ISSUE #04

CHAMELEON BUDDIES

December 2025

Quarterly Newsletter





Welcome to our 2025 round up!

What an incredible year!

Four outreach trips to Kenya, a new ostomy Hub opened in Eldoret, peer support community groups established, our first Kenyan ostomate employee - and Africa's highest peak scaled by 17 courageous women. We have hardly stopped for breath in what has been our most impactful year to date - and we have bigger plans to follow.

We have sent over 600kg of vital ostomy and continence supplies to more than 100 women and young girls in Kenya, including 3,000 items of specialist support and underwear donated by CUI.

Generous donations from several donors enabled us to cement our impact in Kenya. Stuart and Hilary Williams of The Williams Trust donated £20,000 to purchase a new ultrasound for the Gynocare Hospital, ensuring the early detection of cancer and complex fistula tracts, an essential piece of equipment badly needed. Suportx sponsored Nivea Ogutu as our first ostomate to be employed as an ostomy co-ordinator, and Hartmann supplied more than £7,000 worth of ostomy bags direct to the new Hub.

In October, our team of women battled the altitude, exhaustion and their fears, to ascend Mount Kilimanjaro, a towering peak of almost 6,000m - raising over £65,000! Our documentary on this adventure will be released in Spring 2026, with showings to be announced around the country.

We have been overwhelmed by the number of people who have carried out fundraisers for us this year, from marathons, to knitting events, walks, swims, talks and triathlons.

Thank you for all of your support, we couldn't do what we do without it.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year!

With thanks,
Gill Castle
CEO Founder

In this newsletter you can expect:

Kenya updates

Mount Kilimanjaro news

Fundraisers

Volunteer Spotlight

Upcoming news

New projects!





Local news

We have a regular group of wonderful volunteers, who gladly give up their time and energy to help us to organise and sort through all the stoma donations.

These sessions are held every 4-6 weeks, with the next one in Alnwick on Tuesday 13th January.

Please get in touch if you would like to help.

We are grateful to Pets at Home (Alnwick) Thompsons Solicitors, City Carpets (Durham) for continuing to be drop off points for supplies.

Our stoma support group has become a flexible group of casual catch ups and coffee chats between the members who have become friends.

If you would like to join the WhatsApp group to find out when the next meet up is, please get in touch with us at info@chameleonbuddies.org.uk



Upcoming events!

The big one....the release of our Mount Kilimanjaro documentary!

The first date is Thursday 11th June at Alnwick Playhouse. Ticket information will follow in the New Year.

If you would like to fundraise for us, please get in touch with Gill at gill@chameleonbuddies.org.uk



Volunteer Spotlight

Our star volunteer is Sandra Appleby!

Sandra has been a regular helper at our stoma packing and sorting days. Most often found at the table with the largest pile of bags, Sandra takes efficient charge of her area and keeps apace with the constant flow of supplies. Just be sure not to add to her pile of counted bags with a random one!

For two years in a row, Sandra's singing group, Werca's Folk Choir, have donated to us instead of sending Christmas cards. A wonderful gesture of support.

Thank you, Sandra for being fabulous!

Kenya news

Metrin was one of the first girls Gill met via zoom in 2021, and she attended the first ostomy peer support and training workshop at the Gynocare Hospital the following year.

Metrin is a shining example of how access to regular, clean, well-fitting ostomy bags and peer support can change someone's life. The charity purchased Metrin a sewing machine with some material to help her set up a sewing business.

In August this year, Metrin hosted a peer support group at the new house she has built for her father with the money she has made from her business. Joy Blessing, Metrin's beautiful daughter, was also in attendance - the first ostomy baby!









Stoma supplies update

Bags sent to Kenya

- Over 600kg
- Each women provided with 3 months supply

Dignity, hope, respect for all





Tumaini Hub opens!

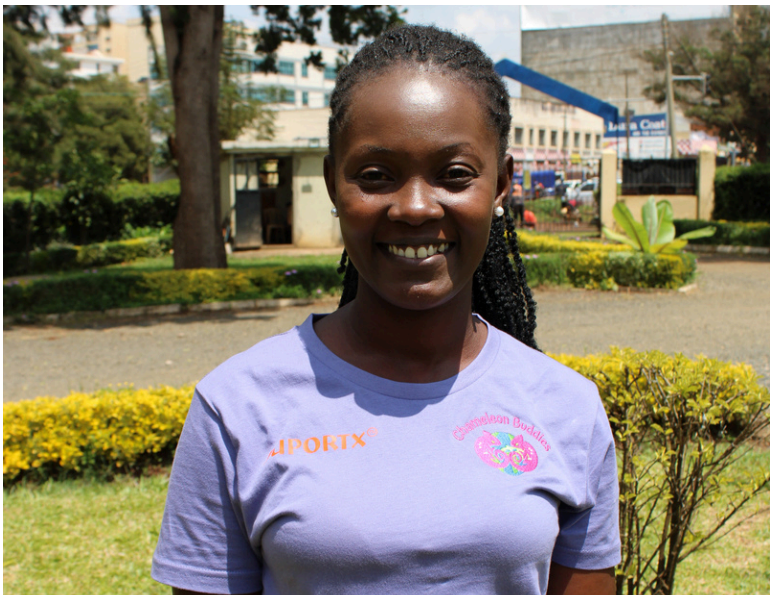
In August, we opened our new Hub. Tumaini means “Hope” in Swahili, and it is the centre of hope for stoma patients of the Gynocare Women’s and Fistula Hospital. It is positioned in the shade underneath the trees in the grounds of the secure compound of the Gynocare Town Clinic, central Eldoret.
Inside, Tumaini Co-ordinator, local ostomate Nivea Ogutu is based, where she distributes the vital ostomy supplies donated by UK ostomates to women and girls in need. Suportx are proud sponsors of Nivea.
What was once a shipping container has been transformed into a beautiful, clean airy space for all the ostomy supplies. There is a waiting area outside, and inside there is a welcoming office where patients can seek advice from Nivea.
A huge amount of work was undertaken over the course of just a matter of weeks in order to complete the project, from painting, to wiring, shelf and partition construction, a roof, foundations and a large canopy to help protect the Hub from the heat. Following construction, a team of volunteers worked hard to categorise and organise all of the supplies.











Nivea Ogutu, Tumaini Stoma Co-Ordinator

Nivea became our first Kenyan ostomate employee in August earlier this year, generously sponsored by Suportx. As the Tumaini Stoma Co-Ordinator, Nivea has been instrumental in maintaining an accurate stock inventory in the Hub, responsible for distributing ostomy supplies to the patients, and visiting new patients after their surgery to provide support.

Since her arrival, the Hub has become a hive of activity, with patients attending to collect supplies, and to arrange with Nivea for follow-up appointments with Dr Mabeya for any issues with their ostomies. Chai and chapatis are served on the sunny veranda by Karen who works in the Town Clinic on the site, and there is even a kitten at the Hub...appropriately named Tumaini! She was later discovered to be a he!

In October, Nivea led the ostomy workshop for more than 40 women, and over the last few months she has travelled on outreach to offer support and advice to women in the further regions.

Thank you to Suportx for providing Nivea with this opportunity to grow in confidence and independence with her ostomy, while supporting other women to live in comfort with theirs.





Nivea in action in the workshops and on outreach with patients







Nivea's office in the Hub with Tumaini kitten!



Team Kili take on Africa's highest peak!

On 5th October, 16 women from the UK and America set off on their 7 day trek up the highest peak in Africa, alongside a team doctor, Gen Moseley from New Zealand. Expert guides and porters from African Scenic Adventures supported the team through the challenging days of jungle, desert and snow, as they slowly trekked up into the clouds.

Altitude sickness was a major fear, with several team members suffering effects from vomiting, to dizziness and headaches, as they made their way up almost 6000m into the African sky.
The courageous group battled stoma bag leaks, anxiety and chapped lips to successfully summit.
One team member succumbed to the altitude at an impressive 4700m - 3 times the height of Ben Nevis!

Gill, our CEO said,
"I was incredibly humbled to walk alongside such a strong, resilient and determined group of women. I have never witnessed so much determination in the face of such challenges, each and every person was pushed beyond their limit."











Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania
5-12th October 2025

The camararderie and support from each other gave the team the strength to keep going, laughter and tears mixing together along with immense pride at their achievements.

Afterwards, the majority of the team, despite their exhaustion and sore knees, headed to Eldoret to meet some of the patients they had fundraised for. A workshop for 40 patients was held.

A very special few days was spent, the Kenyans and the trekkers learning from each other other and sharing experiences of living with their osomties in their different cultures.









£67,200 RAISED!

Female empowerment in action, through action.

The team were accompanied by film-maker Michelle Sanders, who managed to not only summit her first high altitude peak, but film throughout the trek! Her documentary on their fabulous trek will be released in Spring 2026 - keep an eye out for showings in an area near you.



Testimonies from our ladies in Kenya



Pamela

I want to thank Chameleon Buddies and Gynocare for their help they've given our group. They've built us up by giving us colostomy bags and by giving us our support in our group. I am very happy and comfortable.



Irene Cherop

!rene Cherop thought she was the only one in world with a stoma - until she attended the stoma training provided by the charity, and realised that she was not alone.

She says,

"I have accepted my stoma and am comfortable with it, it does not cause me any stress.

More women need to be given the training as they are struggling.

I am the proud Chair of Uasin Gishu support group."



Pastoress Rose

"I want to thank the Buddies and Gynocare for the support of Western Stoma Hope Support Group. They have put a smile on our face so that we may have something to do to support our families.

God bless Chameleon Buddies for eternity and Gynocare at large. We are looking forward to be Community Based Organisation group to support and build up one another.

Tujijue Tujikubali Tijengane

We know ourselves
We accept ourselves
We build up one another"

Thank you to the Inner Wheel Clubs Who have supported us this year

IW Scarborough £300
IW of Yeovil £300
IW Oban £200
IW Kirkby In Ashfield £100

Fabulous Fundraisers



Hays Travel, Alnwick

£733.50 was raised by Hays Travel with their 13 mile walk and Christmas markets bus tour to Edinburgh.



Swap Shop

£710 was raised by a fun clothes swap shop by Emma Phelan and her band of helpers.

Empowerment through Action
Hosted by Stuart and Hilary Williams

On Tuesday 16th September, an impactful, informative and fun evening was held at the stunning home of Stuart and Hilary Williams at their home on Capital Wharf.
A welcoming audience of more than 40 people listened to presentations and speeches by the speakers, including an educational presentation from Hilary's own surgeon, Dr Rajesh Nair, a consultant urological surgeon at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust. Dr Nair explained the importance of ostomy bags in order to provide patients with dignity, urging the audience to dig deep to help us support more women to have their basic needs met in Kenya. Theo Clarke, best-selling author of "Breaking the Taboo" and former MP Chair of the Birth Trauma APPG, spoke passionately about her own work in Kenya, alongside her experience campaigning to improve maternity safety in the UK. Geeta Nayar, Senior Associate Solicitor at Irwin Mitchell, spoke movingly of her traumatic birth experience and work as a birth trauma advocate for mothers.
Gill ended the evening with a celebration of our work and the joy the charity has brought to the lives of so many women in Kenya.

Thank you to Stuart and Hilary for their generosity and support.













What's next in 2026.....?



Run for Charity

Do you want a challenge for 2026, and to raise money for a fabulous cause at the same time?

Look no further!

We have partnered with Run for Charity, and have access to DISCOUNTED places to 100's of events nationwide.

Visit our page and search for an event which tickles your taste buds - from family fun inflatable events, to triathlons, 2.5k runs, half marathons and the full 26.4 mile distances, Tough Mudder obstacle courses and the Arla Great North Swim - there is something for everyone. Individuals, groups, families, work colleagues. Whatever you want to do, and however you want to do it, there is an event for you.

https://runforcharity.com/charity/chameleon-buddies

Campaign 52 and LEFI collaboration

2026 will see the collaboration between Chameleon Buddies and two international partners, building on our partnership with our sister charity in Eldoret, Beyond Fistula.

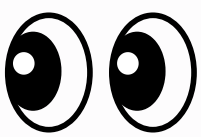
In February, we are attending the AGM of Kenyan charity, LEFI - Let's End Fistula Initiative - founded by a local fistula survivor, Sarah Omega. LEFI has a hugely successful mentorship scheme of peer supporters who work in the rural areas of Kenya, providing sustainable peer support for over 4,000 women. We hope to learn from their expertise and integrate their model into our strategy for our ostomy peer support groups.

In April, we are working with the international team of doctors, nurses, and their surgical teams in Campaign 52. Since 2022, the team, which includes specialists from America and Europe, have been working with Dr Mabeya and the Gynocare team in a fast-paced week of intensive fistula surgeries, cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccine programmes for the most vulnerable women and girls in Kenya. Frequently, ostomy surgeries are the result. This year, the 40-strong team are bringing a stoma nurse, with whom we will be working to build on the ostomy care programme we are currently formulating at the hospital.

We are looking forward to sharing ideas and learning from our new partners.

Hospital Wing development

Plans have been drawn, tenders have been invited...watch this space!





Thank you for reading!

Chameleon Buddies