



# 2025 ANNUAL YEAR IN REVIEW

PO BOX 959 CHESTERTOWN MD 21620 USA

December 2025, ISSUE 18



Thank you for being with us this year. Together, we have been able to serve communities in Zambia, Kenya, & Costa Rica! Isaiah 43:18-19 was our 2025 theme:

*"Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."*

Over and over again we have seen just that, God renew tired hands, God bring hope and make a way for the communities we serve, and God touch people's hearts to serve with us. He opens doors no one can shut.

- 36 children are in our educational sponsorship program in rural Zambia. We do community food relief in areas hard to get to. We train local NGOs, faith-based and governmental organizations in our drug /alcohol curriculum.
- 444 people are receiving our drug and alcohol curriculum in Kenya through 54 trained staff. Despite socio-economic upheaval, they have remained dedicated and we have seen people come off drugs and alcohol and step into a new life.
- 70 children in the elementary age program in Costa Rica are helped weekly through our missionary staff and volunteers. Our nature camp helps 30 children. We launched a new literacy education curriculum in Costa Rica.
- Please pray with us as we look ahead to how we may serve in Puerto Rico (more to come on that).

You can read more details in our updates below. Please give to keep things going, join us in prayer and consider volunteering. Serving on our Boards this year are:

*US: Melissa Stuebing (CEO), Shelly Holland (CFO), Nanyemba Chirwa, Sarah Pinard, Vivian Alibah, Rachel Davis and David Stuebing*

*Zambia: Chipso Nambeye (Director), Angel Hamakando (Treasurer), Kelvin Hamakando, Nanyemba, Melissa, Shelly*

*Costa Rica: Frank Hynson (Director), Brittany Hynson (Treasurer), Carlos Palaciosher, Marielos Ramirez Ulloa, EliAnna Bermudez*

This year, we are giving a gift from our homes to yours to all our donors – a Christmas craft and Zambian, Kenyan, and Costa Rican recipes from our homes to yours. Zambia, Kenya, and Costa Rica. Please let me know how I personally can be praying for you as well!

Melissa Stuebing, CEO [Melissa@CoLaborersInternational.com](mailto:Melissa@CoLaborersInternational.com)

## TAX DEDUCTIBLE GIVING!

- 1) Please mail checks to CoLaborers International PO Box 959 Chestertown MD 21620
- 2) [CoLaborersInternational.com/donate](https://CoLaborersInternational.com/donate)
- 3) [Account.venmo.com/u/colaborersintl](https://Account.venmo.com/u/colaborersintl)

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## KENYA

HIV clinics run by Eastern Deanery AIDS Relief Program (CDC partner) have been offering the Kenyan version of *Literacy-Free 12 Step Expressive Arts Therapy* since July 2023 when we provided training there to 54 local clinicians. This year, Dr. Patrick, Teresia, and Diana have been working to translate all materials into Kiswahili. Dr. Hjordis, Melissa, Anja, and Chris have been analyzing the data to share with the CDC branch and AMREF and prepare a forthcoming publication. *Thank you to the CDC, AMREF, Maryknoll, and Dr. Motoku, Dr. Bechtold, Father Rick Bauer, Chris Muriithi, and Alice Njoroge for your invaluable support.*

In our yearlong study, 444 people received treatment using this curriculum. There were statistically significant decreases in substance use, in stigma, and increases in wellbeing. Even though the study is completed, they are continuing to offer groups to provide people with side-by-side HIV and drug and alcohol care.

To give towards this effort, please donate to [CoLaborers.com/Donate](https://CoLaborers.com/Donate) and write "Kenya" in the memo.



This year, Chipo became our Program Director in Lusaka overseen by Nanyemba who moved to the US and joined our US board as Zambia Operations Director. This year, we focused on strengthening and expanding our local partnerships to better serve our communities. We worked alongside Chisomo Centers, Youth Life Project, Nsansa Village, Kafwa Drop-In Center, Chainama Hospital, Ndola Central Hospital, and Great North Rehabilitation Center to support sustainable and community-focused programs in areas of youth ministry, mental health, education, and substance use counseling support.



### INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In June, we received three interns from Eastern University, Washington College, and Messiah University in the United States in our education and mental health programs.

Education interns were trained in conducting reading circles by our education initiatives director, Sarah Pinard MA, Ed. They used early readers, Zambian folktales, as well as arts and crafts and interactive lessons to teach reading comprehension to primary / elementary school aged students served at Nsansa Village, Kafwa Drop-In Center, and Chisomo Centers.

Our mental health interns were trained in our "Literacy-Free 12 Step Expressive Arts Therapy" curriculum by Melissa Stuebing, MA, CAC-AD (endorsed by MD board of Pro Counselors and Therapists as well as Ministry of Health) and offered groups using curriculum materials at Chainama Hospital, Youth Life Project, and Chisomo Centers.

### WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

We were excited to take part in the commemoration of World Mental Health Day on 10th October with the **Ministry of Health**. We tabled at this event and it provided an important opportunity to raise awareness, engage community members, and promote open conversations around mental health and well-being. We also were able to network with organizations working in the mental health sector.



### DRUG AND ALCOHOL TRAINING

Thanks to a grant from **First Presbyterian of Pottstown, PA**, we are conducting a drug and alcohol training for 27 professionals in "Literacy-Free 12 Step Expressive Arts Therapy" at Great North Rehabilitation Center this month!

### FOOD OUTREACH IN CHAMA

Droughts in Zambia have increased in recent years. In Chama District, November brought a hunger crisis. Crop yields dropped sharply. People were eating even tree roots and wild fruit trying to survive. This was at a critical time when farmers are supposed to prepare their fields for the 2025/2026 farming season. We reached out to you for help and you gave enough to feed 35 households over for the next month while awaiting government support! **You are changing lives.** We joined with **Youth Life Project** for the distribution.

### CHILD EDUCATIONAL SPONSORSHIP

We have **36 students** in our program. We work in rural areas with less opportunities for aid. The Zambian school year has 3 trimesters. We visited each of our service areas – Macha, Miyobo, and Mpongwe - each trimesters to meet with students, teachers and give out much needed school supplies, uniforms, shoes, sanitary wear, food, and solar power lights. It is truly life-changing for the children and their families. **This is only made possible by the generous support of our sponsors to believe in their education!** We are proud to report that three sponsored children completed their secondary school education and are very excited about their future opportunities seeking further education.



Please pray for us in 2026 and give towards these areas so we can continue reaching out.

[CoLaborers.com/Zambia](https://CoLaborers.com/Zambia)



### WEEKLY OPERATIONS AT LAS GRADAS

God has been so good to us here in Costa Rica as we serve the children and families of a struggling community in one of the poorest neighborhoods in San Jose, Las Gradas. For over 4 years we have been a part of a children's program that provides a safe place to play, bible lessons, a healthy meal, and educational help with schoolwork for over **70 children weekly** who live in the Las Gradas community. *Thank you to the Rotary Club of Carolina Forest for their giving towards our nutrition program!*



### CAMP ENCUESTRO

Every year we take **30 children** enrolled in our program to a summer camp experience called *Camp Encuentro (Camp Encounter)*. This gives our kids 4 days away from their challenging home lives to have a safe, fun space to encounter God. They get to eat decent meals, sleep in beds, play games, receive engaging messages about God's love, and do bible studies in a natural environment outside of the city. Along with admission to camp, they also receive backpacks, t-shirts, toiletries, towels, blankets, and a pair of shoes that they can use well after their camp experience is over. Each year, we see a huge positive impact that is made on these awesome young people. This year a group of our girls started a discipleship group after camp to spend time outside of our normal program to dive deeper into their relationship with God. We are so grateful to all the sponsors and volunteers who come together from all over to make this camp possible and are super excited to do it all over again in 2026. *Thank you to Hope Fellowship for volunteering and giving towards this program!*

### INTERNSHIP PROGRAM AND LITERACY PROGRAM

Another big win for us this year was a literacy program that we kicked off in June. Due to overcrowding and a lack of resources the children of Las Gradas are only able to spend half of their day in school. This puts their learning at a huge disadvantage compared to children in the rest of the city. Unfortunately, this means we have 4th and 5th graders who still don't know how to read. CoLaborers recruited 3 interns from Washington College and Messiah University as well as a teacher friend of ours to run a reading workshop for students that we felt were struggling the most.

*Special thanks to Estrellita for providing us with the curriculum and training to get started!* We've been able to see an improvement in their reading skills and a huge increase in their self-confidence. One young man who went through our workshop came to us recently to tell us that he scored a 96% on one of his passing exams. Extra attention he received from our interns had a huge positive effect not just on his studies, but also in his over behavior in our program as well.



### JOYS AND CHALLENGES



Along with these big victories we have plenty of small ones to celebrate as well. Most of all, the strong relationships we are building in this community. One young man who started in our program was really nervous and uncooperative, now shows up every week super excited and has given me the nickname "Tio Frank" (Uncle Frank). Another young lady has made a weekly game out of memorizing scripture with Brittany. Relatives of our students stop us on the way to our car to thank us for what we do for the kids regularly. One day, I was attacked by a dog while taking kids to the program. Many families were concerned for me and prayed for my recovery. While celebrating our wins, we recognize challenges we face as we forge ahead - like maintaining our financial support to live here and raise our daughters in Costa Rica where the cost-of-living changes according to the value of the dollar, like the need for volunteers and our hope to expand into other marginalized communities in the future, and like admin requirements and expenses that come with an official non-profit organization in Costa Rica. We are just doing what we can to help and serve a community that

struggles in a sometimes-dangerous environment with gratitude for the love and generosity that we have received to get us this far. We are excited to see what God has in store for us moving forward!

*Please pray for us in 2026 and give towards these areas so we can continue reaching out! [CoLaborers.com/Costa-Rica](https://CoLaborers.com/Costa-Rica)*