

ANNUAL REPORT

July 2025–June 2026



ACS / H.O.P.E.

Health Outreach Program for Equity in Global Surgery
American College of Surgeons

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THANK YOU

Girma Tefera, MD, FCS(ECSA), FACS

MEDICAL DIRECTOR, ACS H.O.P.E.

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the extraordinary community that makes the work of ACS H.O.P.E.® possible. This report is a testament to what can be achieved when surgeons, educators, trainees, volunteers, partners, and donors unite around a shared commitment to advancing equitable surgical care worldwide. Together, we are demonstrating that lasting impact is built through partnership, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to strengthening surgical systems.

This year marked an exciting period of growth for ACS H.O.P.E. Our Surgical Training Collaboratives continued to strengthen surgical education and workforce capacity in Ethiopia, Rwanda, and Zambia through long-term partnerships rooted in local leadership, mutual learning, and sustainable capacity building. We also launched the inaugural Global Health in Surgery Certificate Program, delivered the first ACS–WACS Surgical Leadership Course in Ghana, and expanded opportunities for collaboration through technologies that enable surgeons to teach, mentor, consult, and learn together across continents.

As our work continues to evolve, so do the ways individuals can contribute. While in-person engagement remains invaluable, advances in technology now make it possible to support surgical education, mentorship, research, and professional development from anywhere in the world. At the same time, we are strengthening partnerships that will expand opportunities for volunteer service and domestic engagement in underserved communities across the US.

None of this progress would be possible without the generosity of our supporters. Your philanthropy strengthens surgical infrastructure, expands educational opportunities, and equips our partner institutions with the resources needed to deliver safe, high-quality surgical care. Most importantly, your support helps create stronger surgical systems that improve access to care and better serve patients and communities for years to come.

Thank you for being part of the ACS H.O.P.E. community. Together, we are strengthening surgical systems, empowering the next generation of surgical leaders, and creating lasting impact for patients and communities around the world.

Sincerely,



LEADERSHIP & STAFF



Committee on Global Engagement

Committee Chair: Raphael C. Lee, MD, ScD, FACS

Committee Vice Chair: Sandra Freiwald, MD, FACS

Advocacy Subcommittee

Chair: Rondi M. Kauffmann, MD, MPH,
FACS, FCS(ECSA)

Vice Chair: Samer Sbayi, MD, MBA, FACS

Education Subcommittee

Chair: Tamara Worlton, MD, FACS

Vice Chair: Jennifer Rickard, MD, MPH,
FACS

Domestic Subcommittee

Chair: Theresa Chin, MD, FACS

Vice Chair: Jessica Minesinger, CMOM,
CMPE, FACMPE, BBCC

International Subcommittee

Chair: Melanie Sion, MD, FACS

Vice Chair: Andrea L. Pusic, MD, MHS,
FACS

ACS H.O.P.E. Staff

Girma Tefera, MD, FCS(ECSA), FACS, Medical Director

Miranda Melone, MPA, Manager

Diana Trujillo-Juarez, Program Coordinator

Iris Keller, Program Assistant

COMMITTEE ON GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Advocacy

Focus: Advancing policies and partnerships that strengthen the global surgical workforce and expand equitable access to care

2025–2026 Highlights

- ACS *Bulletin* article on bidirectional training
- Expanded partnerships with Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH) & Coalition BRIGHT (Building Reciprocal Initiatives for Global Health Training)
- Advanced visa and workforce initiatives

Education

Focus: Developing the next generation of global surgery leaders through innovative education, mentorship, and research

2025–2026 Highlights

- Launched the Global Health in Surgery Certificate Program
- Awarded two Resident Research Scholarships (\$25,000 each)
- Awarded 10 Clinical Congress Resident Scholarships

Domestic

Focus: Expanding access to surgical care in underserved US communities through volunteerism, partnerships, and workforce development

2025–2026 Highlights

- Expanded ACS Free Clinic Registry
- Strengthened Health Career Collaborative partnership
- Developed future volunteer engagement strategies

International

Focus: Fostering global collaboration by advancing education, mentorship, and international partnerships

2025–2026 Highlights

- Expanded the Global Surgery Expert Lecture Series
- Strengthened the ACS—College of Surgeons of East, Central, and Southern Africa (COSECSA) Women's Scholars Program
- Launched the inaugural ACS H.O.P.E. Ambassador Program

ACS H.O.P.E. SURGICAL TRAINING COLLABORATIVES

2025–2026 Summary

Despite disruptions that resulted in several trip cancellations and postponements—including Marburg virus and Ebola outbreaks, as well as regional instability related to the conflict in Iran—ACS H.O.P.E. remained committed to its partners, adapting programming to safely sustain education, mentorship, and clinical collaboration throughout the year.

SURGICAL TRAINING COLLABORATIVES

Through the dedication of our volunteers and partners, ACS H.O.P.E. continues to deliver education, mentorship, and hands-on surgical support that strengthens local capacity and improves patient care.



32
TRIPS

Volunteer teams traveled to our partner hubs in Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Zambia.



131
CLASSROOM
EXPERIENCES

Delivering high-quality surgical education to build knowledge and skills



929
CLINICAL
HOURS

Providing hands-on clinical support alongside local surgical teams



223
PATIENT CASES
COLLABORATED ON

Working together to improve access to safe, quality, surgical care



114
HUB-BASED
SURGEON-LED
CASES

Hub surgeons led more cases than visiting surgeons—advancing local leadership and capacity.



\$107K+
IN DONATED
MATERIALS

Supplying essential equipment and resources to strengthen surgical systems



SERVING. TEACHING. LEARNING. |

Raising the standards of surgical care

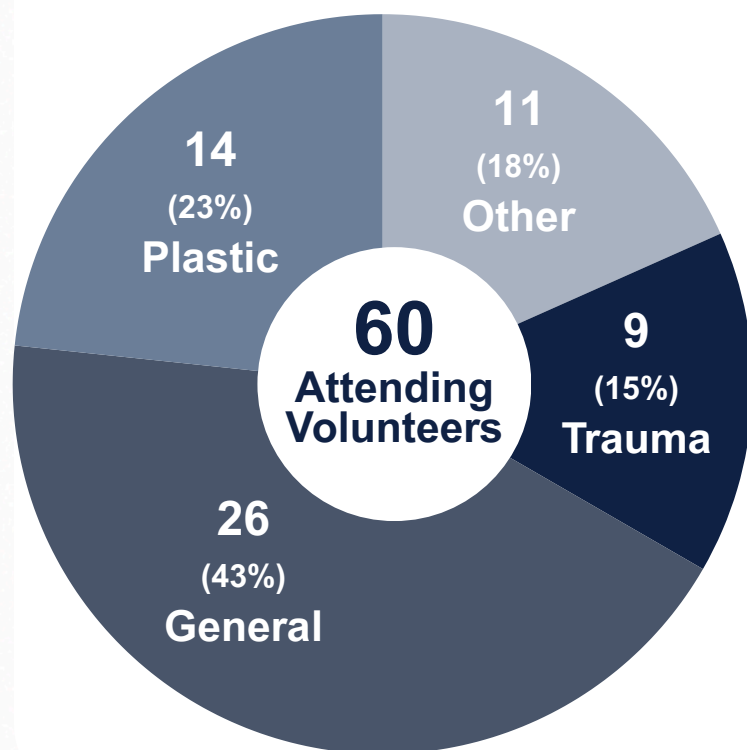
Total value of
donated time

~\$726,000

ACS H.O.P.E. Attending Volunteers by Specialty

	SPECIALTY	NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS
	Trauma	9
	Plastic	14
	General	26
	Other	11
	TOTAL	60

- i** "Other" includes colorectal, ophthalmology, pediatrics, urology, thoracic, and vascular
- i** "General" includes endocrine, oncology, and transplant in addition to traditional general surgery



This is my third annual trip with ACS HOPE. I have been volunteering in Rwanda since 2010. Remarkable progress has been made and has accelerated in recent years as our Rwandan partner surgeon has completed a fellowship and benefits from our ongoing visits to maintain and advance his skills. This is crucial for equitable access to specialized surgical services, globally.

Gita Mody, MD, MPH, FACS

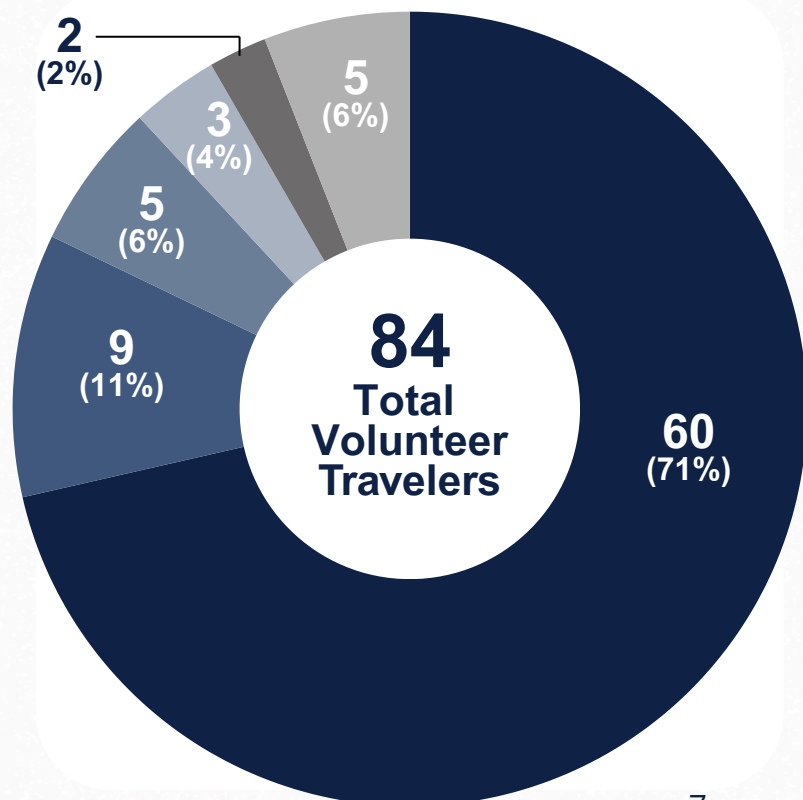


We are so pleased that we could teach liposuction and allow the residents and attendings to actually perform liposuction for the first time! I also taught them how to do subscarpal fat resection and progressive tension sutures. The friendships will last a lifetime.

Holly Wall, MD, FACS

ACS H.O.P.E. Volunteer Travelers by Type

VOLUNTEER TYPE	COUNT
 Surgeon-Attending	60
 Surgeon-Resident	9
 Surgeon-Fellow (Trainee)	5
 Medical Student	3
 Anesthesia	2
 Other	5
TOTAL	84



"Other" includes nursing, simulation specialist, and nephrology

WORKPLAN MEETINGS



In April 2026, ACS H.O.P.E. met with Hawassa University in Ethiopia (left) and University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka, Zambia (below) to review progress, strengthen collaboration, and establish priorities for the years ahead.

I have gone to Hawassa since the beginning of the collaboration. In the beginning, I looked forward to visits because there was so much to work on and learn. While I still learn something new every time, I now have developed significant friendships with many of the Hawassa faculty and look forward even more to catching up with them about their lives and their families.

Christopher M. Dodgion, MD, MSPH, MBA, FACS



The ACS H.O.P.E. experience was both amazing and humbling. The dedication of the Lusaka team to their patients, and to providing access to complex surgical and medical care is just remarkable in every way. It was a privilege to be able to work with them and understand the processes by which they have been able to achieve successful outcomes for their patients.

Wasim Dar, MD, PhD, FACS

SPECIALTY DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Advancing Specialized Surgical Care

ACS H.O.P.E. partnerships are expanding access to specialized surgical care while strengthening locally led training, mentorship, and clinical programs.

TRANSPLANT SURGERY

Multidisciplinary mentorship is helping build the local expertise and systems needed for a sustainable transplant program in Zambia.

COUNTRY FIRSTS

- First pediatric kidney transplant
- First laparoscopic donor nephrectomy

20+

LIVING DONOR KIDNEY TRANSPLANTS

during the program's first
full year in Zambia

THORACIC SURGERY

~160

PROCEDURES COMPLETED IN
RWANDA OVER 9 MONTHS

Programs in Ethiopia and Rwanda are expanding advanced thoracic care and specialist training.

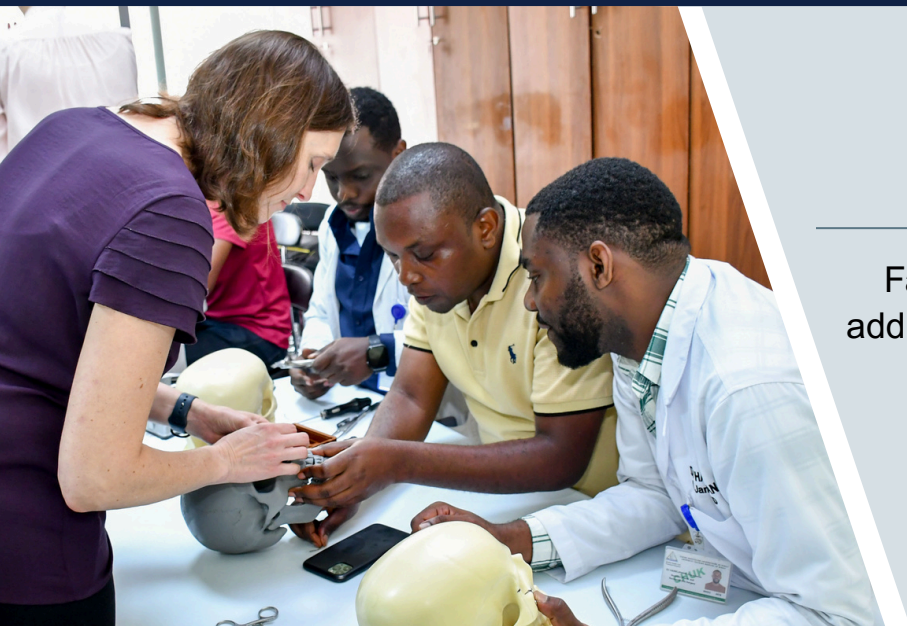
TWO NATIONAL MILESTONES

- Ethiopia's first sustained video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery program
- Rwanda's first cardiothoracic surgery fellowship



SPECIALTY DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

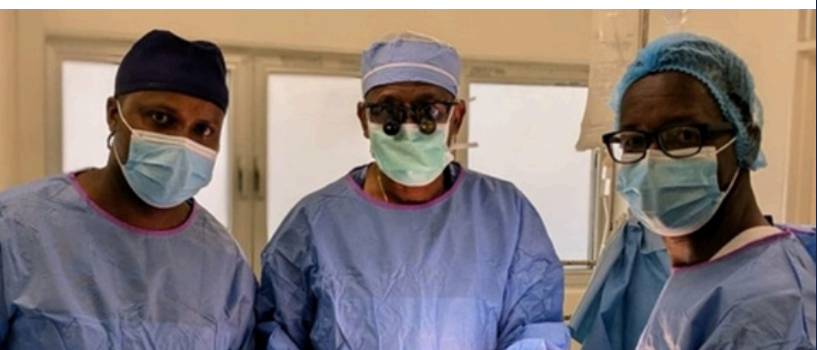
Advancing Specialized Surgical Care



PLASTIC AND MAXILLOFACIAL SURGERY

Faculty mentorship is helping local surgeons address complex trauma, burn, cancer-related, and craniofacial reconstructive needs in Rwanda. The team is in the early stages of developing the first in-country oral and maxillofacial surgery program.

ADVANCED VASCULAR SURGERY IN RWANDA



CLINICAL AREAS

- Limb salvage
- Dialysis access
- Complex vascular reconstruction

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Dedicated vascular clinics and future specialty training programs

MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGERY

Local teams are building the experience and infrastructure needed for continued program growth.

PROGRAM FOCUS

- Skills lab development
- Hands-on training
- Faculty mentorship

4

SURGEONS

completed advanced laparoscopic training at Hawassa University

SPECIALTY DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Advancing Specialized Surgical Care

TRAUMA AND CRITICAL CARE SURGERY

Hawassa University has become a regional leader in trauma education through sustained Advanced Trauma Life Support® (ATLS®) program implementation.

HIGHLIGHTS AND NEXT STEPS

- Local faculty and a viable business model support long-term sustainability
- Working with MedAid to train 12 biomedical technologists
- Working with The Surgical Society of Zambia to launch ATLS by the end of 2026

2025 RESIDENT RESEARCH SCHOLAR PROJECT

KYLE ALEXANDER, MD—VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
Building a Trauma Team Response System in Ethiopia

3

**ATLS
PROVIDER
COURSES**

1

**ATLS
INSTRUCTOR
COURSE**

Participants from Ethiopia, Zambia, Somaliland, and South Sudan

PEDIATRIC SURGERY

3

**OUTREACH VISITS
PROVIDING PEDIATRIC SURGICAL
CARE BEYOND LUSAKA**

Programs partnered with local surgeons in Kabwe, Chipata, and Livingstone in Zambia to perform pediatric and urologic procedures while providing education and mentorship.

2025 RESIDENT RESEARCH SCHOLAR PROJECT

VANESSA NIBA, MD, MS—UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Developing sustainable strategies to improve surgical preparedness, with an emphasis on pediatric nutrition and cancer care disparities



SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS



10

CLINICAL CONGRESS RESIDENT SCHOLARS

Supporting the next generation of
global surgical leaders



2

US-BASED RESIDENT RESEARCH SCHOLARS

Advancing research that improves
surgical care worldwide



1

HEINER FELLOW (ORTHOPAEDIC FELLOWSHIP TRAINING)

Investing in advanced specialty
training and expertise



4

LUSAKA RESEARCH SEED GRANTS

Supporting early-stage research to
address local surgical priorities



10

FEMALE COSECSA SCHOLARS SUPPORTED TO TAKE EXAMS

Closing the surgical gender gap in
Eastern Africa



20

FEES SPONSORED FOR FEMALE MEMBERS OF COSECSA

Removing financial barriers for
females in Eastern Africa to pursue
surgical training



4

HAWASSA QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SEED GRANTS

Empowering teams to drive quality
improvement and patient safety



1

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP-HAWASSA

Building teaching skills and
strengthening local leadership



6

2025 ACS/PFIZER AWARD WINNERS

Recognizing excellence in surgical
volunteerism and humanitarian
efforts



8

VOLUNTEER & PARTNER SPOTLIGHTS

Celebrating extraordinary service and
collaboration in expanding access to
surgical care and education
Featured in the ACS H.O.P.E. quarterly newsletter

EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Through innovative programs and partnerships, ACS H.O.P.E. equips surgeons with the education, skills, and leadership needed to improve surgical care worldwide.



GLOBAL SURGERY EXPERT LECTURE SERIES

Free monthly virtual education led by global experts for clinicians in resource-constrained settings

30+

COUNTRIES
REACHED

188

AVG. REGISTRATIONS
PER LECTURE

64

AVG. ATTENDEES
PER LECTURE



BUILDING SURGICAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

ACS-West African College of Surgeons Surgical Leadership Course

26

SURGEONS
TRAINED

Accra, Ghana

- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Strategic thinking
- ✓ Conflict management
- ✓ Leading change & team building



ADVANCING EXCELLENCE IN SURGICAL EDUCATION

Faculty & Resident Development Workshop

2-Day

EDUCATION
WORKSHOP

Hawassa, Ethiopia

- ✓ Education science & feedback
- ✓ Entrustment
- ✓ Educational research
- ✓ Continuous quality improvement



LAUNCHING THE GLOBAL HEALTH IN SURGERY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

34

INAUGURAL
SCHOLARS

- ✓ Yearlong curriculum with nine modules
- ✓ Mentored capstone project
- ✓ 34 scholars representing eight specialties
- ✓ Attendings, residents, and medical students



THANK YOU



ACS/ H.O.P.E.

Health Outreach Program for Equity in Global Surgery
American College of Surgeons

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DONATE