

Dear Sir/Madam,

There are many health issues that children and young adults face that can cause devastation to families especially middle income or poor families throughout a life time. If I asked you to guess what type of devastation I am talking about I am sure you would say cancer, heart disease, obesity etc. Actually, it's none of the above. How would you feel if you or a loved one were in this situation? The United States and Africa have a silent crisis: mental illness and physical disability

For the past centuries children and young adults in America and in the rest of the world have died prematurely due to short life expectancy caused by mental illness and physical disability and lack proper of treatment. This disease is being ignored because families hit by it are ignorant and do not want to expose the condition of their loved ones and feel it is a shame to have a child that doesn't look normal. Mental illness is caused by a combination of genetic, biological, psychological, and environmental factors not personal weakness or a character defect. Nearly 1 in 5 people in the U.S has a disability according to the Census Bureau Reports.

Mental illness and physical disability is expected to continue to torment families because most parents aren't educated, especially those in Africa who prefer to hide their children and wait for death to take them away, the cost for effective treatments and therapies to the disabled children that they must have on a daily basis and the cost to acquire the equipment is very high and moreover, health insurance in America does not cover the total cost. In Africa health insurance, does not cover these types of diseases or it doesn't exist at all.

This is why we at Caring Hearts Advocates have made a decision to create a 501 © (3) non-profit organization that aims at breaking the silence and creating positive interventions and taking the fight against mental illness and physical disability in children and young adults making a positive change in their lives.

Our approach is proactive and aggressive. We must increase parents' awareness of the importance to seek help for their disabled children and learn how to deal with their conditions. To do this we must draw their attention by introducing to them the programs we have put in place such as: providing training to volunteers and staff members, educational resources, life skills for employment, equipment for disabled children, health counseling, training and resources for parents. We intend to train low income families in Montgomery County and to provide financial means to cover the cost of their copayments on medical prescription and on equipment and to provide respite care.

Caring Hearts was founded by a woman who witnessed firsthand and was inspired by the type of torment a family from Africa who lived in the United States for more than 10 years experienced. This family had a child who was born with cerebral palsy, epilepsy, developmental growth problem, could not see, hear, talk and totally dependent due to an abnormal condition she was born with. She devoted most of her time to help find the right doctors, therapists and good neurology centers and special schools. She understood that these parents depended on the services of the doctors and therapists even on school programs but once at home the parents did neither know what to do with the child or even to follow the recommendations from the therapist because of the very fact that they were depressed and were not training on how to live and care for a disabled child. The mother who was married, had other children and a good paying job lost interest in life. The only time she found some relief was under the care of *doctors; something* she doesn't have access to in Africa. Though she had insurance, she couldn't afford the

copayments on the prescription and equipment, surgery and physical therapy treatments because they were very high. They have now returned to Africa with their daughter who is now 19 years old but the mother continues to be totally dedicated to her disabled child and even more tormented now than ever before because she is no longer receiving the care and treatment she was receiving in the USA.

Three years ago, the same Woman visited a center in Rwanda and was again inspired by the situation she witnessed there. The Center was established by a good-hearted nurse and it accommodates only 22 disabled children who permanently live there under difficult conditions such as: poor hygiene, lack of doctors and therapists, lack of medication, lack of equipment, lack of treatment and shortage of rooms for all children. The Center cares for more than 90 children from their homes because of lack of space at the center.

Once back in the United States the woman decided to open a non-profit organization to benefit disabled children in America and Africa. It is important to stress that CHA is determined to help the Center in Rwanda and establish another one in Gabon and is aware that it needs to put efforts to partner with many if it has to start from scratch in order to establish good and professional centers in these countries.

Caring Hearts will partner with Neurologists, Therapists, Doctors and Volunteers who can train the parents, treat the disabled children and train them to ensure that they live healthy and productive lives. Caring Hearts will also partner with family, friends, foundations and different organizations that can donate funds to finance the different programs it has put in place.

We have started a fundraiser campaign through social media accounts and through friends to raise \$25,000 seed money from December 25, 2016 to February 25, 2017. We have also registered with Benevity Causes Portal where you donate to our organization.

Our Board of Directors and I are extremely excited to work hard and help promote Caring Hearts Advocates' purpose of making a difference in the lives of disable children in America and Africa.

We thank you in anticipation for your generosity and partnership. Together we can help break the silence and make the world know that even those who are mentally disabled still have a chance to live a productive and healthy lifestyle, if we mobilize resources to help them and their families get the proper care needed.

Sincerely Yours,

The Executive Director  
Consolata Gasasira