

Compassion in Action:

By: Preston J. Maile

Mount Pleasant Rotary Helps Deliver Hope to Rural Malawi



What began as a personal connection to Malawi grew into an international Rotary partnership that will provide lifesaving transportation to residents of the remote Chitipa District. Through fundraising, collaboration, and compassion, Rotarians helped turn a critical need into a reality.



For Kevin Crosby, the Malawi Ambulance Project began nearly two decades before it became a Rotary initiative.

In 2004, Crosby first traveled to Malawi through a friend involved with the Malawi Children's Village, an organization established during the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s. As part of his work with Full Circle Studios, Crosby helped produce *Juma's Story*, an AIDS awareness video filmed on location in Malawi and presented in the local Chichewa language. The program aired nationally for four years, creating lasting ties to the country and its people.

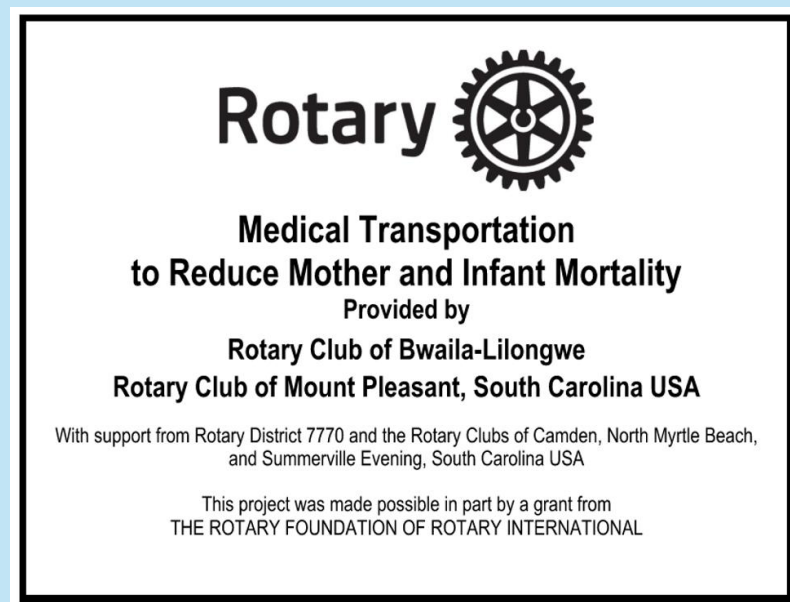
Those connections resurfaced in 2021 where Crosby's friend contacted him about a pressing need in the Chitipa District of northern Malawi: reliable emergency transportation. Difficult terrain and limited infrastructure made it challenging for residents to access timely medical care, particularly in emergencies.

Recognizing the potential impact, Crosby brought the idea before the Rotary Club in 2023. The proposal first gained support at the board level before being embraced by the entire club.



Funding the project required a collaborative effort. Club members raised \$17,150 through popcorn sales along with personal donations from members, and donations from other Rotary clubs. Rotary District support matched that amount with an additional \$17,150 grant. The Rotary Foundation then provided an 80 percent match of the district contribution, adding \$13,670. Together, these contributions created a project budget of \$47,970.

A Rotary Club in Malawi is set to serve as the host club, overseeing local operations and ensuring the ambulance project is successfully implemented and maintained. Their on-the-ground leadership has been essential in transforming financial support into meaningful community impact.



*This graphic that will be put on the sides of the medical transportation vehicle, indicating the clubs that supported our project.

When asked to summarize the project in a single word, Crosby didn't hesitate.

"Compassion."

He then explained that the project will improve the lives of those who save lives, helping medical workers reach patients and enabling expectant mothers and other residents to receive critical care when they need it most. Expressing that –

"[The ambulance will] improve the lives of people who save lives and babies, and that's what Rotary is all about."

For Mount Pleasant Rotarian Kevin Crosby and the many Rotarians involved, the Malawi Ambulance Project is a powerful example of Rotary's fourth pillar of the four-way test in action: "*Will it be **Beneficial** to all concerned?*", benefit that even transcends across continents, to create lasting change.



Note from the Author: *A special thanks to Gerald W. George who was the spark for the motivation behind writing this story and to Kevin Crosby for lending me his time and insight into this Rotary project.*

***All photos used with permission of Kevin Crosby.**