**Annual Report 2014**

**Aid for Orphans Relief Foundation (AORF)**

**Mission**

Aid for Orphan’s Relief Foundation (AORF), in Hamden, Connecticut, provides orphans and other at risk children with proper healthcare, nutrition and wellness treatments that would otherwise be unavailable. AORF is passionate about making sure vulnerable children have access to food and safe water, lifesaving vaccinations, chronic illness management, preventative care, and emergency relief services. Margaret Chustecki, M.D., started AORF in 2010 after observing the need for medicines and medical supplies in orphanages in her native Poland. In the beginning, AORF began shipping pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and nutritional supplements to orphanages in different parts of the world, and even in the U.S. (Appalachian region of Kentucky). Gradually our mission enlarged from helping orphans to helping orphans and vulnerable children around the globe, including at home. In essence, our organization works as a middle-man, finding matches for at-risk children in various places (for example, children in war-torn Ukraine, families still struggling in the typhoon ravaged Philippines, children malnourished and in need of intensive treatment in orphanages in Kenya, and food insecure schoolchildren in need of weekend meals right here in Connecticut), with wholesale suppliers or donated goods, and local organizations on the ground who are able to accept and complete the delivery. **Since 2010 AORF has delivered $2 million of pharmaceuticals, medical supplies, nutritional supplements, and personal care items to vulnerable children around the world.**

**Successes**

We are happy to report that we now have eight active programs for which we secure products and then pack and ship them to vulnerable children. These programs involve: 1) sending medicines and medical supplies to mobile health clinics run by Operation Blessing in the central Philippines, 2) sending medicines, medical supplies and nutritional/hygiene products to two orphanages in Poland run by the Sister Servants of Mary, 3) sending medicines and medical supplies to health clinics run by the Sisters of Divine Providence in Cameroon, 4) sending medical supplies to Uman Children's Hospital in Uman, Cherkassy Region, Ukraine, where families are frequently asked to pay for bedding, medications, and even food for their hospitalized children, 5) shipping over-the-counter medications, hygiene items, and personal care supplies to the Hope Hill Children’s Home in Kentucky, 6) sending medicines and nutritional treatments for malnutrition to an orphanage, Arap Moi, in Nakuru, Kenya. [Kenya, one of the word’s poorest countries, has a significant problem with malnutrition. UNICEF cities data revealed that 33% of children are stunted, 6% are wasted, and 20% are underweight. Most of the 135 children at this orphanage are malnourished. In large part due to a generous grant from Newman’s Own Foundation we have been able to supply the orphanage with close to 20% of the peanut-based nutritional supplements needed for intensive 8-week treatment programs to address malnutrition in the children. Children treated have had a mean weight gain of 1 pound, 12 ounces.] 7) shipping medications to Uganda-to the Chain Foundation, an orphanage near Kampala, and the Mitooma Junior School’s “sick bay,” and 8) delivering, here in Connecticut, over-the-counter medications, personal care items, and hygiene supplies to the children served by Boys and Girls Village in Milford. **We sent close to a million dollars of product to these programs in 2014.**

We have another promising program that we have invested a considerable amount to time to this year: our program to address the problem of food insecurity in Connecticut schoolchildren. We have submitted 22 LOIs/grants seeking support for weekend backpack programs since August of this year. One small grant has been funded, one was declined, and the rest are in review. As part of our efforts in this area, we have partnered with the John J. Driscoll United Labor Agency (ULA), in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, to expand their successful family weekend backpack program to other Connecticut schools that are in need of a program. We are actively reaching out to other organizations involved in the problem of hunger in Connecticut to help us frame the best possible proposals to address the issue. These include End Hunger CT in Hartford, Connecticut and the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at the University of Connecticut. We are very excited and hopeful about this initiative and we believe that together with our ULA partner, and with the assistance of organizations like End Hunger CT and the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, we will make a significant difference in the lives of food insecure Connecticut schoolchildren.

Recently we have also partnered with another non-profit to address the problem of getting clean water to villages in Uganda. Call to Care Uganda, located in Madison, Connecticut, has successfully drilled 25 wells in Uganda, and they have asked us to help them write grants to expand this number. We are currently working together to write one grant, and we expect to do more. Getting safe, accessible water to villages in rural Uganda is extremely important. For many villagers, predominately women and children, walking back and forth to fetch water takes up a good share of each day, leaving little time for much else. For many children this means there is no opportunity to go to school. For women this means there is little opportunity to improve the economics of their families. Drilling a village well can literally change the lives of villagers, making everyday existence healthier and more productive.

**New Personnel**

Doris Nodelman and Izabela Miedzinski have continued to ably provide our administrative support. Lynne Schilling, RN, PhD, joined our team in August, 2014, as the grant writer. She is a pediatric nurse and her PhD is in Child Development and Family Studies. Lynne was on the faculty at the Yale University School of Nursing for many years and retired in 2008, after finishing her career at UMass Worcester. At UMass Worcester she was Director of the PhD Nursing Program and the Associate Dean for Research in the School of Nursing. During her career in academics she was a successful grant writer. After retiring, she has had a few part-time job opportunities, but writing grants for AORF is a remarkable match for her background, skills, and her wish to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children. Finally, Jennifer Ksiazek, B.A. (Political Science and Sociology) was hired in December as our Development and Major Gifts Officer. She has extensive background working in the nonprofit field. She came to AORF with two years experience astheDevelopment Director for the American Heart Association, Southern New England Region and four years as the Fundraising Coordinator for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Her passions are working with corporate development and securing major gifts. She has also managed special events such as walkathons, galas, and other third-party events.

**Events**

Two popular and successful musical concerts were held to benefit AORF. One was held on March 16, 2014 at the James Blackstone Memorial Library in Branford, and featured the Yale Music School’s string trio- Jia Cao, Cello, Zou Yu, Violin, Xinyi Xu, Viola. This same trio also performed on April 5, 2014, at the Whitney Center in Hamden. Additionally, a very successful 3rd Annual Fundraising Dinner, sponsored by Merrill Lynch of Bank of America, was held on December 20, 2014 at Park Central Tavern 1640 Whitney Avenue Hamden, CT.

**Our Supporters**

We are pleased to report that in 2014 AORF received nearly $25,000 in foundation grants, almost $7,000 in corporate contributions, over $43,000 in individual contributions, and just under $1 million dollars worth of in-kind donations of product from dozens of pharmaceutical and medical supply organizations. We thank Bristol Myers, Macy’s Bloomindales, The Community Foundation, Peridot Foundation, Cooperman Foundation, BJ’s Charitable Foundation, BNY Mellon, Cottonwood Foundation, and the Sasco Foundation. We are also grateful to Bank of America, United Health Group, and Morgan Stanley. We appreciate the support of the individuals who contributed to AORF in 2014. Finally we are grateful for in-kind donations of many pharmaceutical and medical supply organizations including, Americares; Blessings International; Catholic Medical Mission Board; Brother’s Brother Foundation; CSL Behring; Grifols; Yale New Haven Hospital; Abbott; PBM Pharmaceutical, Inc.; Glaxo, Smith, Kline; Eurand; Aptalis Pharma; Bayer; Alpharma; Abbvie;; Forest Laboratories, Inc.; Vansen Pharma Inc.; Iroko; LTS Lohmann Therapy System Corporation; Merck & Co., Inc.; Rusch; and Astra Zeneca.

**AORF Ambassadors and Advocates**

We are excited about our newest AORF Ambassador, Ray Charles Robinson, Jr. Son of the legendary Ray Charles, Ray Charles Robinson, Jr. is an award winning author and film producer and an international lecturer. A graduate of Whittier College, Ray is a financial advisor for Fraser Financial Group/Mass Mutual of Beverly Hills. He founded the non-profit, Ray Charles Jr. Foundation for America, that is committed to humanitarian causes, especially those improving global education, preserving natural resources and the environment, and using the performing arts to promote global unity.

Ray Charles Robinson, Jr. is committed to helping us recruit a development board that shares the goals and mission of AORF and to being influential in raising funds and awareness for AORF and its mission of saving and improving the lives of children worldwide. He has offered to travel on behalf of AORF to Africa and/or other locations to spread the word and raise funds to support AORF. He will use his talents and fame to fundraise and advocate for every child’s right to health and survival.

**Future Plans**

AORF will work to strengthen our current programs by continuing to seek donations and grant monies.  We will continue efforts to streamline the process of acquiring, stocking and delivering products to our active programs. In 2015, we aim to increase by 30% the amount of products delivered to each of our programs.

At the same time, we are looking for new sources of funding and new solutions to ensure sustainability of our programs. We are also looking for ways to increase the visibility of our organization in the state, for ultimately this will help us accomplish our goals to provide for the needs of vulnerable children.

In 2015, we will be especially concentrated in developing weekend backpack programs and nutrition education programs for school children close to home-in Connecticut. We will work on getting community engagement by providing education about children’s need for good nutrition and the prevalence of childhood food insecurity in Connecticut. Community engagement efforts can broaden understanding of the issues our organization is addressing and, thus, increase people's willingness to support our cause. AORF is committed to build an organization that will provide a high quality backpack program and nutrition program to students, catalyze positive changes in districts, advocate for improvement in children’s nutrition, and ultimately make a fundamental difference in the lives of children throughout Connecticut.