



Historic Contributions Recognized

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Committed to Cultural Diversity

Angola Medical Clinic has Portland Roots OHSU physician, students contribute to global community



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CAPUIA FOUNDATION

Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capua, executive director of Oregon Health and Science University's Avel Gordly Center for Healing and assistant professor of psychiatry at the OHSU School of Medicine, opens the gates to her Good Samaritan Health Care Center in Angola, joined by patients and clinic personnel. The Portland native and other members of the Capuia family founded the non-profit clinic.

BY BEVERLY CORBELL
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Monique Hedmann just had an experience she'll never forget. She and two other medical students of color were able to join a mission this summer to bring hope and medical care to a beloved global community by spending time at a health care center established by a Portland-based foundation in Angola, on the southwestern coast of Africa.

The catalyst that led to the international visit was Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capua, executive director of Oregon Health and Science University's Avel Gordly Center for Healing and assistant professor of psychiatry at the OHSU School of Medicine.

Moreland-Capua, who is described as a physician, scholar, educator and orator at OHSU, is known for the voice she gives to increasing access to quality health care here at home and for people in Africa. She gives speeches about her foundation and work in Angola, and it was after

hearing her speak, at different times, that the three students from Oregon and California felt moved to get involved to the point that Moreland-Capua became a close advisor to all three.

"During my first year of medical school Dr. Alisha spoke to my class and she has been such a mentor," Hedmann said. "To do this with her, it's amazing, a dream come true."

Although they were in Africa for only a week, the experience was profound for Hedmann and the other students, Kelley Butler and Shane Hervey.

"I found new confidence in myself as a black woman in Africa — it was an all-encompassing hug," Butler said. "I came back with self assuredness as a black woman and a future physician; it was so involved and so personal."

Hervey, a third-year medical student at OHSU, said his first international experience made a distinct impression on him.

"We were in the clinic from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and I saw

four or five patients a day, while Dr. Alisha saw 30 or 40," he said. "It was very exciting. We had a full waiting room and people outside the door."

Butler, a fourth-year medical student at the University of California Irvine, was visiting Portland a couple of years ago when she and Hervey went to hear Moreland-Capua speak at OHSU, and the pair built "a really meaningful connection" with her and, years later, accepted her offer to go to Angola.

In the more than five years since the Good Samaritan Health Care clinic opened in Cacuo, outside the capital of Angola, it has seen between 800 and 1,100 patients annually, according to Daniel Capuia, Moreland-Capua's husband and her co-founder of the Capuia Foundation, a fundraising arm for the nonprofit clinic.

The couple met when they were students at Jefferson High School. Alisha is an Oregon native, and Daniel's family left Angola for Oregon in the mid-1970s because of an ending war.

Angola gained its independence from Portugal in 1975, but then the country erupted in a civil war that didn't end until 2002. It was then that Daniel's father, Estevao Capuia, was urged to go back home and help rebuild his country. He

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Nurse Joana Ribeira-Alves (left) meets with Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capua of Portland at the nonprofit Good Samaritan Health Center in Angola started by the Portland-based Capuia Foundation. Ribeira-Alves has been with the clinic since it opened five years ago.