



Mercy-USA stocks literature books in public school libraries each year in Albania to encourage the love of reading.

Inside



Closing the Education Gender Gap in Somalia

Page 2



Special Needs Kids Get Special Equipment

Page 4



Eid Joy Comes with Vital Aid

Page 5



We Care Backpacks in Detroit

Page 6

Mercy-USA News

September 2019 • Volume 25 Issue 2

Back to School Edition

Summer is over and while many kids in North America see fall as the end of lazy months filled with oversleeping, playing outdoors and trips for ice cream. Other children only dream of going to school with longing for the opportunity to

learn and work toward a better life. Mercy-USA is trying to help kids get what they need to make their dreams a reality. This issue of our newsletter is focused on some of the many education projects we have around the world and in the USA.

Read more beginning on page 2.

Mercy-USA for Aid and Development

is a nonprofit relief and development organization dedicated to alleviating human suffering and supporting individuals and their communities in their efforts to become more self-sufficient.

Incorporated in 1988, Mercy-USA's projects focus on improving health, nutrition and access to safe water, as well as promoting economic and educational growth around the world.

- Registered with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Special Consultative Status with the United Nations
- Member of InterAction

Headquarters

44450 Pinetree Drive, Suite 201
Plymouth, Michigan 48170-3869
Phone: 734-454-0011 800-556-3729
FAX: 734-454-0303 info@mercyusa.org

Other Mercy-USA Offices

Tirana, Albania	Tripoli, Lebanon
Tuzla, Bosnia	Mogadishu, Somalia
Medan, Indonesia	Antakya, Turkey
Nairobi, Kenya	



mercyusa.org

Closing the Gender Gap in Somalia's Schools

According to UNICEF, Somalia has one of the lowest school enrollment rates for primary-aged children in the world. Only 30% of Somali children are in school and of that 30%, less than half of them are girls.

Faced with extremely limited resources and within a traditional social structure where a boy grows up to be a man who will support a wife, children and his parents in their old age, families often prioritize their sons' education. Additionally, scarcity of female teachers, inadequate space for learning and lack of private bathroom facilities for menstruating young women contribute greatly to the school gender gap between boys and girls in Somalia.

One of the primary goals of our education projects in Somalia is to increase enrollment among girls in each community and inspire them to strive for higher education.

We are supporting schools with infrastructure improvements such as building new classrooms, bathroom facilities and clean water wells, as well as providing teacher training and specialized curriculum. Girls who are of menstruating age receive a feminine hygiene package that includes undergarments and supplies to keep her comfortable and able to attend school every day of the month. We have formed local community committees that focus on identifying out-of-school children and finding ways for their families to overcome whatever obstacles they face in not sending their children to school.

Hawo, a nine-year-old girl in south-central Somalia, is one such child. She is the only girl with seven



A Mercy-USA Community Education Committee found 9-year-old Hawo doing household chores instead of attending school.

brothers. A Mercy-USA supported Community Education Committee (CEC) team in her region found her working at home during school hours. She told the committee that while she longed to attend school with her brothers, her parents thought the school wasn't safe for her. The CEC members spoke with her mother and helped her understand that the improvements

we have made to the school facility itself left no excuses to exclude Hawo from school. They explained how Hawo would be given specialized curriculum that would help her catch up with her grade level peers within a short time, eliminating the stigma of her being too old to enter first grade at 9 years old. The CEC team assured her that there are private bathroom facilities for girls and that Hawo would sit at a desk with other girls comfortably on par with the boys in the classroom. Her mother was convinced and Hawo began school for the first day of classes in August, 2019. Her joyful proclamation was the answer to every obstacle that was overcome with this project, "When I finish school, I want to become a doctor and I will help my parents and my community."



Hawo was ecstatic to reenter school on the first day of the new term. She is working hard to catch up on the time she spent out of school.



Too Young to be Working: Nasro's Story

Mercy-USA's Somalia Educate a Child program found 10-year-old Nasro tending a shop on the streets of Mogadishu on a day when other children like her were attending school. She told our Community Education Committee that she had left school after second grade because her mother lacked the school fees for her. "I am out of school because my mother can't afford the fees, books and other things for all four of us. I am working to help my siblings go to school."

Nasro's mother is a widow who supports her children by taking in washing. Since fees for school institutions range from \$30 to \$70 a month, educating all her kids was impossible. Mercy-USA CEC members intervened for Nasro and because she is an orphan, her fees are waived. Our project provides her books, supplies and makes it possible for her to attend a school with improved facilities.

Nasro's favorite subject is science and she is catching up quickly in the subject with the loving support of her teacher, Fahmo Hassan. The little girl still worries about her mother struggling to care for the family while the children are in school, but she knows—even at the tender age of ten—her capacity to help her mother in the long run will depend on her ability to gain knowledge and skills through education.



Nasro is quickly catching up to her peers' grade level with the specialized curriculum delivered by Mercy-USA trained teachers like Fahmo Hassan, Nasro's science teacher.



Special Equipment for Special Kids in Bosnia

The PI Institute for Education of Persons with Difficulties in Physical and Bodily Development in Tuzla, Bosnia works with school aged kids with special needs. The school offers academics, vocational training as well as other therapies designed to help the children be as independent as possible when they reach adulthood. The Institute usually has between 120 -140 students each school year providing the specialized care these students require.

Mercy-USA has provided some much needed specialized equipment for the school. Equipment to help with mobility for students who have some leg function but were wheelchair-bound without support. We provided equipment to aid in lifting, as some of the students board overnight for all or part of the school week when their families or caretakers are too poor or too far away to transport them daily to the Institute and back. Other specialty equipment provided will help the staff at the Institute serve the daily living needs of students.

We are also delivering fresh fruit weekly to the school to improve the diet of the students. Additionally, Mercy-USA is providing first aid kits to the school and hygiene kits to students on a quarterly basis, filling another gap that was identified during our initial needs assessments.



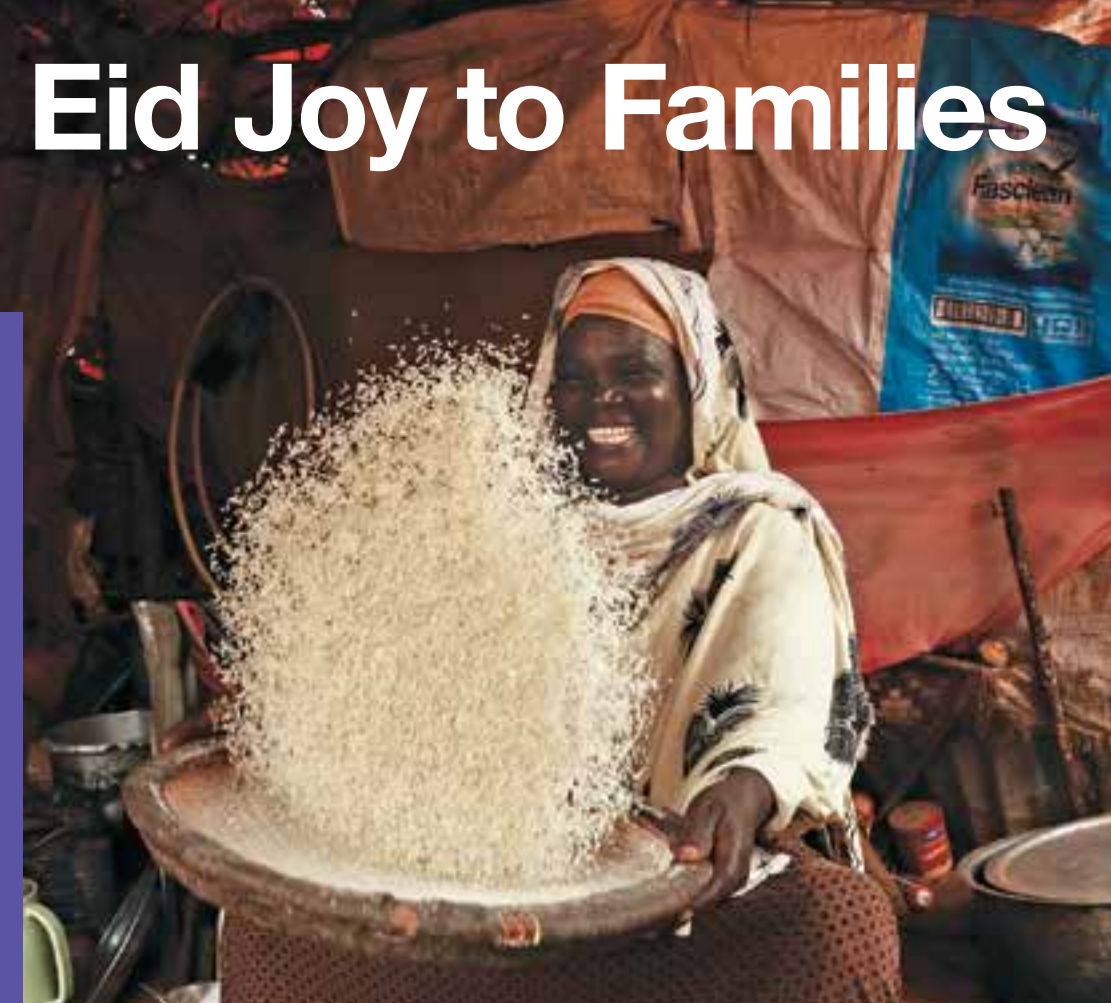
Bringing Eid Joy to Families in 2019



Our Syria field staff organize Eid parties for children in Syria's IDP camps. Lively games and fun sparked joy in an otherwise miserable situation.



Udhia meat distribution in Indonesia, Aug. 2019



Ramadan food package distribution in Albania, May, 2019



Udhia meat distribution in Somalia, Aug., 2019

Muslims around the world observe two sacred holidays each year. Eid al Fitr marks the end of Ramadan where Muslims fast from before the dawn until sunset for a month. Mercy-USA delivers food baskets or hosts large iftar meals to break the fast around the world for families in need. Fitra food baskets are also distributed at the end of Ramadan.

Last month, meat was distributed to thousands of needy families in observance of Eid al Adha. Many tell us that the Qurbani/Udhia meat they receive is one of the few times they are able to provide meat for their children all year.

Stories like Muna's, featured above,

are an example of how these seasonal food distributions have a big impact on the lives of people struggling to survive. We met Muna, a widow with 7 children, in a camp for Internally Displaced Persons in Somalia. Due to armed conflict, she and her children were forced to flee their village, wandering for more than a year from camp to camp trying to find assistance. They had finally settled outside Mogadishu after walking more than 60 miles in search of help when we met her and delivered a Ramadan food basket. The joy on her face as she sifted the rice we brought for her and her children was a reward for all.

Connecting Communities With Love in Detroit

For the second year, Mercy-USA made the first day of school for hundreds of Detroit's school children a bit brighter with new backpacks and school supplies.

Before school began, our volunteers assembled over 550 backpacks and teacher supply kits to be distributed at two Detroit public schools and a family homeless shelter.

At J. E. Clark Preparatory Academy school, volunteers came to the school's open house the week prior to the first day of classes. Students were invited to choose their backpack and fill it with all that their supply list required. The school's Principal, Ms. Yvette Willingham told us it wasn't uncommon for children to arrive to school without any supplies, and our program saved the children from embarrassment and the feeling of not having enough. "Thanks to this project, all our students are guaranteed to start the year off strong."

This community project is popular with our local supporters. It's never difficult to garner dozens of volunteers eager to connect with their neighbors who may not be as fortunate as they. Volunteers are always grateful for the opportunity to get out and put their willingness to help into action.

Mercy-USA local projects are a win-win for families having a tough time and for families grateful to make those times easier.



Teacher supply bags are an important part of our annual project. Teachers, especially in high needs parts of the country, have to dig into their own pockets to do their job.

Where We Work • mercyusa.org



Albania

English and computer skills training for orphans
Read to Succeed program for school-age children and teens



Rohingya Refugees

Food baskets for Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh



Bosnia and Herzegovina

Vocational and career training for orphans, at-risk teens and young adults
Agriculture Education Center to aid farmers, and local communities with sustainable farming methods



Somalia

To date about 650 new or rehabilitated wells for access to clean drinking water throughout Somalia including emergency drought relief
Nutritional support and health services for mothers and children
Hygiene and sanitation training and promotion
Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention
Building food security through veterinary services for livestock.
Support for primary & middle schools in 5 regions of Somalia.



The Gaza Strip

With grant funding to UNRWA, support for a special school for blind and visually-impaired elementary school-aged children.



India

Seasonal food aid



Syria

Monthly food baskets for thousands of vulnerable families in northern Syria
Winterization projects for vulnerable children and their families
Shelter, blankets, mattresses, mats for displaced families
Medical services for vulnerable Syrians living in hard-to-reach areas



Indonesia

Aiding farmers and local communities with sustainable farming methods. Also assisting farmers in forming cooperatives.



Kenya

Nutritional support for mothers and children
Hygiene and sanitation training and promotion



United States

Seasonal food aid
Support for Refugees
Local support for Detroit area homeless shelters
School backpack program for disadvantaged students



Lebanon

Syrian Refugee assistance in Wadi Khalid, Lebanon
Palestinian Refugee Assistance in Beddawi and Nahr-Al-Bared Palestinian Refugee Camps



Pakistan

With funding to implementing partner, The Citizens Foundation (TCF) building a secondary school in Sindh Province



Mercy-USA Board of Directors*

Chairperson

Ms. Iman Elkadi

Vice-Chairperson

Dr. Ali El-Menshawi

Treasurer

Ms. Rasha Ghobashy

Members

Mr. Hassan Amin

Mr. Yassine Benzinane

Dr. Ahmad K. Elshennawy

Ms. Samar Mady

Ms. Claren Menzies

Dr. Hesham M. Mesbah

**All members of the Board of Directors serve as volunteers.*

Senior Officers

Mr. Umar al-Qadi,
President & CEO

Mr. Anas Alhaidar, CFO

Our donors and volunteer fundraisers make our work around the world possible! Get involved to make a difference!
mercyusa.org

Donate Online: mercyusa.org • Call to donate: 734-454-0011 • Toll-free: 800-556-3729

Clip and Mail this Donation Form to Mercy-USA • 44450 Pinetree Dr. Ste. 201, Plymouth, Michigan 48170-3869 • US Federal Tax # 38-2846307
In Canada: PO Box 99055, RPO Heritage Green • Stoney Creek, ON L8J 2P7 • Charity Business #89458-5553-RR0001

Contribution / Pledge Form

One Time Donation \$ _____

Monthly Donation \$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

Check

Credit Card (Fill out Credit Card Section)

Monthly Gift \$ _____

I give my permission to Mercy-USA/Mercy-USA (Canada) to withdraw from my Credit Card the amount I have indicated above. I also understand that I may change or end a monthly donation agreement at any time with a written notice.

Credit Card Information (Charged in US Currency)

Account No. _____

Expiration Date _____ Sec. Code _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Name (Please print) _____

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State/Province _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Daytime Telephone _____ Evening Telephone _____

E-mail _____

More ways to contribute!

Many companies match their employees' donations; ask your employer if they have a "Matching Gift Program". Automatic Giving Program: A gift of your choice can be automatically deducted monthly from your bank account. Please call us toll-free at **800-556-3729** for details on how you can make an easy and sustaining gift.