



CHRISTIAN FRIENDS OF KOREA

조선의 그리스도인 벗들

June 2014

*“And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ,
and to love one another as he commanded us...”*

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear...”

1 John 3:23 and 4:13a

Training Center Opened in May

Monday, May 26th marked the completion and grand opening of the new Training Center located on the grounds of the Central TB Prevention Hospital in Pyongyang. Attendees included our team of 12 from CFK, and honored guests included the Vice Minister of



Ribbon cutting at Training Center grand opening event.

Health, representatives from UNICEF and the World Health Organization, members of the Korea Private Exchange Society, National TB Reference Laboratory and Central TB Prevention Hospital staff. At a banquet that followed, we were also honored by the presence of esteemed colleagues with whom we have worked for many years, including the Director General for US Affairs from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Senior MoPH officials, and other representatives from international agencies.

What followed on May 27 and 28th was a groundbreaking in-depth workshop that brought together US experts

from Global Care Partners and Stanford University together with primary care physicians and laboratory specialists from many different tuberculosis (TB) care centers who are on the front lines of diagnosing and treating TB and multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) patients. Lectures were presented on current laboratory diagnostic capability, use and application, as well as on drug therapy side effects and patient management. Case studies were presented, worked through in small groups, and discussed. Attendance grew from 47 participants



Dr. Gary Schoolnik of Stanford University and Dr. Marcia Kilsby of Global Care Partners present in the main training center classroom.

on Day 1 to 53 participants on Day 2. Feedback received later from several attendees indicated that much of the information presented was brand new and greatly beneficial to help inform and guide more appropriate treatment for patients.

The new training space is beautiful, well-constructed, and ideal for this type of training. Furnishings, includ-



Newly completed main training room.

ing training tables purchased in China and like-new chairs donated through IRN - The Recycling Network, allow for flexible use of the space – including classroom style learning, and reconfiguration to facilitate larger group meetings, etc. The Ministry of Public Health expressed sincere and heartfelt gratitude to all the expert volunteers, donors and support that made this beautiful new building possible. They are eager for us to organize more training events led by international specialists, and also intend to use the space regularly for health related meetings with international partners and down-stream training activities. Two smaller rooms adjacent to the main teaching space will support hands-on training, and also establish a medical library. There continue to be significant ongoing challenges to our work in DPRK, but it was a privilege and joy to be able to celebrate a significant accomplishment to expand training and human capacity in the fight against TB and hepatitis, while also building bridges of engagement, scientific exchange and relationship. As one long-time North Korean colleague noted to us, *“What CFK has done in building the Training Center is a real accomplishment, especially in the current difficult context. We know things are difficult for you, but I salute you for your real sincerity and hard work that has brought this to completion especially in the context of the current circumstances.”*

CFK Team Visits from May 17 – June 5, Travels to 26 Care Centers

In addition to the grand opening and workshop held at the new Training Center, CFK teams were engaged in various construction and other travel activities during the visit. Prior to the grand opening of the training center, final finish work on the center was completed by joint CFK-MoPH teams, equipment at the Central TB

Hospital underwent repair and maintenance, and training towards accreditation also continued at the National TB Reference Lab. CFK teams also made confirming visits to 26 different care centers, including many in the far countryside, which meant long days on the road traveling from place to place and meetings with directors and local staff.

It was so encouraging to see greenhouses full of thriving crops, and to hear how nearly every greenhouse got through the winter without freezing. Many places served beautiful cucumbers and tomatoes grown in their greenhouses, and one director proudly said that he had fresh tomatoes from his greenhouse to serve to his patients weeks ahead of anything available in the local market. Many places realized good harvests from vegetable seeds provided by CFK donors last year, and directors expressed great interest and appreciation for new seeds and a planting/preparation booklet we prepared and hand carried to them this spring. Certainly some greenhouse keepers are more skillful than others, and local resources and circumstances vary greatly, but even in the places that seemed to struggle the most, still the greenhouses gave them significant production of fresh vegetables. Most said that it was the only source of fresh food available for their patients from November to May. Canned meat sent by CFK partners continues to be the primary source of protein for most places. Clean water is still an urgent need at many places in DPRK – and this year it has been more acutely felt as



Two men are planting seed beds in a greenhouse provided by CFK.

rainfall has been very scant from February through June. Many streambeds were completely dried up or slowed to a trickle, creating additional challenges for meeting everyday needs. We are working hard to expand water well drilling but have been delayed this year by a short-

age of drilling equipment and spare parts in the country. The demand for new water wells is very high, and there are less than a handful of working drilling rigs available to drill. We continue to encourage Wellspring's efforts to help expand drilling capability, but drilling rigs and maintenance costs are very high. We have been told that our facilities are a high priority for drilling, so hopefully several places can be drilled later this summer once the needed equipment arrives or is repaired.

We were able to visit again several of the 10 places where we have already drilled wells and/or installed solar powered, gravity-fed water systems. It is so encouraging to be able to drink a glass of cold water directly from these taps and not experience any ill-effects later – knowing



that this same clean water is greatly improving the overall health of TB or hepatitis patients every

Fresh strawberries grown with proper fertilizer and washed in clean water are now safe to eat as several care centers!



day, and making the difficult lives of the staff and care givers of these places a little easier. It was also a true gift this time to be able to eat fresh strawberries grown at care centers that have clean water and who have learned not to use night soil for fertilizer. Korean strawberries picked fresh from the field are sweet and full of flavor – but until now, we were not able to taste them anywhere in the country for fear of getting very sick. It was a true gift on many levels to enjoy them this time at several places with no painful consequences. This is important and lasting progress.

Training to Expand with Delivery of Transportation Vehicles

We have noted for some time the need to provide maintenance and repair training on equipment that we send, and we have frequently asked for the opportunity to conduct such training. During this trip, our request was

finally granted. Through your support, we were able to send 10 3-wheel cargo motorcycles and 17 motorcycles, along with replacement tractor sets for several places. The tractor sets and vehicles arrived in Pyongyang in late May and the vehicles are undergoing licensing procedures now. We will be allowed to conduct a three-day



Cargo motorcycles currently undergoing licensing procedures, will help transport goods and patients to and from rural health care facilities.

workshop (one day on each type of equipment) to be held in Sariwon in September, and every place receiving a vehicle or tractor will be required to send staff members for training in order to receive their new equipment. We are grateful to our long-time hospital director colleague at Sariwon who has graciously agreed to host the training for up to 50 attendees and to MoPH for supporting the expansion of needed training.

Renovations at Several Facilities Underway

A major CFK effort this year supported by three special grants is helping several TB or hepatitis places replace their roofs, windows and doors, install tile, or build wards to house suspected MDR-TB patients separately from regular patients in order to reduce transmission of MDR-TB. During the visit we saw several projects partially underway, and we hope these will be finished



A nearly completed roof has been installed on a new patient ward under construction at Hwangju TB Sanitarium.

by the time of our next confirming visit scheduled for November. Many other facilities urgently need similar upgrades and these kinds of improvements encourage staff and patients alike. We hope with your support we can expand these efforts so that these and other changes that often happen parallel to these projects can bring about better care for patients.

General Observations

We were traveling during the intensive time of rice planting, and everywhere we traveled we saw groups of people of all ages mobilized to help with the effort. The days are long this time of year; work begins early and ends late. In support many office workers, students and house-wives have been mobilized, and markets are closed during the day opening only in the late afternoon and early evening hours



Planting rice fields in the DPRK countryside.

The building boom in Pyongyang continues with construction cranes dotting the horizon and work sites aflutter with motivational flags. Grass planting continues to expand and has greatly changed the face of Pyongyang and areas of the countryside for the better. While some limited infrastructure improvements are apparent in travel to the countryside, still the concentration of such efforts appears to be in Pyongyang, where change is more rapid and pronounced. The number of taxis has also increased dramatically in Pyongyang, giving more transportation options to local residents. The overall atmosphere felt more guarded this time, with people very careful about how actions or conversations could be misinterpreted. Still, we were warmly welcomed and well cared for during the visit by our colleagues who also are away from their families for the duration of our visit, staying in the same hotel where we stay and actively facilitating our ongoing work and activities.

North Korea in the News

Many ask how CFK can continue to bring teams safely in and out of North Korea in light of ongoing diplomatic tensions and the recent detainments of other American citizens.

While we cannot fully understand the actions and purposes of another government, several factors illustrate the uniqueness of CFK's engagement with the DPRK, especially in contrast to general tourist travel. Our work has a long history - it began in DPRK in 1995, and is both wide-ranging and deep in scope and impact. It is based on long-standing relationships, understanding and mutual agreements reached over time in full consultation with our DPRK colleagues, including members from the Foreign Ministry, the Korea America Private Exchange Society, and the Ministry of Public Health. It is clearly defined within agreed parameters and shared goals and brings verifiable improvements, healing and change to many thousands of people every year. Certainly, our open identification as a Christian organization is not without its sensitivities; however, we strive to be clear about what motivates our work while also recognizing (and carefully briefing each team member traveling with us) that we are guests in a country with different customs and rules from our own. More than anything, we actively seek the wisdom and grace of the Holy Spirit in every situation, trusting that His many promises are sure. (Proverbs 3:5-7)

Fall Activities

In September, we are planning to return with a technical team in order to install water systems at two care centers desperately in need of clean water. We expect to install solar panels, large water storage tanks, solar powered pumps, distribution lines and hydrants. We also expect to do the vehicle training in September, and hopefully continue ongoing training activities at the National TB Reference Lab/Training Center in support of the overall TB program.

We are also planning towards a return visit in November to check on multiple shipments that will have arrived since the May visit, confirm progress on renovation projects underway now, and also to begin a pilot Hepatitis B survey/vaccination project for healthcare workers that was recently approved by the Ministry of Public Health.

It is hard to put into words what your faithful and generous support means to care givers and thousands of



Three patients sit comfortably on floor mats provided through CFK

patients who pass through the facilities where we provide assistance. They express genuine and sincere gratitude for remembering them, for sending food, medicine, blankets, greenhouses, tractors, vehicles, spare parts, floor mats and many other things to help them, and they show in their faces, words and actions their gratitude for our regular visits to them. We are often deeply humbled by the sincere and generous hospitality shared by people who continue to struggle daily to meet very basic needs. Often this work presents many difficult challenges, but it is also a very great privilege to visit frequently to show love and encouragement. We are honored to hear and convey back to you their deep appreciation for your tangible love and support made possible by the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ in whose name we serve.

Volunteer Support and Completion of the Shipping Center in Black Mountain, N.C.

This spring we have had the pleasure of welcoming several groups to our Black Mountain, North Carolina location. In March, a group of US Veterans assisted



A forty foot container was loaded with volunteer support in March 2014.

CFK with the loading of a forty foot container from our shipping center. This container included chairs that have

beautifully furnished the new Training Center and others being distributed to our supported facilities. It also included medical supplies and building supplies for the

newly completed training center. Our shipping contract allows 2 hours for the loading of containers, so we need to load quickly. We were tremendously grateful for volunteers who helped the loading go smoothly.

This spring, we were also able to complete our shipping center. The interior bathroom was finished, and we received our certificate of occupancy just in time to welcome nearly thirty members of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church Presbytery. Videos of the work of CFK were viewed as a light dinner was served followed by a facility tour. CFK staff and board members were available to answer questions and speak about the many areas of our ministry. We are grateful for opportunities to introduce others to this ongoing work.

The following morning we received the youth of Trinity Presbyterian Church of Asheville, NC. These high-energy volunteers came to us as a part of their "Best Weekend Ever" retreat which included visiting local ministries to offer their service. They assisted with landscaping and clean-up of areas around our office property. It was refreshing to see youth happy to share in service opportunities. They were also given a facility tour and a chance to ask questions about the ministry. We were pleasantly surprised at the prior knowledge these youth had of the plight of the North Korean people, and the maturity of their well thought out questions.

Christ Community Church members of Montreat, NC came to help us on Sunday, May 4th. After gathering for an early church service, members dispersed into the community for their "The Church Has Left the Building" day of service. More than 15 volunteers of all ages assisted CFK with numerous projects. Over 50 trees, shrubs, and bulbs were planted around the CFK property. Plastic buckets were cleaned and drilled to be paired with a filter and sent to CFK supported facilities in North Korea.

Flower beds were weeded and wild-flower seed scattered. Our front porch was painted with new stain that will allow it to



A member of Christ Community Church of Montreat, NC helps drill holes in plastic buckets that will be used for water purification.

last up to 10 years longer! It was a beautiful day, and we were amazed at the amount of work accomplished in just a few hours. We were truly grateful for all the help as well as the fun and fellowship.

Many individual volunteers have offered their gifts, time and services throughout the Spring as well. The work that we accomplish would not be possible without this ongoing support. We are so grateful for those who send knitted sweaters, dolls, blankets, hats, and other items lovingly made

for the patients and staff in our supported facilities. The patients light up with joy upon receiving these gifts. Other individuals have assisted with assembling seed packets that were hand-carried and distributed on this past trip, translating our written items to the Korean language for our Korean supporters, gathering and cleaning buckets for water filters, and general grounds maintenance.



A knitted lion and monkey made by a CFK knitting volunteer are given to two young patients at Pongsan TB Sanitarium.

Volunteer opportunities are always available for both individuals and groups and can be arranged by contacting our Black Mountain office.

A Little Can Go a Long Way

A special thank you to one of our Board members, Mrs. Kay Rader who has begun a 2014 Water Challenge in support of CFK. Just by ordering tap water instead of a soda or tea at the restaurants where she regularly dines, she has been able to save and donate over \$150 to CFK's

clean water projects so far this year. This small sacrifice for her has provided three care centers with water filter buckets supplying patients with clean water for up to 10 years!

We Need Your Help!

CFK's general fund supports our day to day activities, shipping costs, some travel and project costs, and other expenses. Without regular contributions given to CFK's general fund, the work we do would not be able to continue. One way general funds are used is to support 6-8 shipments a year of canned meat, medicine, and other donated goods. This meat is distributed quarterly and satisfies 40 -70 % of the daily protein needs for the staff and patients at our 30 supported facilities -many of whom are malnourished and would otherwise only receive protein on three or four major holidays in any given year. The funds for shipments like these come out of CFK's general fund. Shipping costs for shipments of meat are close to \$30,000 a year. A donation of just \$1,000 from a family, youth group, church, or group of friends, can help provide the patients at one health care facility with the protein they need to help rebuild their health. Thank you for your faithful support of CFK's general fund that strengthens and enables CFK's life-giving work. We pray that by partnering together our work can expand as we begin our 20th year of service in the DPRK!



Participants of the first training workshop pose for a group picture in front of the new Training Center.

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Christian Friends of Korea is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization founded in 1995 to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through humanitarian, educational, and religious programs. Contributions to CFK are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. CFK also accepts stock or in-kind donations. Please make all checks payable to "Christian Friends of Korea."

If you are interested in supporting the work of CFK or to request information or materials, please contact us.

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