

## Remembering Mike

### Mike Besten & Gwen (MDG chair)



Dear members and friends,

In so many ways it's been a great year for the Chilanga Health Centre with lots of exciting accomplishments, thanks to your ongoing care and solidarity. But it has also been a year of terrible loss. Mike Besten, the Chief Clinician at the Centre, died very suddenly Dec. 7, 2022. Mike was an unbelievable pillar for over 4 years. Through thick and thin, he was present for patients, staff and the community at large. He came on board at a time when the Health Centre had still not received government accreditation and funding. Mike was crucial in shepherding that process, and in sticking with the clinic despite under-funding and a skeletal staff. He personally had to contend with a serious snake bite, Malaria, a break-in at his home and a motorbike accident but remained steadfastly present for the Health Centre through it all. He was also a generous and talented teacher and during his short time at the Centre was able to

guide and instruct many of the Health Centre's staff and volunteers. We will always be indebted to Mike for helping to keep the Health Centre running at a time when many would have collapsed under the pressure.

Following Mike's passing, we also learned a lesson about accountability. His computer was never found, which contained much of the paperwork regarding the Health Centre, including some invoices making it difficult to account for all expenditures for the Fall of 2022. To ensure that such a situation does not occur again, in collaboration with the Health Centre's Board of Directors, we have implemented a new accounting system. The paper trail for all expenses now must be printed or handwritten, and is managed by the Health Centre's Accountant Assistant with close and coordinated oversight by the Health Centre's Board.

Mike's position has yet to be filled. There are two nurses on staff at the Health Centre, along with a number of other employees who have been managing remarkably well in Mike's absence, but it's critical that a replacement be found. It's a long process, but the Health Centre's Board has been following up regularly with the Malawi officials responsible, and we've been told the position should be filled shortly.

We wish you all a safe and lovely summer and we'll be in touch in the fall.