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NEWS LETTER

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Providing Warmth in Challenging Circumstances

Keep the Aged Warm at Mangu Internally Displaced Person's Camp

In the heart of Mangu Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria, where many have been displaced by violent conflicts and bandit attacks, the elderly are among the most vulnerable. The harsh, cold weather adds to their challenges, making it difficult for them to stay warm and healthy. In response to this pressing need, the "Help the Aged Initiative" launched the "Keep the Aged Warm" project, a compassionate effort to provide warmth and comfort to elderly individuals living in the Mangu Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp.

This initiative was made possible through the collaborative efforts of dedicated volunteers and generous sponsors, including alumni from the 2006 Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (KL-YES) program. Driven by a shared commitment to community service and empathy for the elderly, these KL-YES alumni joined hands with the "Help the Aged Initiative" to bring immediate relief to those aged in need.

On a crisp morning, the "Help the Aged Initiative" team arrived at the Mangu IDP camp, where over 150 elderly residents eagerly awaited their arrival. The camp, a sprawling collection of makeshift shelters, has been a refuge for many who have fled their homes due to ongoing violence. Among them are elderly individuals who have endured not only the loss of their homes but also the biting cold that accompanies the region's weather.

The distribution of warm clothing began with a sense of anticipation and hope. The elderly residents, many of whom were dressed in thin, worn-out clothing, lined up to receive winter jackets provided by the initiative. For these seniors,



the jackets were more than just a means to stay warm—they were a symbol of care and recognition.

As the jackets were handed out, the joy and gratitude on the faces of the recipients were palpable. Mary, a 76-year-old woman who had been living in the camp for several months, expressed her thanks with a tearful smile. "This jacket will help me sleep better at night," she said softly, holding the warm fabric close. "The nights are very cold here, and sometimes it feels like the cold goes right to my bones. This gift means so much to me. It shows that people still think about us, that they care."



Similar sentiments were shared by many others in the camp. The initiative's impact extended beyond physical warmth, fostering a sense of community and support among the elderly. The "Keep the Aged Warm" project became a powerful reminder that even in the most challenging circumstances, small acts of kindness can make a profound difference.



The KL-YES 2006 alumni who participated in the project were deeply moved by the response. "We knew we wanted to help, but seeing the smiles on their faces and hearing their words of thanks made it all worthwhile," said one of the alumni organizers. "We may not be able to solve all the problems they face, but if we can make their lives a little easier, even for a moment, it's worth it."

This initiative highlights the importance of community and the need to support the elderly, especially those who have faced displacement and hardship. It is a testament to the power of collaboration and the impact that can be achieved when people come together for a common cause.

Help the Aged Initiative aims to continue its work, inspired by the success of the "Keep the Aged Warm" project. By partnering with local organizations, volunteers, and sponsors, the initiative hopes to reach more elderly individuals in need, not only in Mangu but also in other communities facing similar challenges. The project's success serves as a model for others to follow, demonstrating that with a little effort and a lot of heart, significant change is possible.

As the elderly residents of the Mangu IDP camp wrap themselves in their new jackets, they are reminded that they are not alone. The "Keep the Aged Warm" project, though simple in its execution, has had a profound impact, providing much-needed comfort and instilling a renewed sense of hope. It shows that every act of kindness, no matter how small, contributes to a larger, more compassionate society.

In a world that often seems divided, the Help the Aged Initiative stands as a beacon of unity and care. Its work reminds us all of our shared humanity and the importance of looking out for one another, particularly the most vulnerable among us. As the project continues to grow, its message remains clear: when we come together to help those in need, we can create a warmer, more inclusive world for everyone.

Restoring Dignity and Comfort

An Emergency Intervention

In Jos North Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria, the harsh realities of displacement and abandonment often leave the elderly in desperate circumstances. One such case involved a 97-year-old woman who had been forsaken and was found living on a bare floor, devoid of even the basic comfort of a mattress.

Responding to this dire situation, the Help the Aged Initiative launched an emergency intervention. This initiative, spurred by a follow-up visit in December, revealed that her living conditions had deteriorated further since an initial visit in September where medical care was provided. Recognizing the urgency, the team acted swiftly to address her needs.

A heartfelt Facebook campaign was launched to rally community support, resulting in generous donations. The organization contributed additional funds, ensuring that the funds were sufficient to address her immediate needs. The focus was on procuring a new bed and mattress, crucial for her physical comfort. However, the initiative's commitment went beyond merely providing material goods.

A team of dedicated volunteers, motivated by empathy and a strong sense of responsibility, spent an entire day transforming her living conditions. They installed the new bed and mattress, thoroughly cleaned her home, addressed infestations, washed her clothes, and provided essential personal care. In addition to these efforts, they prepared a warm, nourishing meal to address her emotional and physical well-being.

The success of this intervention highlights the power of community collaboration. The collective compassion of local residents, through both donations and volunteer work, played a pivotal role in effecting positive change. This case underscores the importance of sustained community engagement in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

Looking ahead, the Help the Aged Initiative is committed to finding sustainable solutions that provide long-term relief. By engaging continuously with the community, the organization aims to tackle systemic issues and foster enduring support for the elderly. Through strategic partnerships and advocacy, the initiative seeks to build a supportive ecosystem where the well-being of all community members is prioritized.



The impact of this emergency intervention extended far beyond the tangible improvements in her living environment. It restored the elderly woman's sense of dignity and comfort, and her emotional response—marked by tears of joy and gratitude—reflected the profound effect of community support. This initiative not only provided immediate relief but also rekindled hope and a sense of belonging.

Through this heartfelt intervention, the Help the Aged Initiative exemplifies how empathy, collaboration, and dedicated action can lead to meaningful change. Their work in Jos North serves as a powerful reminder of our shared humanity and the importance of supporting the most vulnerable among us, ensuring they experience dignity and comfort in their later years.

Spreading Joy and Support

Easter Home Visit

On March 30th, 2024, the Help the Aged Initiative embarked on a heartwarming journey to bring joy and support to elderly residents in Bassa and Jos Local Government Areas. This special Easter home visit aimed to spread love and ensure that elderly individuals, who may face various challenges, could experience a sense of celebration during the festive season.

The success of this initiative was built upon the collective efforts of volunteers, community members, and organizational resources. The project highlighted the community's dedication to caring for the elderly, particularly during significant times like Easter.

During the visit, the initiative distributed essential provisions to 25 elderly individuals, including 10kg bags of rice, half broiler chickens, and monetary assistance. These items were intended to provide not only physical nourishment but also to bring a festive spirit to their lives. The distribution was met with overwhelming gratitude, as captured in videos showing tears of joy and heartfelt thanks from the beneficiaries. Many elderly individuals remarked that they could hardly recall the last time they had enjoyed such generous gifts or had the opportunity to celebrate with meat.



The impact of this intervention extended beyond material support. It underscored the significance of showing love and appreciation to the elderly, reinforcing their sense of worth and belonging. The gratitude expressed by the recipients was a powerful reminder of the difference such acts of kindness can make.

The organization remains committed to ongoing community engagement and sustainable solutions. The organization aims to create a supportive environment for elderly individuals, ensuring their well-being throughout the year, not just during festive periods. By advocating for their rights and addressing their needs, the initiative seeks to build a more inclusive and compassionate community.

Inspired by the success of the Easter Home Visit, the initiative plans to expand its reach and support a broader demographic of elderly individuals. Through strategic partnerships and outreach, the goal is to ensure that no elderly person is left behind, particularly during times of celebration and need.

Central to this mission is the creation of a supportive ecosystem where elderly individuals are valued and celebrated. By fostering connections and promoting inclusivity, the initiative aims to build a community where the elderly feel supported and respected.

Looking ahead, the insights gained from the Easter Home Visit will guide future interventions. By addressing the identified needs and incorporating feedback from beneficiaries, the "Help the Aged Initiative" aims to tailor its efforts to make a meaningful impact on the lives of elderly individuals, improving their overall well-being and quality of life.



Providing Mobility and Dignity

A New Wheelchair for an Elderly Individual

In a recent heartening intervention, the Help the Aged Initiative, in collaboration with the Bris Care Humanitarian Foundation, has made a significant difference in the life of an 89-year-old elderly individual by providing a much-needed wheelchair. This initiative reflects a shared commitment to enhancing the quality of life for elderly members of our community, especially those facing mobility challenges.



During a prior intervention, it became evident that this elderly individual was struggling with severe mobility issues due to paralysis. The lack of mobility not only restricted her physical movement but also impacted her sense of independence and dignity. Recognizing these challenges, the need for a wheelchair was identified as a critical step towards improving her daily life.

With generous support from both the Help the Aged Initiative and the Bris Care Humanitarian Foundation, the procurement of a suitable wheelchair was promptly arranged. The collaborative effort ensured that the wheelchair was tailored to meet the specific needs of the elderly individual, providing her with the mobility and comfort she desperately needed.

The delivery of the wheelchair was executed with efficiency and care. Upon receiving it, the elderly woman was overwhelmed with emotion. Her reaction was one of profound gratitude and joy, as she eagerly began to explore the newfound mobility it provided. Her face lit up with excitement and anticipation, underscoring the profound impact of this seemingly simple intervention.



This initiative highlights the power of collaboration and the importance of partnerships in addressing the needs of vulnerable community members. The successful outcome not only improved the physical mobility of the elderly woman but also restored her sense of dignity and independence.

The "Help the Aged Initiative" remains committed to ongoing support for elderly individuals, working closely with partners like the Bris Care Humanitarian Foundation to provide meaningful assistance. The transformation achieved through this intervention is a testament to the positive change that can be brought about through collective effort and compassion.

Empowering Caregivers for Holistic Wellbeing Workshop Bassa



On May 25, 2024, Government Secondary School Mista Ali in Bassa LGA, Plateau State, hosted a transformative workshop titled "Empowering Caregivers for Holistic Wellbeing." The event was designed to provide caregivers with essential skills and knowledge to improve their care for elderly individuals aged 60 and above. The initiative aimed to address isolation, poverty, and neglect while promoting economic empowerment and environmental care.

The workshop was divided into several key thematic areas, each focusing on crucial aspects of caregiving. One of the primary sessions revolved around aged care, emphasizing the importance of compassionate and respectful practices. Participants engaged in role-playing exercises and discussions, which significantly enhanced their understanding of the emotional and physical needs of the elderly. Feedback from attendees highlighted a notable improvement in their ability to offer empathetic support.

In a session dedicated to financial literacy, caregivers learned about budgeting, savings, and investment strategies tailored to their unique circumstances. This segment was particularly impactful, with many participants expressing newfound confidence in managing their finances. The practical advice provided during these workshops is expected to have lasting benefits for caregivers and the elderly individuals they support.



A highlight of the workshop was the practical training on liquid detergent production. This hands-on session equipped caregivers with a new income-generating skill, allowing them to supplement their household incomes. Participants were enthusiastic about the potential economic benefits and were eager to apply their new skills.



The workshop achieved several significant outcomes. It raised awareness about compassionate care practices, improved financial literacy, and provided tangible economic benefits through skill acquisition. Attendees reported increased confidence in their caregiving abilities and financial management, underscoring the workshop's effectiveness in addressing their needs.

In conclusion, the "Empowering Caregivers for Holistic Wellbeing" workshop proved to be a resounding success. It not only equipped caregivers with valuable skills but also fostered a supportive community environment. The initiative demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing the quality of life for elderly individuals and their caregivers, paving the way for continued support and advocacy in the future.

Help the Aged Initiative Celebrates Salah with Jos North LGA Muslim Elders



In a touching display of compassion and community spirit, the Help the Aged Initiative celebrated the Salah holiday this June by reaching out to Muslim elders in Plateau State. As part of their ongoing commitment to supporting the elderly, the organization conducted a special home visit, distributing essential items and providing comfort to those in need.

Understanding the significance of Salah, a time for joy, unity, and reflection within the Muslim community, the Help the Aged team organized visits to selected elderly individuals in Jos North Local Government Areas. The visit aimed to share the festive spirit and ensure that these elders felt cherished and remembered during this important holiday.

During the visits, the team distributed food items, clothing, and cash gifts to the elderly. These thoughtful gestures were not just about providing material support but also about fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion. By celebrating Salah with them, Help the Aged sought to acknowledge and honor the elders' contributions to their communities, reinforcing the organization's mission of compassion and care.

"We wanted to make sure that these elders felt the joy and warmth of Salah, especially those who might not have family around to celebrate with," said a spokesperson for Help the Aged. "Our goal was to bring smiles to their faces and remind them that they are valued members of our community."

The distribution of food items included staple goods such as rice, grains, and cooking oil, while the clothing gifts provided warmth and comfort. The cash donations aimed to help alleviate some of the financial burdens many elderly individuals face, particularly during festive periods when costs can increase.

The elders expressed deep gratitude for the visit and the generosity of Help the Aged. Many shared their joy and surprise at being remembered on such a special day, emphasizing the impact of such simple yet meaningful acts of kindness. One elder, receiving her gifts, remarked, "This is the first time in many years that someone has come to celebrate Salah with me. I am so thankful for this kindness."

The home visit was not just a distribution of goods but a celebration of community and a reinforcement of social bonds. Volunteers from Help the Aged took the time to sit with each elder, listening to their stories and sharing in the festive cheer. This personal connection was a vital part of the visit, ensuring that the elders felt genuinely cared for and appreciated.

By engaging with the elders directly and taking the time to understand their needs, Help the Aged continues to build on its reputation for compassionate and community-focused work. The organization plans to make these home visits a regular part of their activities, recognizing the profound impact that simple, heartfelt gestures can have on the lives of the elderly.

As Salah came to a close, the Help the Aged team left each home with a sense of fulfillment, having shared in the joy of the festival and strengthened their bond with the community. Through initiatives like these, Help the Aged remains committed to its mission of enhancing the wellbeing of the elderly, ensuring they are not forgotten, and always celebrated



Simple Humane Values

Bridging Wisdom and Compassion to Combat Elderly Isolation



In a transformative initiative spanning from July 1 to 29, 2024, the "Simple Humane Values: Bridging Wisdom and Compassion to Combat Elderly Isolation" project has made significant strides in addressing elderly isolation across Plateau State. Sponsored by a grant from the Iowa Resource for International Service (IRIS), the project has engaged 100 elderly individuals and 100 youth participants, impacting approximately 7,500 community members.

The project's primary goals were to reduce elderly isolation, empower youth, preserve cultural wisdom, and promote environmental and social responsibility. Over the course of the month, weekly intergenerational

workshops were held in community centers throughout Bassa, Jos North, Jos East, and Jos South Local Government Areas. These workshops facilitated dialogue between the elderly and youth, fostering mutual understanding and empathy. Discussions led by local experts covered personal growth and cultural traditions, creating a rich exchange of life experiences and heritage.

Youth involvement was a cornerstone of the initiative. Volunteers organized weekly community clean-ups, performing tasks such as litter picking, gardening, and home maintenance for elderly residents. In addition, skill acquisition sessions were conducted, teaching both elderly individuals and youth how to knit. This training resulted in the production of warm clothing items, symbolizing the strengthened bonds between generations.



Storytelling sessions provided a platform for the elderly to share their life stories and cultural wisdom, enriching the younger generation's understanding of their heritage.

These sessions were held in rotating community centers and included memorabilia and photographs, deepening intergenerational connections. Furthermore, "Compassion Circles" were established to offer companionship and support to isolated elderly individuals, significantly reducing feelings of loneliness and neglect.

The project achieved notable outcomes:

- ***Social Impact: Over 150 elderly individuals reported enhanced emotional well-being due to increased social interaction, while 300 youth participants experienced a heightened sense of community involvement.***
- ***Cultural Preservation: Storytelling sessions successfully preserved cultural knowledge, enriching younger generations' appreciation of their heritage.***
- ***Environmental Impact: Clean-up and tree-planting activities improved local environments, contributing to healthier community spaces.***
- ***Skill Development: Knitting sessions provided practical skills, fostering creativity and collaboration among participants.***



Despite facing challenges such as logistical coordination and limited resources, the project underscored the importance of community collaboration and sustainability planning. Looking ahead, the initiative plans to continue Compassion Circles and expand skill acquisition sessions to include other vocational skills. Efforts will also be made to secure additional funding to ensure the project's long-term impact.

This project, made possible by the support of Mirabel Ngremeh and the IRIS grant, exemplifies the power of intergenerational collaboration and compassionate community engagement. It highlights the positive changes that can result from fostering empathy, responsibility, and mutual respect within a community.

Help the Aged

Empowering Caregivers for Holistic Wellbeing

In Plateau State, especially in local government areas like Barkin Ladi, Bokkos, and Mangu, communities have been deeply affected by violent conflicts and terrorist activities. These challenges have led to widespread displacement and economic instability, particularly impacting the elderly and their caregivers. Despite these hardships, the people of these regions remain resilient, characterized by a strong sense of community and a rich cultural heritage.

To address these challenges, Help the Aged: Empowering Caregivers for Holistic Wellbeing project was launched. With funding from the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Alumni Grant Program, the project was designed to improve the financial literacy of caregivers and provide them with practical skills to produce cosmetics and household items.



The project, conducted from August 13th to 17th, 2024, at the Barkin Ladi Youth Center, featured a comprehensive five-day workshop. The workshop targeted caregivers in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps and communities across Barkin Ladi, Bokkos, and Mangu LGAs, aiming to equip them with practical skills and enhance their financial management abilities. The initiative directly benefited over 240 caregivers, primarily women responsible for caring for elderly family or community members, often without formal training or support.

During the workshop, participants learned to produce various cosmetics and household items such as soap, lotion, and cleaning agents—products with low startup costs and high market demand. These new skills provide immediate income-generating opportunities, enabling caregivers to meet their needs while supporting the elderly. To ensure effective application, the project included hands-on sessions where participants could practice under the guidance of experienced trainers, with local entrepreneurs serving as mentors to offer ongoing support and advice.

Community leaders, dignitaries, and religious figures attended the events, emphasizing the importance of the training and encouraging participants to leverage their new skills. The project also adopted a step-down training approach, encouraging each trained caregiver to share their skills and knowledge with at least 50 others in their communities. This strategy aims to extend the project's benefits beyond the initial participants, potentially reaching thousands across the region.



Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the transformative nature of the initiative. One caregiver shared, "I had never really understood how to save money or plan for the future. This training has opened my eyes to the possibilities. I now feel like I have control over my finances and can make better decisions for myself and those I care for." Another participant noted, "Learning to make soap and other household items has given me hope. I plan to start a small business selling these products to support my family and provide better care for the elderly in my community."



Several participants have already begun to see the benefits of the training. A group of caregivers from Barkin Ladi LGA organized themselves to produce and sell cosmetics and household items they learned to make during the workshop. The income generated from these activities has allowed them to improve their living conditions and provide better care for the elderly under their supervision.

Moreover, the step-down training approach has amplified the project's impact beyond the initial participants. Reports indicate that several caregivers have started teaching others in their communities what they learned, spreading the knowledge and skills to hundreds more. This ripple effect is helping to create a more financially literate and economically empowered community, enhancing resilience in the face of ongoing challenges.



Reflecting on the project, Help the Aged initiative team expressed appreciation for the resilience and dedication of everyone involved. "This initiative was not just about addressing immediate needs but also about fostering long-term change and empowerment," "Working on this project reinforced my belief in the transformative power of community-driven solutions and the importance of adapting to the evolving needs of those we aim to help."

Help the Aged: Empowering Caregivers for Holistic Wellbeing project, funded by the YES Alumni Grant Program, is making a significant impact in Plateau State. By empowering caregivers and enhancing the well-being of the elderly they support, this initiative is helping to create a brighter future for all in the region.

Rescues Destitute Elderly Woman in Jos South

While carrying out their project to bridge wisdom and combat elderly isolation in Jos South, the Help the Aged Initiative team came across a heartbreaking situation that required urgent intervention. The team discovered an elderly woman living in a severely dilapidated house, facing dire conditions that posed a serious threat to her health and wellbeing.

The woman, paralyzed and unable to walk, lived in a home with walls full of holes, allowing insects and reptiles to crawl inside. Her only son, struggling financially, was unable to provide the necessary repairs to ensure her safety and comfort. With a leaking roof, rainwater had soaked the piece of foam she used as a bed, leaving her vulnerable to the elements.

Upon discovering her situation, the team immediately sprang into action. Understanding the urgency, they quickly arranged for a builder to repair the holes in the walls and floor and fix the leaking roof.



The organization purchased all the necessary supplies and compensated the builder for his services.

After the structural repairs were completed, the team conducted a thorough cleanup of the woman's living space. They replaced her soaked foam mattress with a new bed, mattress, pillows, and bed sheets. Warm clothing was also provided to ensure she remained comfortable, and they heated the room to keep her warm.



The volunteers did not stop there. They prepared and served her a hot meal, ensuring she felt nourished and cared for. The elderly

woman's excitement and gratitude were palpable as she saw her new bed and enjoyed the warm meal. Her son, overwhelmed by the kindness of the Help the Aged Initiative, could not hold back his tears as he expressed his deep appreciation for the support they provided.

"We knew we had to act quickly when we saw her living conditions," said a representative from the Help the Aged Initiative. "No one should have to live like that, especially not our elderly. We were glad we could make a difference in her life and provide her with a safe and comfortable place to live."

The swift and compassionate response from Help the Aged Initiative highlights their commitment to improving the lives of the elderly in their community. Their actions not only restored the woman's living conditions but also brought a sense of dignity and comfort to her and her family.

The initiative continues to stand as a beacon of hope for many elderly individuals facing isolation and neglect, demonstrating the profound impact that community support and quick action can have on the lives of those in need.