

Hamlin Fistula NZ



NOVEMBER 2019



Celebrating
60 years of service



www.hamlinfistula.org.nz

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This year we mark 60 years since Dr Reginald and Dr Catherine Hamlin first departed for Ethiopia in 1959. Intending to stay for a 3-year service abroad, instead they dedicated their lives to the plight of fistula victims. Over 60,000 women have had life-restoring surgery as the result.

In this special end of year issue, we honour the example and the legacy of the Hamlins, evident in the incredible service of so many - from hospital gardeners to volunteers to midwives.

The Hamlin's example continues to inspire us all with their love, work ethic, their compassion for the poor and marginalised and their devotion to the cause of eradicating fistula.

Tragedy is turned to triumph when we each serve with what we have to give - whether that be finance, skills or time. And in the process, we discover what Dr Reg and Dr Catherine knew so well - the joy of giving.

Renowned for her humility, Dr Catherine spoke at the 60th Anniversary celebrations in Addis Ababa in May:

"I'm just overwhelmed at so much congratulations for all the things I've done, but I haven't done anything that I haven't loved doing. I love this country, and I love the people... I love helping the people to get back to a safe life again after their injuries...And I thank you all, the people that have helped me."



From all of us at HFNZ, we thank you for all that you invest in serving these forgotten and invisible women. Amaseganelo!

The Legacy Lives Strong

This year Hamlin
Fistula has:



Performed 1,365 Fistula operations, 454 Pelvic Organ Prolapse surgeries and 90 Caesareans



Safely delivered
30,095 babies



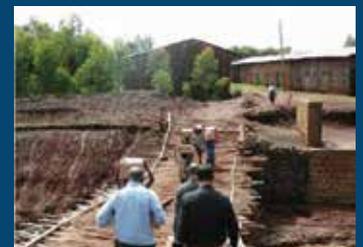
Provided 222,368
contraceptive treatments



Trained 2 Fistula surgeons, 2
nurses and 1 physiotherapist



Supported 19 new
Midwifery Centres



Medically equipped
66 Midwifery Centres



Graduated 25 midwives
with a BSc degree



Provided psychosocial
counseling, education and life
skill training for 830 women



Renovated 7 Midwifery
Centres and built 1



Provided ultrasound
assessments to 2,387
women in remote areas

The Dauntless Hamilton Midwife

Former Gisborne woman Christina Campbell and her fabulous team of Waikato midwives have together raised more than \$12,500 for Hamlin midwives.

Not only did they host their 3rd successful Hamilton High Tea, raising \$4,200, but Christina trekked 1,000km on the challenging, blister-raising Camino de Santiago trail in Northern Spain in a further fundraising effort that raised \$8,390.

Beginning on International Midwives Day, May 5, she persevered for 5 weeks and 2 days and finishing by bicycle due to a foot injury, Christina raised awareness of the desperate need for access to maternity care for Ethiopian women. Her walk mirrored some of the challenges faced by fistula patients in reaching treatment! Knowing the challenges that midwives face serving in remote regions, she is passionate about enabling and supporting our midwives to serve at their best in preventing childbirth injuries. As quoted in the Gisborne Herald, Christina remarked, "What Reginald and Catherine Hamlin started is a very strong example of what can be achieved through compassion, dedication and perseverance in helping those in desperate need."

Back home and still hobbling, Christina shared at the Hamilton High Tea an inspiring quote that she discovered along the trail in Spain. At a low time personally, she discovered the very spirit that inspired Dr Reg and Dr Catherine also gave her strength to finish her journey and inspire her service as a midwife and advocate for Hamlin.

I dreamt that life was joy. I woke up and realised that life was service. I did service, and I found that life was joy.

Read more of her story at www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/christina



Christina and Waikato Midwives hand over a cheque for \$12,350 to HFNZ.



Passing Santiago de Compostela Cathedral in Northern Spain.

High Tea for Hamlin

@ the Cathedral

Raises \$30,000!

We are thrilled to report another sold out event!

Over 200 guests were serenaded by the Cathedral Choristers - of whom Dr Reg Hamlin is an alumnus. Thanks to the generosity of our amazing sponsors, the ticket price of \$45 grew into \$150 raised per guest for the work of our dedicated Hamlin midwives. That's a fabulous increase!

Principal Sponsor for 2018 and 2019, Michael Taylor of Strategic Financial Planning says;



Michael Taylor receiving a certificate of appreciation from HFNZ Trustee Joli Wescombe

"We are so privileged. It is a joy to give back to those who are less fortunate than us. And this work is so life-changing!"

IN 2019, YOUR DONATIONS SENT

\$112,832 for the annual running costs of 7 Midwifery Centres

\$70,877 for a second midwives' accommodation building

\$39,608 for medical equipment

***Amaseganelo!*
THANK YOU!**

Why did I get this newsletter by post rather than email?

It is important to us that we stay in touch with you, our Hamlin supporter. We know this is most effective through the post. If it is important to you to opt out of any postal news, please let us know at info@hamlinfistula.org.nz



Dreams of a Bright Future

Sini, 20, is from a poor farming village 600kms from Addis Ababa and three hours from the closest market town with a government health clinic, school and electricity. There are few choices in life; boys become shepherds and farmers, and girls train to be good homemakers and wives. With no schooling and given to an aged husband at age 17 as a second wife, it is easy to guess her married life was not an enjoyable one.

At 18, Sini fell pregnant for the first time, happy news that would secure her married life. Her plan was to deliver at the government clinic, and she carefully learned about the first signs of labour. Unfortunately, the labour began before she could make it to the clinic. But after a day labouring at home, help was needed.

The non-stop painful labour, with the jolting of my body while being carried on a hand-made stretcher for the half-day walk to the clinic and then to the hospital was unbearable. By the time I reached the hospital I was unconscious. When I woke up from surgery, I found myself soaked on the bed and unable to move one leg. At first, I thought it was something related with the long labour, and I would soon recover. But when I discovered the death of my baby, I fell in deep sorrow. The uncontrollable urine flooding down my legs and the loss of my baby made me feel I wanted to remain unconscious forever without knowing all this agony.

Sini never returned home. The three surgeries she had at the government hospital were unsuccessful, but she stayed at the hospital for over one year begging the medical staff for help.

I was the only one with such a problem at the hospital. When other patients looked at me, they often covered their noses. I never talked, ate or drank with anyone, even family. My husband tired of washing my things and taking care of me and snuck away. I didn't see him again. I was so lonely, heavyhearted, crying day and night. The hospital staff remained by my side and supported me in every way until I finally made it to Hamlin.

In January, Sini was brought to Hamlin Fistula in Addis Ababa by ambulance from the government hospital where she stayed for over a year. She underwent various treatments for the first four months and received the first and final diversion surgery which left her totally dry. She was then admitted to rehabilitation at Desta Mender where she is taking life skills training with other fistula survivors.

Now I feel like I am the happiest woman, never ashamed to talk and eat with people around. I dream of a bright future and living an independent life. All these are made possible because of you. You gave my dead, hopeless life back, and I have no words to thank you all.

LONG, FAITHFUL SERVICE

During the 60th Anniversary Celebrations held in Addis Ababa in May, Hamlin honoured staff who had served the hospital for 40 years or more with a golden medallion. These special seniors shared their memories of working alongside Dr Reg and Dr Catherine.

Dr Reg was a very humble man. He cared for the patients. He would see them on the street and bring them in. - Kassa Gutema, age 65

When Dr Catherine said to move with her to the Fistula Hospital [from Princess Tsehai Hospital], I was so touched. I decided to serve her the rest of my life. I made a hut for Dr Catherine's first office - even though I'd never done it before. Dr Catherine said to me, "There's no such thing as I don't know. Just try." They didn't have enough money and needed a pharmacy, so I had to build a hut again.

Dr Reg wanted African doctors to learn about fistula - from Somali, Djibouti.... He was a fighter; he was at war in fistula - that's how I see him. He was a father to all. He was an easy person and hardly got angry at situations.

I remember Dr Catherine crying after he passed away, and I was so scared that she would leave the country. I hugged her and said, "I'll never leave you. I'll forever be with you." So, God built me a life, and I've been caring for her all these 60 years. - Birru Robi, age 83

Award-Winning Midwifery Service

Hamlin midwives are highly sought after for their professionalism and skills in establishing rural midwifery centres. Maurdi and Chaltu, both 28, revamped the maternal healthcare service of their rural Harar centres. 'Starting from scratch', they easily gained the community's trust through providing quality midwifery and won regional government awards for their performance. During their exemplary service with Hamlin, they transformed their midwifery centres into models recognised across the region.



The very fact that I am a Hamlin graduate with world-class training means I faced no challenges in introducing adaptations to my work environment. Within a short time, my colleague and I took a leading role in the midwifery service of the centre. I believe, in my four years' service at the centre, I achieved what my generous sponsors wanted me to accomplish. - Maurdi

After serving Hamlin for 4 and 5 years respectively, Maurdi and Chaltu became Midwifery Instructors at Dire Dawa University, a government university in their region. Currently they are also studying the first year of the Master of Midwifery (MSc). They both confirm that their training and work with Hamlin has been critical to their professional success.

In my training with Hamlin I was enabled not just to be a highly skilled and confident professional midwife, but I have also inherited the deep satisfaction of helping and loving the poor, from the lifelong dedication of Emaye [Dr Catherine] and the service rendered at the fistula hospitals. Emaye will always remain the inspiration behind my future success in my personal and professional life. - Chaltu.



Kassa Gutema, Hamlin gardener for 50 years



Birru Robi, Hamlin gardener for 60 years



Mihrat Gidey, Nurse aid 45 years, former fistula patient



Kass Azlem, Hamlin gardener 45 years, celebrating with traditional raw beef

The Joy of Serving

To be able to help people who, through no fault of their own, are unable to help themselves is a wonderful thing.

To help people who are in a very dire situation, with no quality of life at all, to regain their lives is quite simply wonderful. Janet Wallace

Do Janet's words hit a chord with you? Does it trigger something in you that says, "I will!"

We are very excited to share the news with you that you can, and we would love to support you in that.

HFNZ has deliberately increased capacity within our team to enable you as our wonderful supporters to have the ability to engage one step further with us through volunteering to run an event in your area. We now have Rachel Thornton on our team specifically working to grow the events and fundraising across New Zealand and ultimately impact the women we care so much about.

Rachel has been working with the Board to create support systems so we can increase our volunteer capacity. This is a very exciting time for HFNZ because we know we have an amazing group of dedicated supporters that want to do more, and we want to empower you!

Whether it's a High Tea for Hamlin, organising a viewing of the very powerful *Walk to Beautiful* in your area or even a Barefoot Walk, we are keen to hear from you. Maybe you have a different idea all together to raise awareness and support. Now you may well be reading this thinking, "I would love to, but", or "That's all well and good, but where do I start?"

Janet started by running a dinner night in her home with a group of friends. Christina started a High Tea for Hamlin with a group of colleagues. You can too!

Check out Janet's full story at www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/volunteer and Christina's story on www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/christina

Volunteering for Hamlin has been one of the things in my life that I am able to look at and smile. I have made lovely new friends, worked alongside old friends, and grown as a person at the same time.

I realise now after three years of doing this, that I have been a great control freak all my life and now I have become the Queen of delegation!! What personal growth!!! And how lovely for my family and friends!!!!

I smile a lot, I work hard for Hamlin and I smile while I do it, because it matters so much to someone else and brings smiles to those who haven't smiled in a long long time.

I encourage anyone who would like to do something really wonderful for someone else to smile for Hamlin and see how it brings a smile to you.

– Janet Wallace



I was first attracted to helping with The High Tea for Hamlin after hearing about the work done by Hamlin Fistula. The more I learn the prouder I am to be involved!

Being involved has given me the opportunity to implement my organisational skills, my creative flair, and my ability to communicate the purpose and benefits of the Hamlin Trust to those I approach to donate goods, and to friends I ask to assist with and/or attend the high tea.

I appreciate the camaraderie engendered by the diverse personalities of the organising committee and witnessing how these talented individuals, working at their specific tasks, produce an outstanding event.

Most of all though is the sense of purpose I experience, knowing my contribution creates the opportunity for vital medical care to be administered to the less fortunate.

– Sue Greenwood



Volunteering - Where do I start?

High Tea for Hamlin

By hosting a High Tea for Hamlin, you can connect friends, mothers, daughters and sisters in support of women on the other side of the world.

Every High Tea hosted is helping to achieve Dr Catherine Hamlin's dream of eradicating fistula... one cuppa at a time!

Your event can be as small or elaborate as you like - if it works for you, it works for us!

Screening of the documentary *Walk to Beautiful*

This documentary is incredibly moving and no-one who leaves the theatre or host venue will ever be the same. This event will raise awareness and is sure to lead to many other people wanting to step up and help with the work of Hamlin Fistula NZ.

The Barefoot Walk or High Tea for Hamlin would be a fantastic event to do after the documentary has been shown.

Barefoot Walk for Hamlin

This event is designed to encourage participants to empathise with the journey fistula patients go through in Ethiopia, walking for kilometres in bare feet - often very unwell and stigmatised. The concept is to find a location and organise a walk that would raise both funds and awareness for the work of Hamlin Fistula NZ.

Art/Jazz Evening

This event would be a lovely evening out for a target audience that could be the professionals who work in the areas of health and women's well-being.

Local artists would be approached to display their works, along with dessert and jazz during the evening, finishing with an auction.

Thank you for considering stepping up to restore dignity and hope to the women of Ethiopia.

It's our desire to support and empower you through the whole process of running an event whether large or small. So please don't hesitate to contact us, and we can start planning!

Call or email Rachel on 027 527 4055 or rachel@hamlinfistula.org.nz, and let's have a conversation.





Not all gifts can be wrapped...

Give the gift of life this Christmas



For many women, having access to a midwife during their pregnancy is the greatest gift of all.

This was the case for Tobiya. Access to a midwife during pregnancy ensured safe delivery of her daughter, Sitotaw, which means 'Gift' in Amharic.

30,004 women like Toyiba had their baby delivered by a Hamlin midwife in 2019.

In order to reach our goal of eradicating fistula in Ethiopia by 2030, we need to ensure there is a midwife for every pregnant woman.

You can prevent fistula this Christmas for just the cost of a cup of coffee a week!

\$25 per month will support safe, professional midwifery care for one mother and her baby for a whole year!

Register online www.hamlinfistula.org.nz/christmas or complete the form and post it back to us:

I WOULD LIKE TO:

- Be a Christmas Sponsor (\$25 per month) - Please reference 'Christmas' A/C 06 0817 0264043 00
- Donate a Hamlin General Donation: \$_____ A/C 06 0817 0264043 00
- Donate to Administration Expenses of Hamlin Fistula NZ: \$_____ A/C 06 0817 0264043 02

PERSONAL DETAILS:

Name _____

Address _____

Town/City _____ Postcode _____

Email _____ Phone _____

*Photos by Mary F. Calvert. Patient names and images have been changed to protect the identities of those we help.



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