

TANZANIA 2018

Amanda Martinage, (Occupational therapist) Dr. Martha Collins, Nilofer Naqvi (Psychologist) and Karen Levy (Speech-Language Pathologist) traveled to Tanzania this summer with the Organization for Medical and Psychological Assistance for Children overseas (OMPACO). They arrived in Dar Es Salaam on the weekend of July 22, 2018.

On July 23rd, Nilofer and Amanda had a productive meeting with VodaCom, a large telecommunications company, to discuss the mobile phone training project, with a goal of increasing the scope of the project to more communities in Tanzania.

On July 24th, the team traveled to Arusha to prepare for the launch of the mobile phone training. Once again, the team was warmly welcomed by the Medical Missionaries of Mary, and stayed in their beautiful compound with a view of Mount Meru. Amanda and Nilofer met with administrators of the Arusha City Council the next day, and on July 26th, OMPACO officially launched the mobile phone project, with 35 educators beginning the training on their phones. While in Arusha, the team visited the Makumbusho Autism Unit, where Karen provided a training to teachers on how to use a communication device that was then donated to the unit. The next day, Nilofer left for the airport to travel towards home, while the rest of the team embarked on the four hour drive to Dareda.

During the short stay in Dareda, the team visited the Dareda Hospital. They also visited students and teachers at the Patrick Winter Primary School, where they donated a suitcase full of learning materials. The team returned to Arusha for one night before traveling once again, this time flying west to Mwanza, located on Lake Victoria.

From August 1st to August 3rd, the team provided a 3-day training to over 45 teachers, at the Village of Hope School. Peter Ndomondo organized the training for the second year in a row, and teachers traveled from over 10 different districts around Mwanza to attend. The autism training focused on diagnosis and assessment, communication and teaching strategies, behavior strategies, and individual education plans. The trainings were enthusiastically received, with many requests for additional trainings in the future!

On August 4th, the team, led by Dr. Martha Collins, offered consultation to parents and their children with disabilities. Over 50 families arrived at the Village of Hope school that morning, and the amazing Martha managed to see 29 of them, providing recommendations to the parents of each child. On Monday, August 6th, Amanda and Karen delivered learning materials to 3 different schools in Mwanza. It was great fun meeting the students and teachers, and touring the schools!

The team returned to Dar Es Salaam on August 7th and worked together to write up the reports for all 29 children in Mwanza who had been seen for consultation. On August 9th, the team prepared to present a 1-hour training at Grand Rounds at Muhimbili National Hospital; unfortunately the training had to be cancelled. The team left another suitcase of learning materials for the special education officer in Kigamboni to distribute to a local school.

After a productive and exhilarating, but tiring, three weeks in Tanzania, the team enjoyed their last day at the beautiful Kipepeo Beach before preparing for the long flight home on August 11th.