



SIGN Meets Growing Need in Guinea

The SIGN Program at Compassion Evangelical Hospital in Guinea, West Africa, is less than a year old, but its reputation for providing effective and affordable care is growing.

One patient recently treated there is Philippe, a 22-year-old nurse, who was in a severe traffic accident. He suffered an open fracture of his tibia, in which the fractured bone pierces through the skin and dramatically increases the chance of infection. His right forearm was also fractured.

Philippe was taken to the closest hospital, where the staff cleaned his wounds but did not have the capacity to care for his fractured tibia. His uncle, who used to work at Compassion Evangelical Hospital (CEH), knew that it had a SIGN Program and could help people with fractured bones. So Philippe transferred there the next day.

At CEH, Dr. Paul Sidjani examined Philippe's tibia injury and determined that a SIGN Nail was the best treatment to stabilize the bone and enable it to heal. A few days later, after Philippe's infection was under control, Dr. Sidjani performed SIGN Surgery with a donated SIGN Nail. He used a cast to stabilize the fractured radius in Philippe's forearm.

Following the surgery, Dr. Sidjani went to check on Philippe. He was asleep, but his wife, father, and the uncle who referred him to CEH were all there.

"I showed them the images of the post-operative x-ray," Dr. Sidjani says. "All three melted in thanks."

Only one day after SIGN Surgery, Philippe was able to stand without

assistance and was able to walk with one crutch.

You can help provide SIGN Surgery for someone like Philippe. Donate today using the included form or go to signfracturecare.org/donate



Philippe (right) is able to stand without support and walk with crutches one day after SIGN Surgery.

Hands-On Training for Medical Students

One of SIGN's main goals is to raise the level of orthopaedic care available in low- and middle-income countries. In order to do this, we provide and support educational opportunities for surgeons.

In years past, much of the teaching was done by surgeons traveling from the United States to locations around the world. But now, most education is led by surgeons training their peers in their home country.

Training Surgical Residents

This spring, the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) hosted a 2-week basic science course for

56 surgical residents at Tenwek Hospital in Kenya. This course covered broad topics within general surgery including physiology, anatomy, trauma management, and orthopaedics.

PAACS's goal is to provide training support for national surgeons who will practice for decades to come in Africa. The organization provides education, mentorship, and financial support for residents in East, Central, and Southern Africa so they pass their exams to become surgeons. Three SIGN Programs, including Tenwek Hospital, are PAACS training sites.

Hands-on SIGN Training

Dr. Dan Galat, a former SIGN Program Manager at Tenwek Hospital, said surgeons dedicated one and a half days to orthopaedic surgery topics including hands-on training with the SIGN System.

"For the SIGN station, residents practiced antegrade and retrograde femoral nailing, and were able to handle the instruments, understand the "SIGN feel", get experience with



Practicing SIGN Surgery with simulated bones helps doctors get tactile feedback in a safe teaching environment.

using the drills and appreciate bony anatomy," he said.

Many of the surgeons who attended the course were from hospitals with SIGN Programs and were familiar with SIGN Instruments, but most are not training to be orthopaedic specialists. "Because much of the orthopaedic trauma in Africa is handled by general surgeons, orthopaedic training for all surgeons is important," Dr. Galat said. "This course provides an opportunity for more hands-on experience and training in a lower-stakes environment than in an operating room."

Lasting Education and Impact

"Thousands of patients have been treated with SIGN Nails, and hundreds of residents have been training in using SIGN at our PAACS training sites," Dr. Galat adds. "Many graduating PAACS residents request SIGN Sets for their assignments at the hospitals they serve after training."

Supporting local education like this training course helps SIGN to grow and, more importantly, helps raise the level of orthopaedic care available in low-and middle-income countries.



56 residents from East, Central, and Southern Africa participated in hands-on learning with the SIGN System.

In Memoriam: Dr. Sara Zirkle

By Jeanne Dillner, SIGN CEO



On June 19, 2022, the SIGN Family lost a special member. Dr. Sara Zirkle passed away after a five-year encounter

with cancer. People in our community revered her. During her career, she was the most trusted pediatrician in our area for parents who had children that needed a developmental pediatrician. She also assisted the police in helping children who had experienced abuse. When she retired, she focused on other ways to serve the community, but her first passion was being a grandmother to her nine grandchildren.

She was instrumental in helping Dr. Lewis Zirkle to achieve his dream of building orthopaedic capacity in less developed countries. She researched an organization

called CARE and suggested to Lew that they should join this organization and begin to volunteer. They started their overseas volunteerism when Lew was still serving in the US Army. They ventured to Indonesia, where Sara taught pediatrics and Lew taught the general surgeons how to perform orthopaedic surgery. They returned to Indonesia together for several years until Lew assayed that their orthopaedic program was sustainable, and then he moved onto teaching in Vietnam.

SIGN Surgeons who attended the annual conferences will remember her grace and the gift of hospitality she extended at the evening meals served at their home. Sara was interested in the lives of the SIGN Surgeons. She enjoyed her conversations with them and was encouraging to them in their careers.

She was the tiny and mighty force behind Lew and SIGN, and we will miss her presence greatly.

Read the obituary written by the Zirkle family at bit.ly/SaraZirkle



Dr. Zirkle Honored

Dr. Lewis Zirkle recently received the 2021 Meritorious Service Award from Loma Linda University Health.

This honor was given "For his revolutionary and innovative contributions in service of humankind, with the development of the SIGN Nail Implant System."

Dr. Zirkle shares this honor with the whole SIGN Family, as each of you contribute to the success of SIGN and creating equality of fracture care throughout the world.





How You've Helped This Year...

As of June 2022

14,816

Patients Healed

22 SIGN

Programs Started

261 Hospitals

received implants

50 Countries

have been sent shipments

6 SIGN Trauma

Session Webinars

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give.org

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Meets all 20
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See SIGN's privacy policy and state disclosures at signfracturecare.org/privacy



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bit.ly/SIGNstory

Scan this QR Code to go directly to SIGN's page on GreatNonprofits to write your review.

