



GWEIMEN CENTRE NEWSLETTER

A Self-Sufficiency Centre for
Widows and Orphans of HIV/AIDS
Winter 2016



Results from the 5th ANNUAL GWEIMEN CENTRE AUCTION

Thanks to generous donors and bidders, the 2016 auction raised \$11,400 for the children and women of the Gweimen Centre. New this year was a simulated Nigerian marketplace in the church lobby. Purses, jewelry, and other items made by Gweimen widows sold out quickly.

Many products available at the auction were made with care by our donors. They included local honey and jam, hand-made quilts, artistic birdhouses, Adirondack chairs built from a single cedar log, and fine art paintings.

Dr. Beatrice Kadangs gave an up-to-date report on conditions in Kwoi, Nigeria. Live music and catered treats added to a delightful evening.

LIFE IN NORTHEASTERN NIGERIA

By Rachel Vanderhill, PhD

Over the last year the Nigerian government's campaign against the militant group Boko Haram has had some success. However, the years of conflict in northeastern Nigeria has had devastating effects on civilians. Boko Haram has destroyed villages and cities across this region of Nigeria. For example, when Boko Haram fled the town of Bama, about 500 miles from Gweimen, they killed hundreds of people and burned much of the town. The violence also destroyed crops and killed livestock. The multi-year conflict with Boko Haram has forced 2.6 million people to flee their homes, becoming internally displaced people (IDPs) in Nigeria. IDPs are in need of health care, water, sanitation, and education. The most serious concern is that 4.5 million Nigerians in the region are severely food insecure, which means they do not know where their next meal is coming from and are suffering from malnutrition. What is truly heartbreaking is that according to a recent BBC report, 75,000 children are at risk for starvation. UNICEF also estimates that in the Nigerian states of Borno, Adamaoua and Yobe that there are almost 400,000 children under 5 suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

Although hundreds of miles from Gweimen, the effects of humanitarian crisis in northeastern Nigeria are widespread. The massive scale of this humanitarian crisis combined with the ongoing economic recession has stretched the resources of the Nigerian government and society. Therefore, there are fewer resources available to provide assistance to other regions of Nigeria, including in Kwoi, where Gweimen is located. Now, more than ever, Gweimen needs your help to continue its mission of caring for orphans, widows, and other vulnerable children. Please prayerfully consider donating to Gweimen.

**THERE'S STILL TIME TO DONATE BEFORE
THE END OF THE YEAR!** Checks can be
sent to PO Box 1517, Wheaton IL 60187

“I WONT LET GO”

STORIES FROM NIGERIA ...

“DESPERATE TIMES”

Joshua Maikori, the chairman of the Gweimen Board in Nigeria recently told this story about a man and his nine year old daughter who went to the market to buy food for their family. The man had five smaller children at home. He picked up a bag of rice, but told the storekeeper that he didn't have any money. He promised to return with the money and offered to leave his daughter at the store as a promise of his return.

Hours passed. The man did not come back. After the shop closed, the storekeeper asked the little girl to show him where she lived. They walked to the family home. When they arrived, the man, his wife, and his other children looked at the storekeeper with fear in their eyes.

They had eaten the food, the only meal they had eaten in days. They had no money to pay for it. Perhaps they thought the storekeeper would take their daughter in trade. Perhaps they were so desperate that they felt one had to be sacrificed so the rest could eat. Perhaps they were hoping the man would return their daughter without asking for what they did not have to give.

If this man had known about the Gweimen Centre, he could have come for help that would not have required this agonizing decision to use his daughter as payment so his other children could eat.

This incident has convinced Chairman Maikori of the desperate situation of many in the community surrounding Gweimen. It has also demonstrated the importance of the work of the Gweimen Centre.

Recent news from Nigeria suggests that some of the little girls that were taken from their school in the northern part of the country may have been returned. Only a few of more than 200 have been released so far. Some of them came back carrying babies. All will be traumatized. If only they had a loving community like the Gweimen Centre to love them and support their parents through this pain.

The stories from Nigeria are heart wrenching and full of pain. The hope for Gweimen – peace – seems far away. Please pray for those who are suffering.

Just a few days following the Gweimen fundraiser, after finishing our evening meal, Beatrice Kadangs, the director of the Gweimen Centre, told my husband and me this story that is circulating widely in Nigeria.

A man came into a market stall in the capital city of Abuja. He sat on the ground next to a large bag of rice. He put his arms and legs around the bag of rice and laid his head against it. He just sat like this for a while.

The shopkeeper approached him. “What are you doing?”

With his eyes closed, the man just continued to hug the bag of rice.

The shopkeeper repeated his question. Finally the man looked up. “I work for the government. I haven't been paid in three months. I have nine children. We have no more food to eat. I cannot look in the faces of my hungry children any more. I can't return home without this bag of rice.”

“That is a 5k bag of rice. It costs \$80.” The amount was more than double what the same bag of rice cost last month.

“I can't pay, but I won't let go. You will have to kill me. I won't go home without something for my family to eat.”

The shopkeeper, a Christian, looked at the man with his arms around the bag of rice, a Muslim. He considered what he should do. I won't tell you how the story ended just yet.

The Gweimen Centre has a food pantry. People in our village of Kwoi and the surrounding area know that Gweimen means comfort, hospitality, welcome. They know that if they come, they will not be sent away hungry. But the cost of food is very high now. The government is so corrupt and unable to function that the prices of food have skyrocketed. A famine and war in the north increases the pressure on the price and the availability of food.

Because of your support and the support of many local Christians, the Gweimen Centre food pantry continues to have food to give away, but the number of hungry children at the Centre increases every day. Good nutrition is especially important for those taking medications for HIV. Feeding the hungry in our community is one of the important missions of the Gweimen Centre. No one is turned away, Muslim or Christian.

Your support of the matching gift drive and the auction helped to provide food and medicine for those whose needs are great. The shopkeeper gave the man the rice. When you help the Gweimen Centre, you can picture yourself handing that hungry man a bag of rice.

Thank you for your financial support.

www.gweimencentre.org | 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization

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