



# MEDICAL MISSION SISTERS

Over 95 Years of Healing Presence

Winter 2024

“My curiosity about dying, death, and grief peaked as a 10-year-old when my beloved grandfather died. The loss was devastating...I had more questions than answers. The greatest of these was, ‘where did he go?’ His thoughts and feelings, the essence of who he is must be somewhere...It was these questions and then experiencing additional losses, that I have been seeking answers to ever since.” These are the words of Medical Mission Sister Associate Kristyn Manemeit.

Kristyn recently graduated from Hartford International University with her masters in Transformative Leadership and Spirituality. She has woven her skills as a hospice nursing assistant with her professional education and relationship with MMS to shape her approach to guiding others in the grief and loss process. She pays close attention to what is meaningful to the individual, offering guidance in expressing their deepest feelings about their life and their final wishes. Kristyn herself is exquisitely present, intentional, and authentic; the work she has done in these areas of her own life are quickly evident when she speaks and in the way she accompanies others.



*Kristyn at a ceremony honoring the wisdom of older women.*

A nature enthusiast, Kristyn brings with her an energetic and playful spark; she is very comfortable “in her own skin” and although the topics she is exploring are serious, she offers a hint of whimsy that is both supportive and comforting. For her master’s project she developed a tool called Winged Messengers. The pack of 33 cards, each depicting a different bird, is designed to help people connect to their feelings, offering understanding, direction and hope in dealing with death. After a session with Kristyn last summer, Sister Rosemary Ryan reflected, “The beautiful paintings of the birds seemed not only to bring them to life but to invite us to share in some of their natural life wisdom. This encouraged a reflective inner acknowledgement of our life experience and processes, owning them and learning from them. The experience was gentle and prayerful in a unique way. Kristyn offers us a special gift.” You can learn more about Kristyn at [www.kristynity.com](http://www.kristynity.com).

Medical Mission Sisters have been dedicated, for close to a century, to bringing healing to our broken world. The edges of brokenness are particularly sharp and jagged right now and we sometimes wonder how we can make a meaningful difference. Fr. Richard Rohr’s Center for Action and Contemplation teacher, Mirabai Starr recently shared the following thoughts on mending the world: “We do this through every act of loving kindness...through every act of...generosity, hospitality...It’s an offering of ourselves, even when it’s not convenient and not comfortable.” She adds that our loving, kind thoughts count too – they help mend the world. We hope you are inspired as you read about the way in which two of our Associates are bringing their heart-filled selves to the world.

Please join us in prayer, in action, in your thoughts of loving kindness and with your financial support to MMS. Together we can bring light and healing to the brokenness, and hope for those who are suffering.

## Gift of Support

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L124

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Phil Pryjma grew up in the colorful, religiously and culturally diverse poor immigrant neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. That experience shaped a passion that reflects an authentic appreciation for others and the freedom to respect and explore their differences.

In 2015 Phil started an NGO, Sawa Sawa, an avenue to express his dedication to compassion and respect, “two ideals held up by the MMS charism of healing presence.” Sawa Sawa operates in Angiya, Kenya, and is managed by local leaders; Phil and his business partner, Karen Smith, visit once a year. Their initial work was to offer help and new ideas to subsistence farmers in Angiya to increase crop production. They also addressed the health needs of students at St. Basil’s elementary school. He found that introducing explorative art to the children enhanced new ways of learning, stimulating the creative process in unexpected and surprising ways. He believes everyone benefits from greater community pride, leading to more self-respect and ideas for productive and self-sustaining change.

In addition to supporting St. Basil’s, Sawa Sawa has given tremendous aid to the maternal and child health clinic run by Medical Mission Sisters. They have gifted the clinic with an ultrasound machine, and assisted in the procurement of medications. Sawa Sawa has established a partnership between St. Basil’s and the clinic, paying for students to receive necessary medical care, most often malaria treatment, so the children don’t miss school.

***“The serious need for malaria treatment and the impact of climate change on the gardens is daunting.”***

Sawa Sawa now provides lunch for the students because there is often no food at home. The students and community have planted a 10-acre garden; Sawa Sawa wants to help the residents achieve total self-sufficiency with the program which is beginning to show signs of success. Over the years, Sawa Sawa has donated hundreds of solar lights and chargers, reducing the use of kerosene and its impact on



respiratory health and increasing time spent on schoolwork. Solar chargers also allow families to use cell phones and generate extra money by charging others’ phones.

Phil recently noted that the cost of medications has skyrocketed, and their capacity to meet the needs of the children has become very challenging. East Africa has the highest incidence of malaria; the cost of medicine and health insurance is not remotely possible for families to afford. They are hoping and praying for an effective and affordable vaccine and are working diligently to access vaccines already in the pipeline. The serious need for malaria treatment and the impact of climate change on the gardens has been daunting. Phil added, “The children do not complain for what they never had...no food, no medicine.”

Phil lives with his wife, Maureen, also an MMS Associate, in Great Barrington, MA. Phil owns and operates the St. Francis Art Gallery in Great Barrington, where a section of artwork, clothing, and sculpture is dedicated to raising funds for Sawa Sawa. You can visit their Facebook and website Sawa Sawa Foundation, Inc. ([sawasawaberksire.org](http://sawasawaberksire.org)) to learn more!

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