

CARTER CENTER



CARTER CENTER NEWS

FALL 2015

WAGING PEACE.
 FIGHTING DISEASE.
 BUILDING HOPE.

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Center Poised for Future Impact

Carter Center founders Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter have been an inspiration for our work for more than three decades. With President Carter's recent announcement that he is in treatment for melanoma, many of our friends have asked what the plans are for Carter Center programs without the Carters.

Through their leadership, the Carters have built an institution prepared to continue waging peace, fighting disease, and building hope for millions of the world's poorest people into the distant future. For years, President and Mrs. Carter have been mindful of securing a long-term, sustainable future for this unique institution.

Since its founding in 1982, the Center has grown into a respected force for good around the world. A seasoned board of trustees, now chaired by President and Mrs. Carter's grandson Jason Carter, is in place to govern the Center. A healthy financial endowment continues to grow. Our programs have a track record of achievement and global impact. And we have a devoted base of financial and program supporters who are deeply invested in our ongoing mission.

Our successes have created more opportunities for our mission. Our renowned experts in international affairs and global health bring their skills and passion to programs that are saving lives,



changing mindsets, and reshaping what is possible in many developing countries where hope has long been elusive.

As the former president and first lady continue to show us all how to live a life of purpose and immeasurable impact, we know that when they are no longer active, their mission—of peace and human rights for all—will endure through the dynamic living legacy of The Carter Center, bringing their bright light of hope to the world's least fortunate people for many decades to come.

M
F R B

The World Health Organization has officially verified Mexico's elimination of the parasitic disease river blindness, or onchocerciasis. Mexico joins Colombia (2013) and Ecuador (2014) as the only Latin American countries to apply for and be granted verification of elimination of onchocerciasis by WHO.

Mexico is one of six countries in the Americas that had active transmission of the disease in 1993, when a coordinated effort to eliminate the disease from the Western Hemisphere began through the Onchocerciasis Elimination Program for the Americas, led by The Carter Center.

Guatemala, which has eliminated transmission of the disease and completed a multiyear post-treatment surveillance period, officially filed its request for verification of elimination in March 2015. Today, river blindness transmission in the Americas only occurs among the indigenous Yanomami people who live deep in the Amazon rainforest in an area that straddles the border of Venezuela and Brazil. The two countries have pledged to eliminate the disease from their shared border as soon as possible.



J C C
C C B

Jason Carter, former Georgia state senator and grandson of President and Mrs. Carter, became chair of the Carter Center Board of Trustees in November. He was elected unanimously by the board in March to succeed Kent "Oz" Nelson, who announced he would retire from the board this fall.



"It has been a wonderful 20 years being involved in so many activities that have impacted so many women, children, and men around the world. Now it is time for new leadership, and I am excited that Jason Carter has shown his commitment to the work of the Center and its future by agreeing to serve as the board's next chairman," said Nelson.

"We are grateful for Oz's leadership as an active board member since 1994 and as chairman since November 2009. So many of the Center's accomplishments are a direct result of his involvement and direction. Rosalynn and I could not be more pleased to see Jason carry this important work forward," President Carter said.

A board member since November 2009, Jason Carter led its

strategic planning committee. He has traveled to Africa and the Middle East on behalf of Carter Center programs, including leading election observations in Egypt and Myanmar. The 2014 Democratic nominee for Georgia governor, he is a partner at the Atlanta law firm of Bondurant, Mixson, and Elmore.

"I am honored to have this opportunity to help further the mission of The Carter Center to wage peace, fight disease, and build hope," he said. "Millions of people in the poorest nations have better lives and hope for a better future because of the effective, action-oriented work of The Carter Center. Oz Nelson is retiring from a strong organization that he did so much to build, and all of us associated with The Carter Center owe him a great debt of gratitude."

E M D
G D C

At press time, The Carter Center was set to observe its 101st election, this one in Myanmar.

The Southeast Asian nation is emerging from isolation after 50 years of oppressive military rule and taking its first tentative steps toward democracy. Its people were set to go to the polls on Nov. 8 for the first general election since democracy began to take root, with a Carter Center delegation of more than 60 on hand to witness this historic event.

Scheduled to lead the delegation were Jason Carter, the new chairman of the Carter Center Board of Trustees; Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland; and Bhojraj Pokharel, Nepal's former election commissioner.

Earlier this fall, The Carter Center twice sent small, high-level political delegations to corruption-plagued Guatemala elections: first for September's presidential election and then for October's presidential runoff, which saw former comedian Jimmy Morales voted into office. The presence of the delegation did not constitute an electoral observation but was an expression of the international community's high interest in Guatemala's democratic process.



Last May in Guyana, The Carter Center celebrated its 100th election observation mission. In this Q&A, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who led the Center's first election mission to Panama in 1989 and 38 of the 99 that followed, discusses three decades of elections, remembering ones that made history, ones that put his life in danger, and one that brought tears to his eyes.

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president, finally agreed to go with me to see his successor (Violeta Chamorro). They embraced and agreed that they would accept the results of election.

Journalists Gain Insight to Mental

In September, 18 journalists met at The Carter Center to discuss an under-reported health problem: mental illnesses. Half of the journalists had spent the past year working on mental health topics of their choosing. The other half was preparing to spend the upcoming year doing the same thing.

The meeting was part of the Rosalynn Carter Fellowships for Mental Health Journalism, which aim to enhance public understanding of mental health issues and reduce stigma and discrimination against people with mental illnesses through balanced and accurate reporting. Each fellow is awarded a stipend and provided with two trips to The Carter Center to meet with program staff and advisers. Fellows join a cadre of over 165 current and former fellows from the past two decades.

Three fellows share their experiences here.



Fellow: Megan Thompson, 2014–2015 class

Occupation: Producer and reporter, PBS NewsHour Weekend
Fellowship Project: Connection

among children, poverty, and mental health; well-being of girls in the juvenile justice system

Thompson said she never thought of herself as an insensitive reporter, but her Rosalynn Carter fellowship has made her more aware of the stereotypes about people with mental illnesses. Throughout the fellowship, she also focused on success and resilience. “It really kind of stuck with me,” she said. “For example, when talking about kids and poverty for my story on toxic stress, I didn’t want the story to come across as though we have millions of kids who are doomed. It’s a serious problem but there are ways it can be mitigated.”

Besides focusing on positive outcomes for people with mental health issues, Thompson said that her fellowship experience has made her a more sympathetic interviewer. “It’s okay for people to tell only the parts of their story they want to tell. I don’t need to ask for every gory detail,” she said. “I can do my job without making people relive experiences they don’t want to relive.”



One of the unexpected aspects of the story on children and poverty was the feedback PBS NewsHour received. It has been shared more than 21,000 times on Facebook and was viewed online more than 34,000 times. “I was really surprised about that kind of response, not only for a mental health story but on something that is really complicated,” Thompson said. “It’s about poverty. It’s about stress. It’s not a sexy topic that people would be clicking on.”



Fellow: Ben Selkow, 2010–2011 class

Occupation: Documentary filmmaker

Fellowship Project: “Buried Above Ground,” a documentary film

about post-traumatic stress disorder as it relates to an Iraq war veteran, a domestic abuse and child abuse survivor, and a Hurricane Katrina survivor

Selkow began his career with a planned film on street basketball in New York, but a chance meeting at the courts turned the focus of the film to a man living with bipolar



disorder. For his current film, “Buried Above Ground,” he wanted to look at how trauma affects people in different communities. “I want my audience to leave with an appreciation for humanity,” he said. “That’s why I like documentaries—in the long form there’s an opportunity to place context, which can lead to empathy and compassion.”

Selkow started the film in 2008 and received a fellowship in 2010, just as he began editing. “I was starting to think about the obligations and responsibilities when you’re dealing with a vulnerable population,” he said in reference to his documentary subjects, who had all survived different kinds of trauma. The editing continued long after his one year as a fellow; he completed the film this year, and it was shown at The Carter Center in October.

At screenings of the film, Selkow has heard firsthand about the impact on attendees. “People will say: This is how I was feeling and now I feel validated,” he said. “There are moments after a screening when I know I’ve moved the needle a little bit in the community, whether it be aware-



ness, disrupting someone’s ‘crisis of connection,’ or elucidating an issue that they know nothing about,” he said.

2010 f



Nigerian Finds Hope Despite Lymphatic Filariasis

Outgoing and quick to smile, Rahab Joshua has the right personality to sell rice and maize at the market near her home in Plateau state, Nigeria. So several years ago, when friends began avoiding her because she has lymphatic filariasis, or LF, she was devastated.

“Someone gave me some new clothes to pass on to another woman,” said Rahab, “but she refused to collect them because they came through me. During that time I cried a lot.”

Rahab is one of about 120 million people in the world infected with the mosquito-borne disease. LF has caused her right leg to swell enormously. The deep folds of leathery skin not only give the disease its common name, elephantiasis, but invite bacterial infections to spawn a host of secondary complications preventing people from earning a living or attending to children.

Mother of six, Rahab’s symptoms appeared after the birth of her fourth child. She struggled to cope.

“I used to have fever attacks,” she said. “And for weeks I couldn’t do anything, not even take care of my family.”

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Congolese Man's Life Upended in Shadow of Mining

For five years, Christophe Kabwita has been trying to reclaim what is rightfully his while also trying to keep his family sheltered, fed, and healthy.

Like thousands of others in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kabwita has suffered huge losses at the hands of the mining companies. The DRC is among the most mineral-rich nations on earth, but a history of corruption and irregular contracts between mining companies and the government has resulted in inequities of financial benefits and legal rights. Since 2007 The Carter Center has been pushing for reforms to ensure transparency and accountability in the mining sector, which would help people like Kabwita.

His story symbolizes the human costs involved in such large-scale abuses.

Since 1995 Kabwita had been farming cassava and corn on 40 acres of land that had been in his family for years.

"The harvests from my field helped me to meet all of my family's needs: food, school fees for my children, medical expenses, and clothes," he said. "The field was my only source of income for my family's survival."



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In 2003 Kabwita was earning enough to buy two small pieces of property in Washeni, a village near the city of Lubumbashi, where he intended to build a new house for himself and his wife, Tshisola Rachel, and their nine children, who range in age from 23 to 3.

But in 2010 the Ruashi Mining company seized Kabwita's farm without offering any compensation. Then the Chemaf (Chemical of Africa) mining company expropriated the land he owned in the village, giving him an arbitrary sum of US\$400 for one parcel and nothing for the other.

Since then, every aspect of life has become harder for the family. Kabwita now ekes out a living making and selling charcoal. It is a tedious, environmentally destructive process that involves cutting wood in the bush, baking it in a homemade oven, and hauling it more than 50 kilometers into Lubumbashi, where he rents a stall in a small market.

"Before, I always had food in abundance in the house," Kabwita said. "Now I sometimes have trouble finding food for my family."

"In addition, paying the school fees for my children has begun to weigh me down a lot," he added. "I experience the same difficulties when I have to pay for medical care if a family member falls ill."

The family's overall health has suffered

in their post-farming life. Explosives used in the nearby Ruashi Mining operations have caused cracks in the walls of the house, putting them all at risk, and sometimes the plant emits a pungent smoke that makes breathing difficult.

Like any father, Kabwita dreams of a safer, healthier future for his children. The Carter Center's work in the DRC has given everybody new hope, he said.

"I would like to thank The Carter Center for the report it published in 2012 about our problems and for the way its staff worked with us during their investigative research," Kabwita said. "It was the first time that our problems were heard by all of the various government offices and courts within the country and even outside the country."

The Carter Center also maintains the French-language website www.congomin.es.org, which pushes for transparency in the Congo's mining sector.

At age 55, Kabwita wants to return to farming, so he can take care of his family and rebuild their future.

"My hope is that both the Chemaf and Ruashi Mining companies, along with the Congolese government, can find us new areas of land as a replacement," he said, "so we can continue our normal agricultural activities."



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Former Ambassador Brings Global Perspective to CEO Post

Posted by the U.S. State Department to Moscow during the Mikhail Gorbachev era, Mary Ann Peters had an up-close view of the Soviet system. “The isolation and repression of the people were palpable,” said Peters, a former U.S. ambassador and now chief executive officer of The Carter Center. “We in the embassy knew that talking to people on the streets would get them in real trouble, so we refrained for their sakes.”

A few years later, she was assigned to another Eastern Bloc country: Bulgaria. It turned out to be one of her favorite posts in her 31-year diplomatic career. The Berlin Wall had just come down and the communist regime was no longer in power. Peters found that although the people suffered an enormous decline in their economic standard of living, they were relieved and hopeful.

“Having worked on Cold War problems on and off for much of my career, it was a real privilege to help Bulgaria rejoin the community of European nations,” Peters said.

Now The Carter Center is benefiting from her skills as a leader and global citizen.

Peters’ taste for international work and the nomadic lifestyle it requires began long before she took the entrance exam to the U.S. Foreign Service. Her father was a corporate executive who

was reassigned every three to five years. She and her six siblings got used to moving around. She recalls significant stints in the town of Setauket on the north shore of Long Island and in Grand Rapids, Michigan, but also lived in California and Pennsylvania, among other places.

In college, she spent a year abroad in Paris, and in graduate school, she studied for a year in Bologna, Italy. Thanks to these experiences and her frequent childhood moves, she had no fear of relocating, a boon for any future diplomat. Those years abroad provided the foundation for learning six languages during her diplomatic career.

On Sept. 11, 2001, Peters was serving as U.S. ambassador in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and had to navigate uncertain waters in a densely populated Muslim country during the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. She recalls an outpouring of sympathy from the Bangladeshi people. She still keeps a piece of art by a child in Dhaka that depicts the attacks. “It’s a reminder that the initial international response to 9/11 was one of immense support,” she said.

Before joining The Carter Center in September 2014, Peters was provost at the Naval War College, essentially the chief operating officer of an accredited professional graduate school that grants a master’s degree in national security and strategic studies. “I used to tell incoming students: You are all great at driving a ship or flying a plane, but now you need to think about why you do it,” she said.

International matters are par for the course at The Carter Center, which has worked in more than 80 countries over the years. Peters believes that the Carter Center’s mission statement provides a clear template for the organization’s activities. “Thanks to President and Mrs. Carter, the Center has a uniquely defined role that makes it easy to understand why we do what we do where we do it,” she said.

She believes wholeheartedly in the work of the Center and wants the organization to continuously search for opportunities to make an impact. “We should not be shy about the fact that we are very good at what we do,” she said.

As Peters embarks on her second year at The Carter Center, she is focused on showing the value of the organization’s work. “We need to continuously assess to ensure we’re having the impact that we seek,” she said.

The Center’s programs are based on respect for the people we seek to assist, said Peters. “We don’t work for them, we work with them, an attitude that comes directly from President and Mrs. Carter.”



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Earlier this year, the trachoma program in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, supported by The Carter Center, launched its biannual weeklong campaign in the region, which aims to provide a single dose of antibiotics to the entire population of the region, over 18 million people per year. Antibiotics are a key component of the multifaceted strategy to combat trachoma, a bacterial eye disease pervasive in the region. Providing antibiotics to such a large population is no easy feat.

While visiting Ethiopia during the cam-