is still listed as a Tier 2 Watch List Country on the U.S. Department of State's Trafficking in Human Persons Report. Traffickers often exploit young and desperate girls by assuring them a better life. The girls get taken away from their home villages and brought to larger cities where they are forced into prostitution for little or no pay and subjected to horrible abuse and violence.

While there are more than 60 orphanages registered in Liberia, many have been shuttered because they do not meet the minimum standards established by the government. They are generally "bare bones operations," offering shelter but not much more. Headwaters is an established and trusted NGO in Liberia, and worked with government officials to understand the scope of the problem, the resources that exist, and the challenges.

Young girls in Liberia need assistance from both their government and organizations that have their best interests and more promising futures in mind.

The gift of a caring community

Headwaters has established the **Aunty Annie Care Center** that will provide shelter and educational opportunities for vulnerable, young orphaned girls. A solution that will not only protect young girls from trafficking, but will also prepare them for productive lives as young adults. The name Aunty Annie was to honor the spirit of a long term, Headwaters volunteer from Liberia.

Boards of directors have been established in Minnesota and in Liberia, and Aunty Annie Care Center, Inc., has been registered in Liberia. The board has located a suitable facility in Monrovia. The first group of Headwaters volunteers have worked on rehabing the facility and preparing it for occupancy. The building inspection has been done by the government, and necessary approvals are being received.

Aunt Annie's Care Center cannot open for service without investments from people who, like us, care about saving vulnerable girls from the abuse of human trafficking.

The expenses include maintenance of the facility, salaries and stipends for the staff, food, clothing and educational support for the girls. We also foresee the need to bring additional skilled volunteers occasionally to accomplish specific tasks.



To learn more or to be involved please visit our website:
<https://www.headwatersrelief.org>

Our Involvement in Health and Research

Blood bank feasibility study in Liberia

Blood transfusion services in Liberia have not been effectively established due to the lack of a well-equipped laboratory setup, technical expertise, policies, and adequate funding. Therefore the traditional method of blood acquisition - patient's relatives finding (or often paying for) suitable donors, or donating themselves is still practiced in Liberia.

The high number of road traffic accidents, pregnancy related complications, incidence of tropical diseases such as malaria, often complicated by severe anemia mandate higher rates of transfusion. The situation is further worsened by the high prevalence rates of HIV, Hep B, HCV which get transmitted from donors due to the lack of proper screening technology.

Headwaters Relief Organization undertook a feasibility study of Blood Bank establishment in Liberia. We have established partnerships with the stakeholders, as well as the Ministry of Health, World Health Organization Liberia office, Red Cross Liberia, Blood Bank and Biosafety Program and John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital, Liberia.



Growth and Development charting

Headwaters Relief Organization has been supporting orphanages and schools in Haiti for almost a decade. In order to assess the nutritional impact of our interventions, we launched a program of anthropometric measurements of every individual child for their growth and development.

We continue to chart the progress and will soon develop computer apps which are linked to a unique identification code for every child. This can be easily used by Headwaters Volunteers and sponsors to record, trace or monitor progress of their kids.



Zika virus awareness and prevention program

Building on our work with schools and orphanages since the 2010 earthquake, Headwaters Relief Organization has spent the past two years conducting public health education in prevention techniques for mosquito-borne illnesses like Zika, providing some relief to this ongoing epidemic. SC Johnson generously donated 90,000 cans of insect repellent to Headwaters and distributed them along with partner NGOs across Haiti.

Study on psychological effects of traumatic events in children

Headwaters Relief Organization along with Georgetown University conducted a study, entitled "Psychological Effects of the 2010 Haitian Earthquake on Children: An Exploratory Study". This study was published in the Journal of Traumatology in 2014. In 2018, the data collection was completed for a follow-up study.

Sustainable Development Goals

Today, our planet faces its greatest challenges in health, economy, equity and environment. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of Resolution 70/1 of the United Nations General Assembly, define common global priorities and aspirations, agreed upon by governments around the world. These targets are set to be achieved by 2030 and represent an unprecedented opportunity and put the world on a sustainable path for all.



Now, it is time for us to act.

At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth — all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

Global Effort- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seek to mobilize global efforts around a common set of goals and targets. The SDGs call for worldwide action among governments, business and civil society to end poverty and create a life of dignity and opportunity for all, within the boundaries of the planet.

Creativity- SDGs explicitly call on all sectors to apply their creativity and innovation to solve sustainable development challenges. The success relies heavily on action and collaboration by all actors.

Opportunity- SDGs present an opportunity for all organizations, individuals. The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. The Goals interconnect and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve each Goal and target by 2030.

Headwaters Relief Organization in support of SDGs

- Headwaters Relief Organization is opening a girl's residence in Liberia. We will serve orphan girls aged 13 and below and provide them with proper housing, education and health care.
- Our nutritional programs in Haiti provide orphanages with food each quarter and ensure its adequate and timely supply.
- Headwaters Relief Organization ran medical clinics at Syrian and Afghan refugee camps in Greece.

- The New Orleans Mental Health Resource Center focuses on providing access to mental health resources to people in one of the more impoverished communities in America.
- Headwaters has provided psychosocial support and community training in the Philippines, Nepal, Haiti, Liberia, Puerto Rico, Sierra Leone and St Johns, US Virgin Islands. Providing this training promotes awareness and furthers the reach of support in communities that might not otherwise be assisted.
- We are promoting access to quality education for children in Haiti and Liberia. Headwaters Relief Organization is providing sponsorship for tuition, books, school supplies and uniforms to children attending school.
- Headwaters has provided economic and work opportunities in Haiti by offering support with startup businesses and cottage industries. We have provided employment opportunities and have hired local people for our work in New Orleans, Haiti, Greece and Liberia.
- In Liberia, Headwaters is creating job opportunities in the areas of social services and health care.
- Headwaters is a member of InterAction and the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD). In addition to the Minnesota VOAD, we are members of the VOAD in 12 different states.
- Headwaters partnered with artist JR and the Inside Out Project to bring awareness to the Somali Immigrant community in Minneapolis showcasing the personalities, sacrifices, creativity, hard work, and patriotism that define this dynamic and growing community. This was expanded to 12 countries internationally with a partnership with Padraig O'Malley and the GAME (the Global Alliance of Muslims for Equality) movement.



Our Volunteers

"People who have been through a natural disaster often need someone to listen to their story- they need some sort of connection in order to deal with the tragedy of losing everything they own. A lot of the time they connect with volunteers. One of the things I've learned from all of the Headwaters trips is that it is important to take the time and just listen to people. You can help people just as much by listening."



"On my first trip with Headwaters in Minnesota, we met a lady whose business—an antique shop—had been destroyed. She had lost so much both her and her business. We helped clean out her shop and I was very touched by her heartfelt gratitude. She was so thankful for the work we had done, and I found that very rewarding."



"The kids were all different. Some had lost their parents; some had been taken away from their parents. When we first got to the orphanage, the kids would stand next to the interpreter, one by one, and tell their stories. One that particularly struck me was a little girl who had been taken away from her mother after her mother had prostituted her. That one little girl had been through so much in her life already—it was hard to believe."



For me, the most striking thing was the poverty. There was so much poverty, so little infrastructure, and so little hope for change. You go there and think “How can this ever get better?” It’s overwhelming when you consider how many people need help. There are countless children in orphanages, there are people on the streets, and there are starving people everywhere. I think what I learned from the whole experience is that you need to try to make as big a difference as you can in a few places and slowly spread from there. Like we always say - “One person at a time.”

“I always think of the people who run the orphanages in Haiti, and I am astounded at how overwhelming every day must be for them. They have to feed and care for so many children without very much support from anyone. All of the teachers still manage to stay so incredibly positive despite their seemingly impossible job. They are always so grateful for the supplies and help that we bring. It always feels good to help such deserving and selfless people.”



“Locally we worked with flooding. When we got to the house that we were supposed to gut, I saw the homeowner—an older woman. After some of the belongings had been hauled out of the house, she started to go through them. She had piles and piles of pictures, yearbooks, and photo albums that she was working her way through. I could see that looking through everything was very emotional for her, so I went over to talk.

She started crying as she told me about each of the pictures. After a while, she stopped crying and picked up more pictures. She would talk about the pictures, cry, and then stop. Talk, cry, and stop. This continued for the whole day until our group of volunteers packed up to leave. Here I had come in my old clothes, ready to work, and instead, I sat with the homeowner for the entire day, just letting her talk and cry and go through her things. She was nowhere near getting through all of the pictures, but I think it helped her to be able to talk to someone.”

There are many ways to make a contribution in the world and to help others. We have chosen, through Headwaters Relief Organization, to assist those who have experienced natural or man-made disasters. As we have grown and diversified, we have been able to expand our services and to have an even greater impact locally, nationally and internationally. Headwaters is a collaboration of our volunteers and partner organizations. We want to thank each of you for supporting this work by lending your time and talents, by providing financial support and by making a commitment to positive change in the world.

We are grateful beyond measure.

Cheryl Vennerstrom

