

MK carries on legacy through gift to Nigeria hospital

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Mary Kay Posey points to the Texas-sized gift she plans to deliver this Christmas to Nigeria—thanks largely to Texas Baptists.

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DALLAS—Many people renew family ties at Christmas. For Mary Kay Posey, the trip home takes 19 hours. But when she returns to Nigeria this month to deliver a Texas-sized gift, it gives her the chance to carry on the legacy of her medical missionary parents.

“We were expecting a miracle, but what we got was so much more,” she said.



Posey meets with residents and staff at a leper colony near Eku Baptist Hospital.

- [Watch video from CBS11 News in Dallas on Posey's trip.](#)

Posey plans to return to Eku, Nigeria, with two 18-wheeler-sized containers filled with operating room equipment and medical supplies—a shipment facilitated by the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Healthcare Outreach Network, Texas Baptist Men and Walking in Love Ministries, a nonprofit organization Posey and her husband, Fred, formed last year.

“It’s the dream of a missionary kid, to go back to Eku and share the love of Jesus,” she said.

More than 60 years ago, Posey’s parents helped start the Eku Baptist

Hospital about a mile from a lepers' colony and a tuberculosis camp.

"I remember reaching in with my small hands to pull two twins from their mother during a Caesarean section," Posey said. "When I was old enough, I taught little girls about Jesus in Sunbeams class."

Growing up in Nigeria, Posey witnessed the effects of hunger, inadequate medical care and devastating disease.

She and her husband have traveled to Nigeria with supplies four times in the past two years. They plan to make three visits a year to Nigeria. These two-week to four-week trips will involve volunteer doctors, medical personnel, teachers and other people who want to share Christ's love and minister to needs they have discovered in Nigeria.

"It's been heart-wrenching," Posey said. "With the loss of support from the International Mission Board, the hospitals have struggled to stay alive."

A shift in the mission board's strategy in 2000 dramatically reduced funding for the Eku Baptist Hospital, leaving it without the money to hire doctors, nurses and other staff or to fund operations.

The Eku hospital serves one-third of Nigeria, and the nearest Baptist hospital is eight hours away.

The Christmas gift from Texas Baptists will help save lives at three Nigerian Baptist hospitals—in Eku, Ogbomoso and Saki.

Healthcare Outreach Network, an organization launched by the BGCT institutional ministries office made the shipment possible. For several years, some Baptist hospitals offered used equipment to the Baptist hospital in Guadalajara, Mexico, through medical missionary Lee Baggett. With the project's success, hospital administrators and BGCT representatives began discussing how they could expand their effort, and

Healthcare Outreach Network developed. After changes in IMB funding, the global medical outreach need grew urgent as hospitals and clinics overseas struggled to survive.

Ben McKibbens, former CEO of Valley Baptist Health System, serves as volunteer executive director for Healthcare Outreach Network.

“We’re trying to bridge the gap left behind,” said Keith Bruce, director of the BGCT institutional ministries office. “At least nine Texas and national hospitals are ready to offer support motivationally, financially and physically through medical supplies and equipment to hospitals like those in need in Nigeria.

“These are the first large containers of medical supplies and equipment we have sent to a developing nation. We were aware of the need of the Baptist hospital in Ogbomoso, and we’re glad to be able to provide medical assistance to those desperately in need.”

BGCT Medical Missions Coordinator Shirley Shofner helped bring the medical resources together—involving not only Baylor Medical Center and Valley Baptist Hospital, but also Children’s Medical Center of Dallas, the Christian Community Action in Lewisville, Heart to Heart of Kansas City, Mo., and Supplies Overseas of Louisville, Ky.

“It’s awesome what the Lord has done,” Shofner said. “Children’s Medical Center was remodeling its operating rooms and provided us operating-room suites, including tables and lights.”

With only two physicians on staff, the Eku hospital still desperately needs doctors. Nourished by only beans and rice, the hospital staff is loyal and compassionate but extremely overworked and underpaid, Posey noted. Walking in Love often wires \$1,000 checks to feed the unpaid staff for a month.

“We’ve found the names of four doctors who are willing to come,” Posey explained. “But we need \$30,000 for first-year salaries for each one. More than 200 people are currently on staff, but the hospital only has funding for one month’s salary, \$25,000, excluding the doctors.”

Texas Baptist Men volunteers built crates for the supplies and loaded them in containers, and Posey is working with TBM to build an orphanage not far from the hospital in Eku. For now, Posey looks forward to delivering a Christmas gift that will improve the lives of many less-fortunate people a world away from Texas.

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