

CAUSE

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NONPROFITS
CONNECT

IN TIMES WHEN MONEY IS TIGHT
AND CHATTER IS PLENTIFUL,
FOCUSED EFFORTS ARE BEING
LAUNCHED BY NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATIONS VIA
SOCIAL MEDIA OUTLETS
EVERY SECOND OF
EVERY DAY



CATALYST

Trident United Way's communications team utilizes new social media outlets to implement an integrated marketing strategy.

GOODWILL

Palmetto Medical Initiative helps South Carolinians change the world.

PAY IT FORWARD

Local nonprofit organizations have wish lists, too, and you can help fulfill them.

GROUNDWORK

Coastal Community Foundation dives into Web 2.0.



Palmetto Medical Initiative Helps South Carolinians Change the World

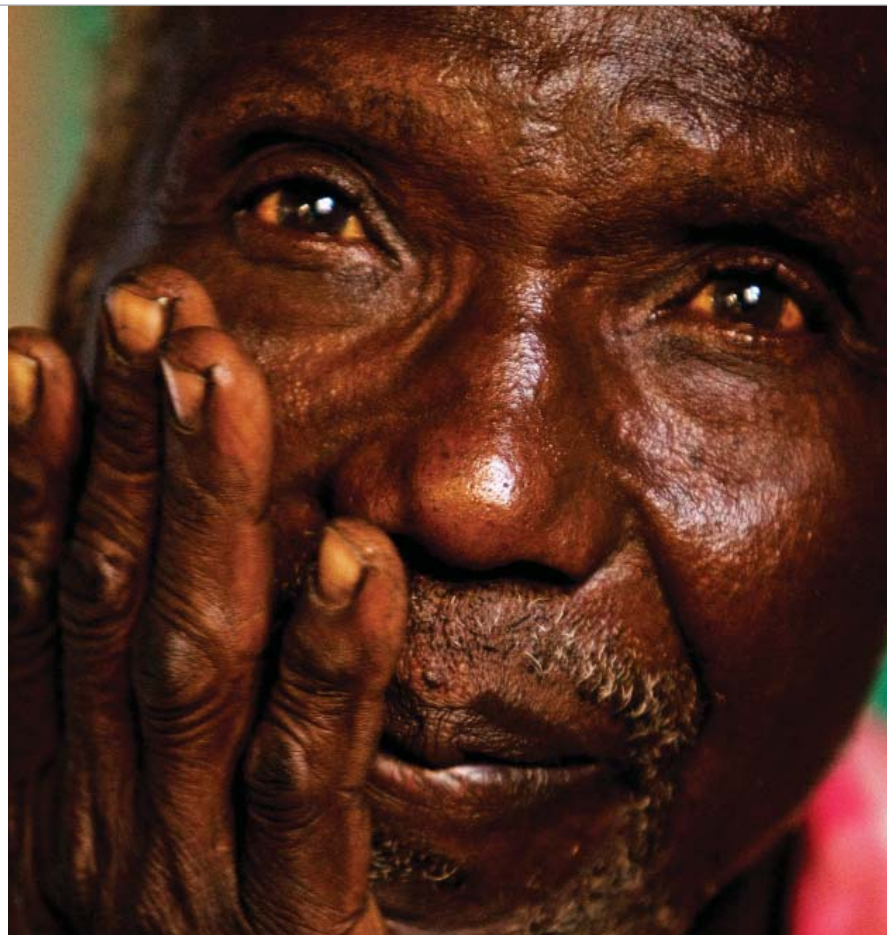
BY ASHLEY SIMONS

“

I am still marveling at how we could help so many patients, while simultaneously benefitting ourselves so much. It is remarkable. Before the trip, I thought that I would be able to help some people and glean medical knowledge. I had no idea how much spiritual insight and growth would be possible for me...because I was solely focused on helping others.” --William Carroll, second year student at MUSC.

Palmetto Medical Initiative (PMI) is helping our community change the global community. Established in 2008, Dr. Ed O'Bryan and Matt Alexander sought to address the need for sustainable healthcare in developing countries using the talent, education and enthusiasm of local medical students and healthcare workers. PMI aims to help poor areas take ownership in their own healthcare systems, empowering impoverished communities to bring about long-term change and to improve their quality of life.

PMI's first project is located in the Masindi-Kitara area of Uganda. Over the three mission trips taken in 2009, PMI has treated more than 6,000 Ugandans. Volunteers have given sight to those who could not read, helped the injured and disabled walk again, distributed tens of thousands of much-needed prescriptions and provided check-ups for more than 100 children at the Family Spirit Orphanage. Most of the patients had no shoes, walked miles in the heat to be seen and slept outside on the



ground to be assured a place in line at the clinic. Technology has played an important part in sharing this experience with others in the local medical community and beyond.

Marianne Heis, Administrative Director for PMI, said the organization's website initially served as the foundation's most important marketing tool. A professional photographer accompanied groups on each of the 2009 mission trips and captured

the volunteers' experiences. These photographs can be seen on the Gallery page at www.palmettomedical.org. The website's blog is another popular feature. Heis can easily and immediately post updates about deadlines, upcoming missions, letters from the Ugandan partners, and more. During the mission trips, she and volunteers post daily updates so that the volunteers' family members and financial supporters have a first-hand



PALMETTO MEDICAL INITIATIVE
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account of happenings from the mission. Family members at home can also post notes of support. Because the volunteers conduct their own fundraising, this exchange of information and encouragement is an irreplaceable means to express the value and the power of any donation.

PMI also utilizes the social networking sites Facebook and Twitter. Most of PMI's volunteers are medical students. Because many students check Facebook and Twitter throughout the day, those sites became the most convenient method to provide updates and news about upcoming mission trips. The Facebook fan page, with its abundance of extraordinary photographs, has also raised interest in potential volunteers. The site includes a quote from Mother Theresa that echoes PMI's goal: "Let us touch the dying, the poor, the lonely and the unwanted according to the graces we have received; and let us not be ashamed or slow to do the humble work."

Web-based marketing strategies have expanded PMI's community of volunteers and they have also generated financial donations, both solicited and unsolicited. The click-and-pledge link on the website allows PMI to capture donor information including name, mailing address and email address, allowing PMI to send donors subsequent mission information. PMI also employs the use of E-Tapestry, software by Blackbaud for nonprofit fundraising. Using E-Tapestry, PMI can send mass

emails, thank you letters, receipts and other correspondence to current and potential donors.

Although relatively new to the world of nonprofits, PMI has already experienced great success in fulfilling the longtime needs of both the Charleston medical community and the people of the impoverished community of Masindi-Kitara, Uganda. The organization is the only of its kind in South Carolina, and it successfully marries the desire of citizens of our state to serve abroad with the contin-

uing, sustainable medical needs of the Ugandan patients. PMI is helping South Carolinians change the world.

"As we continue to experience difficult economic times and change here at home, we must remember that there are people so much worse off than us. We must recognize and be thankful for the values that are truly important in life: love, compassion and generosity." – Brian Blaker, second year student at the MUSC.

To see and learn more about PMI, visit www.palmettomedical.org. ■

