



Friends of Global Workers

Dear Member Care or Personnel Director,

It can be challenging to find Christian counseling and psychiatric support for staff returning from global assignments with needs such as severe burnout, depression, emotional or physical fatigue resulting from traumatic events, marital distress, children with behavioral difficulties, or other kinds of crises. Fortunately, there is an increasing number of professionals in the US who can relate to both the spiritual and cross-cultural dimensions of the experiences of global workers. In addition, intensive counseling programs are increasingly available. However, staff at times need to wait a few months before they can attend one of these valuable programs. They may lose precious time in their home country while they wait for effective support. In some situations, it does not help their needed restoration to live close to relatives or supporters immediately upon return. Typically, staff will often try to respond to family and church expectations even though they are in dire need of care for themselves.

The “Friends of Global Workers” Network serves the purpose of providing assessment and short-term intensive counseling where staff is in urgent need of professional care with the additional goal of initiating further steps for restoration. We are grateful to our hosts, who have volunteered to offer free hospitality and practical support for global worker guests during their time of assessment and counseling.

Dr. Frauke Schaefer is a psychiatrist who served seven years as family physician in Nepal prior to training in psychiatry and psychotherapy at a Christian psychiatric hospital in Germany (her home country) and at Duke University in North Carolina, USA. Together with her husband, she is a Member Care Consultant to Trans World Radio, particularly for post-field debriefing, crisis response, and pre-field assessments. She has served short-term at the Tumaini Counseling Center in Nairobi, Kenya and has worked with the Mobile Member Care Team in Ghana, West Africa and in Germany. She has conducted and presented research about traumatic events, posttraumatic stress, and resilience including the spiritual aspects of resilience in cross-cultural workers. She presently works in private psychiatric practice in NC, where she regularly works with cross-cultural workers and TCKs.

Dr. Charlie Schaefer is a psychologist (counselor) who served with SIL in Togo, West Africa prior to training in psychology and theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. He entered the field of psychology specifically to support people in ministry in their needs and challenges. His special interest is the integration of Christian theology and psychotherapy. He has been a founding board member of Heartstream Resources, an organization that serves workers in burn-out and crises. He co-led Refresh programs (Heartstream Resources) in France and Crisis Response Trainings with Mobile Member Care Team in Nigeria, Senegal, and Germany. He serves

as a Member Care Consultant for Trans World Radio. He presently works in private practice in NC where he works regularly with cross-cultural workers and TCKs.

Hosts: Several families and one single woman in the Durham/Chapel Hill area of North Carolina have opened their homes to global workers with an urgent need for professional assessment and care. These families have a burden for and understanding of those serving globally. They are characterized by a caring and supportive attitude towards people, and support their guests pursuing counseling and/or medication treatment. They are committed to provide accommodation at two weeks' notice. The duration of this kind of urgent or crisis care would typically be up to two weeks.

What would the Friends of Global Worker Network be able to provide?

1. Assessment, short-term counseling, and evaluation of the need for psychiatric medication

Staff will typically receive an evaluation and/or counseling session each day (Monday to Friday). After an initial assessment of the nature and severity of the issue(s) of concern, short-term counseling is provided with the goals of stabilization and initiation of a longer-term care plan that would commence while staff is on home assignment. On request and with a release signed by the worker, a short assessment report can be provided to the sending organization with recommendations for further restorative steps.

2. Accommodation

Hosts will offer a separate room or rooms and a bathroom to guests at no cost. Guests will arrange their own food and will be able to use the host's kitchen during their stay. Hosts would make every effort to provide a restorative environment of welcome and a quiet, clean and beautiful space. They will be open to talk or socialize, as available, and as their guest desires. They will help guests to find their way around, e.g. finding local parks, exercise facilities, shopping opportunities, social opportunities, church programs, cultural activities, a library, and dental/medical care. Guests would need their own transportation unless a vehicle would become available locally. We are usually not able to accommodate for the needs of young children along with their parents.

What are the costs?

Living accommodations will be free of charge. Guests are typically expected to arrange their own food and transport during the time. Rates for counseling services will depend on insurance coverage. North Carolina Medicare rates serve as a guideline for our professional rates. Individual cost arrangements are possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests or questions you may have.

Best regards,

Frauke and Charlie Schaefer and the hosts of the Friends of Global Workers Network

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