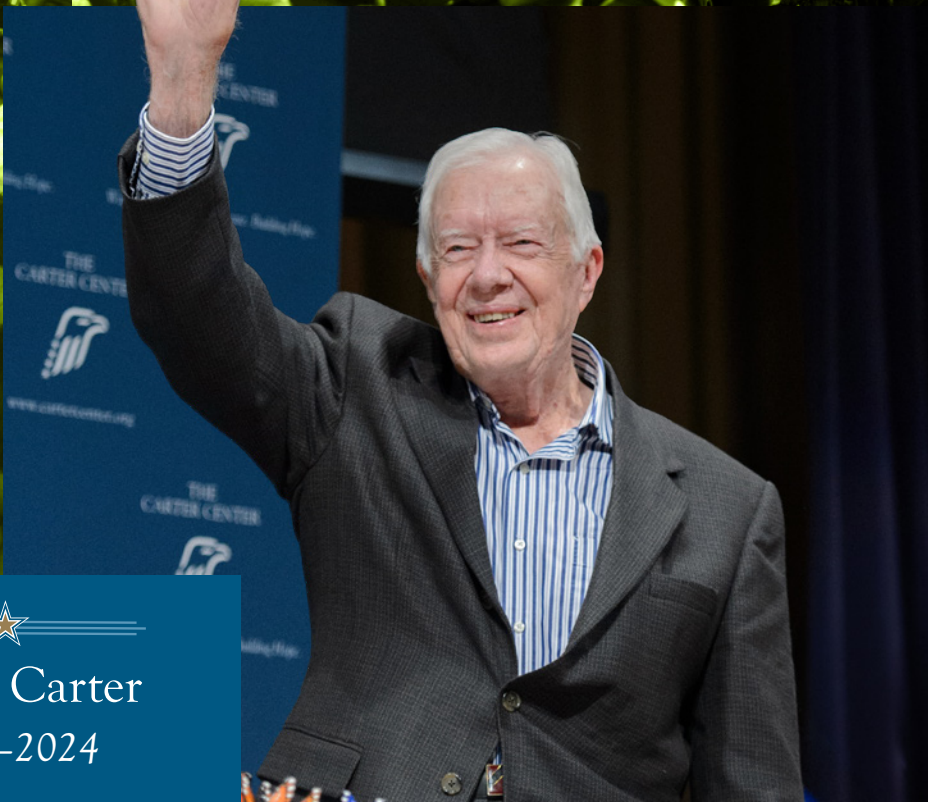


THE  
CARTER CENTER



# CARTER CENTER NEWS

SPRING 2025



★  
Jimmy Carter  
1924–2024





WAGING PEACE.  
FIGHTING DISEASE.  
BUILDING HOPE.

SPRING 2025

# CARTER CENTER NEWS

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### ON THE COVER

**F**ormer U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who co-founded The Carter Center in 1982, passed away at age 100 on Dec. 29, 2024. This cover collage shows just some of the facets of his incredible life. Read about his funeral on p. 4, and go to [www.jimmycartertribute.org](http://www.jimmycartertribute.org) to browse more than 24,000 condolence messages or to send in your own.



*From the CEO, Paige Alexander*

## Now More than Ever, We Need You

**W**e've all seen the headlines: U.S. Slashes Foreign Aid Funding.

The nonprofit world is experiencing a major financial earthquake right now. Many of our fellow nongovernmental organizations have taken a heavy blow from drastic cuts in U.S. government funding for humanitarian assistance. Some have gone bankrupt and shut down entirely, leaving voids that will be impossible to fill. People have lost their jobs, and those who were benefitting from aid are of course dramatically affected.



*Families who benefit from programs funded by the U.S. government will be dramatically affected by cuts in aid.*

Despite this difficult reality, I want to assure you that The Carter Center remains a strong, resilient, fiscally sound institution. We continue to wage peace, fight disease, and build hope around the world.

Our late, beloved founders, President and Mrs. Carter, had the wisdom and foresight to build an endowment that helps to insulate us against economic shocks, and, fortunately, our family of donors is diverse, divided among individuals, foundations, corporations, and U.S. and foreign governments.

That said, nearly 10% of our funding suddenly evaporated when the U.S. government cuts came. Seven programs were affected, including conflict resolution work in Sudan and women's empowerment efforts in Bangladesh. We are actively seeking new sources of funding to keep those projects operating, but that's not easy.

Your steadfast support is more important now than it has ever been, and we continue to be grateful for our loyal group of supporters.

Seeing our strength, other worthy organizations that have been devastated by the cuts are coming to us, asking us to continue the work they can no longer do, and we are weighing if and where we might be able to step in to help. The world's most vulnerable people need us more than ever, and we are determined to remain a force for good in this world.

I hope you are, too.



*Paige Alexander is the chief executive officer of The Carter Center.*

## Youth Leader Shares Firsthand Knowledge of Crisis in Sudan

During a recent trip to the United States, Hanaa Eltigani, assistant secretary-general of the Youth Citizen Observer Network (YCON) in Sudan, visited The Carter Center in Atlanta, met with officials at the United Nations in New York, and held discussions at diplomatic offices in Washington, D.C.

YCON, which The Carter Center helped establish, connects and supports a network of more than 7,000 youth-led organizations across Sudan. Initially formed to monitor and report on Sudan's transition to democracy after the 2019 revolution that ended Omar al-Bashir's three-decade rule, YCON adapted its mission following the outbreak of civil war in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces. As conflict engulfed the country, many YCON observers—along with millions of other Sudanese—were forced to flee, seeking refuge in neighboring nations.

"The humanitarian situation is deteriorating," Eltigani said during her visit to The Carter Center, which continues to support

YCON's work. "The violation of all kinds of international laws by both of the warring parties continues. We had to make shifts to how we can bring Sudan back into that place that reflects the demands and the aspirations of Sudanese people, our demands of freedom and peace and justice."

## Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers to Merge with The Carter Center

The Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers will join the Carter Center's Mental Health Program, connecting two issues—mental health and caregiving—championed by the late former U.S. First Lady Rosalynn Carter.

"Rosalynn Carter was truly ahead of her time in recognizing the need to improve the lives of all Americans who live with mental illnesses and those who provide care for loved ones," said Carter Center CEO Paige Alexander.

RCI, founded in 1987 by Mrs. Carter, is committed to prioritizing America's family caregivers, defined as those providing care to someone who is aging, ill, or disabled.

There are 105 million family caregivers in the United States who provide compassionate care to tens of millions of people. "Joining forces with The Carter Center will improve outcomes for caregivers by dramatically increasing our impact to see, hear, and support family caregivers," said Paurvi Bhatt, interim CEO of RCI. "This transformative step in our nearly 40 years of dedication to family caregivers builds on Mrs. Carter's vision and leadership and on the tireless work of generations of staff and partners to serve the millions of family caregivers in need."

## Center Takes Action to Combat Climate Change

The effects of climate change have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable communities, often the same communities where The Carter Center works. In response, the Center is seeking ways to reduce its own impact on the planet while helping communities adapt.

To begin to address the problem, the Center started integrating climate change into its existing programming. The extractive industries governance project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, reoriented its support for more equitable and accountable management of mining to focus on minerals needed for the transition to renewable energy.

"Although we often only act on the risks we see today, when addressing climate change it is important for organizations to act preemptively, because waiting only results in higher costs and greater harm," said climate change expert Matthew Brubacher, hired by the Center to help guide this work.

The Carter Center recently conducted an audit of how much greenhouse gas it produces in its daily operations worldwide. The audit identified several areas for potential reductions.

"The Carter Center has an opportunity to be a leader among international organizations on this pressing issue," Brubacher said.



Hanaa Eltigani (center), assistant secretary-general of Sudan's Youth Citizen Observer Network, discussed the country's humanitarian crisis while visiting The Carter Center last fall. She was joined by Ahmed Tom Dawd (right), secretary-general of the group, and Guma Komey, Carter Center deputy senior country representative for Sudan.





## The World Bids a Fond Farewell to President Carter



*Mourners at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library in Atlanta gaze upon the casket of former President Jimmy Carter.*

Friends, dignitaries, staff members, and everyday admirers from around the world poured out love and grief after the Dec. 29 death at age 100 of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who co-founded The Carter Center with his wife, Rosalynn, in 1982.

The Center's official condolence book at [www.JimmyCarterTribute.org](http://www.JimmyCarterTribute.org) logged more than 24,000 messages from people in 155 countries, provinces, and territories. "President Jimmy Carter has been a beacon of light, a leader for peace, love, the environment and humanity, a true citizen of the world. His legacy will continue to improve and inspire lives near and far," wrote Alessandra Colfi of Oceanside, California.

Aggrey Kipngetchi of Nairobi, Kenya, wrote: "President Jimmy Carter was an icon of peace, human rights crusader, world's moral compass and committed family man. May [his] soul rest in heavenly peace."

*Military personnel flank a horse-drawn caisson as it carries former President Jimmy Carter's casket to the Capitol.*





*As the motorcade passed through each city, it slowed down for people to pay their respects to the late president.*

Then-President Joe Biden, President-elect Donald Trump, and former Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush, and Bill Clinton and their spouses offered their condolences, as did numerous Cabinet officials, members of Congress, and other prominent figures.

President Carter's remains traveled to three locations—Atlanta, Washington, D.C., and Plains, Georgia—representing facets of his long and extraordinary life. The first stop was the Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta,

the city President Carter called home while serving as Georgia's governor and, after leaving the White House, where his presidential library and the not-for-profit Carter Center were founded. Mourners paid their respects as President Carter lay in repose for two days.

President Carter's family then accompanied him to the U.S. Capitol. Some people waited in line for hours to visit the flag-draped casket in the Rotunda.

At the state funeral held at the Washington National Cathedral on Jan. 9, sons of former President Gerald R. Ford and Vice President Walter Mondale read eulogies written for President Carter by their late fathers. President Biden, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young, and President Carter's grandson Jason Carter also offered words of comfort, often tinged with humor. The family then traveled with President Carter's remains back to Georgia for a private funeral service at the tiny Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, where he taught Sunday school for decades. In a nod to President Carter's military service, a fleet of 21 Navy fighter jets roared over Plains, one of them dramatically peeling off in the traditional "missing man" formation. As darkness fell on a cold winter night, the funeral procession crept slowly along Plains' Main Street, which was lined with reverent mourners. The family walked behind the hearse to the home where President Carter and his beloved wife, Rosalynn, lived for more than 60 years. There he was laid to rest beside her, concluding the funeral events and ending a triumphant, century-long journey.

## Country Offices Pay Tribute

Many of the Carter Center's more than 3,500 staff members in 20-plus countries around the globe organized gatherings or tribute services to honor President



*Staff members at the Carter Center office in Guatemala memorialize President Carter with white roses and a special banner.*

Carter. They hung banners in their offices and provided condolence books for guests, including government dignitaries, to sign.

Several staff members also sent heartfelt messages. Maymoona Mahmoud El Tayeb, the Center's deputy country representative in Sudan, wrote:

"I am saddened at the loss of President Carter, a remarkable leader who devoted his life to helping others to live healthy and in a peaceful world. The memory of his lifetime as a warrior in the service of the highest ideals will be a legacy of inspiration to all Carter Center staff and others, and no doubt

his tremendous accomplishments are never lost."

Writing on behalf of himself and his staff, Dr. Emmanuel Miri, the Center's longtime country representative in Nigeria, offered this reflection:

"For us, this is indeed a monumental loss of immeasurable proportion! It is easy as Nigerians to realize this as we imagine an alternative reality in our public health space: What if he did not intervene to lead the campaign for the eradication of Guinea worm disease in Nigeria? What if he had called it quits in the face of enormous challenges?"

Miri added: "We are, therefore, inspired by this reflection and the legacy President Carter and his wife painstakingly built in Nigeria and other countries worldwide, to take upon ourselves, individually and collectively, the challenge of sustaining this vision and legacy."





# 'Hope Is Action'

## Human rights pioneer Mary Robinson shares life lessons at Carter Center event

*Mary Robinson (center), former president of Ireland, shares her views on human rights at a Carter Center event in March. From the Center, CEO Paige Alexander (right) participated in the discussion, and Nicole Kruse moderated.*

When Mary Robinson began her term in 1990 as the first female president of Ireland, she didn't let her gender take a back seat to the office. She wanted to convince people that "I would actually do a better job because I was a woman," she told an audience at The Carter Center in March.

Robinson went on to blaze trails not only in politics but human rights, women's rights, and climate advocacy. She offered insight on her remarkable life during a public conversation and Q&A with the Carter Center's Paige Alexander, CEO, and Nicole Kruse, vice

president of development, following a screening at the Center of "Mrs. Robinson," a new biographical documentary.

Robinson has several ties with the Center, including a long friendship with co-founders President Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter. She also helped lead the Carter Center's election observation mission to Myanmar in 2015.

But perhaps her strongest connection to the Center is a shared commitment to bolstering human rights around the world. "The universal values of human rights are indispensable," Robinson said. "They are as valid today as they ever were, and they are more relevant

today than they ever were."

During her tenure as U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997 to 2002, she traveled to many dangerous places—Chechnya, Kosovo, and Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. "I always came back energized because I was meeting people on the ground," Robinson said.

The world celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights last year and its 50th anniversary while Robinson was high commissioner. The document is as "relevant today as it was in 1948," she said. "We have learned so much about how, hopefully, to do better in creating more understanding but also embedding it in the cultures of people."

Despite her belief that “countries go up and countries slide” in their commitment to human rights, she remains optimistic about the future and the young people who will be inheriting the world older generations created.

As a member of the Elders, a group of former world leaders to which President Carter also belonged, Robinson said she has been involved in conversations about climate and

*‘We have learned so much about how, hopefully, to do better in creating more understanding but also embedding it in the cultures of people.’*

energy that span several age groups. “Younger people are insisting at being at the table,” she said. “I’ve had incredible conversations with 13-, 14-, and 15-year-old climate activists.”

The motivation of younger generations will lead to sea change soon, Robinson believes, because they want the world to move faster. “We’re on the cusp of this much healthier clean energy, renewable energy, no-waste circular economy,” she said. Robinson marveled at the difference such innovations will make for people in Africa who have never had electricity.

Although Robinson has spent her career addressing societal ills across the globe, she believes joy and hope can be found anywhere and are essential components for a well-lived life. She once heard her mentor, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, describe himself as a “prisoner of hope.” It made an impression on Robinson. She thought, “what he’s saying is the glass may not be half full. There may be only a tiny bit in the glass. But hope is action. You work with that.”

## Forum Participants Provide Perspectives on Human Rights

As a former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights and member of the Elders, Mary Robinson has fought for human rights around the world. Similarly, the Carter Center’s Human Rights Program works to advance the rights of protected groups. Last year, the Center hosted the Human Rights Defenders Forum, where activists and scholars came together to learn from and support one another. Below are perspectives from four participants, working on different aspects of a broad human rights agenda.



**Colette Pichon Battle**

*Vision and Initiatives Partner, Taproot Earth*

*“One way for us to understand the climate crisis is to understand everybody’s going to be impacted.... The worst part of climate change is not the big hurricanes. It’s not the big storms that you can predict. It’s global temperatures that are going to take out more people than any storm ever could.”*

**Vincent Warren**

*Executive Director, Center for Constitutional Rights*

*“States talk a lot about their rights, but states don’t have rights. What states have are power. And who has the rights? People have the rights.... What we have to do as human rights defenders is shift power to the people from the state.”*



**Hossam Bahgat**

*Founder, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights*

*“Our work can only succeed if we think of ourselves and execute our activities as a movement, not as a group of individual organizations working in individual countries, and not as a group of visionary individuals exercising leadership. To really make change, you need to build.”*

**Hina Jilani**

*Pakistani Lawyer and Women’s Activist, Member of the Elders*

*“I cannot afford the luxury of either pessimism or cynicism or frustration, so I always have hope. I respect my struggle more than I expect achievement. I believe in my struggle. And because I have that belief, I have hope.”*





# 15 Guinea Worm Cases Reported Last Year

**T**he prospect of eradicating Guinea worm disease remains on track, with just 15 human cases reported in two countries in 2024.

That figure compares with some of the lowest annual totals of human cases ever

reported. When The Carter Center assumed leadership of the global Guinea Worm Eradication Program in 1986, an estimated 3.5 million human cases occurred annually in 21 countries in Africa and Asia.

Since 1986, the success of the campaign

has averted more than 100 million cases of the devastating parasitic disease.

Nine of the 15 cases reported in 2024 occurred in Chad, and six were in South Sudan. A small number of additional 2024 specimens that may or may not be Guinea worms were awaiting laboratory evaluation at press time. All figures for the disease were officially confirmed at the eradication campaign's global annual meeting, which took place in Chad in April.

"A single worm can cause multiple new cases the following year, and we're actively preventing outbreaks in some of the most challenging and complex environments," said Dr. Kashef Ijaz, Carter Center vice president of health programs.

In the six countries where Guinea worm remains under surveillance—Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Ethiopia, Mali, and South Sudan—reported infections in animals declined 25%, from 887 in 2023 to 664 in 2024. Chad reduced animal infections by 43% (from 496 to 281), its fifth consecutive year of improvement. Reductions in animal infections in Chad, Angola, and Mali were partially offset by an increase in Cameroon. The same species of worm, *Dracunculus medinensis*, infects both humans and animals, so eradication requires eliminating it in both.

"The low numbers show that communities' commitment to reaching zero and interventions to reduce human suffering are working," said Adam Weiss, director of the Carter Center's Guinea Worm Eradication Program.

Guinea worm is poised to become the second human disease in history to be eradicated, following smallpox. It also would be the first parasitic disease to be eradicated and the first done without use of a medicine or vaccine. Local mobilization and community-based behavioral change are the formula for success.

The Carter Center leads the global eradication campaign, working closely with national ministries of health and a variety of global institutions including the World Health Organization, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF, and other partners.



A woman in Wau, South Sudan, holds up a filter cloth used to help prevent Guinea worm disease. Water intended for drinking or cooking is poured through the cloth, which strains out the parasite that causes Guinea worm disease.





# Center Observes 2024 U.S. Elections

From Zimbabwe to New Mexico, Sierra Leone to Montana, and Tunisia to the Peach State of Georgia, the Carter Center's recent election observation work has spanned the globe.

"The United States is increasingly similar to many other countries around the world where there are questions, doubts, and criticisms about the quality of elections," said David Carroll, director of the Carter Center's Democracy Program, which is dedicated to reinforcing democratic institutions through nonpartisan election observation. "The goals of The Carter Center and its nonpartisan observation partners are to provide an extra set of eyes and analysis, generating detailed reports on what happens throughout the electoral process."

In 2024, the Center conducted nonpartisan election observation in Fulton County, Georgia, where Atlanta is located. Working with state-specific organizations, it also launched two grassroots observation networks—one in New Mexico and one in Montana—where it provided training, technical expertise, and funding, making it possible to deploy more than 300 people across the two states to observe everything from early voting and ballot counting to machine testing and

post-election audits.

"Our theory is that as people understand what it takes to conduct elections, and really understand the minutiae of the process, a new level of transparency is generated that helps to increase people's trust in elections," said Carmen López, co-lead of Observe New Mexico Elections.

Furthermore, the hope is that what these election observers saw firsthand working behind the scenes gets shared with friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors, thereby helping to boost confidence in our democratic process from the ground up.

One person likely to spread that good news is Patricia Hixson, a volunteer observer with the Montana Election Observation Initiative.

"The systems that they have in place just boggle the mind," she said. "I really feel like I don't see how you could have a fraudulent election."

While nonpartisan election observation is common around the world, only about half of U.S. states allow it. Georgia, for instance, does not, but a special process allowed for nonpartisan observation in 2024 in highly scrutinized Fulton County.

The citizen observers who worked on Carter Center-sponsored projects during

*Carter Center staffer Jordan McNary monitors voting Nov. 5, 2024, at Lang-Carlson Community Center in Atlanta, where the Center conducted nonpartisan election observation.*

the 2024 elections came away with a deeper understanding of the value of these nonpartisan efforts.

"People's faces light up, and they realize they have a role," said Sharon Berman, co-lead of Observe New Mexico Elections. "They'll go back to their communities and let their friends and neighbors know how incredibly careful and conscientious poll workers are across the state. It has nothing to do with political affiliation. It has everything to do with commitment to a fair process."

The nonpartisan observation projects in all three states have publicized reports and statements detailing what went well and what needed improvement. And, though the 2024 election largely lacked the unsubstantiated allegations of fraud made in 2020 and 2022, Carroll believes that the work remains critical in our increasingly polarized country.

"I didn't anticipate that we would be in this kind of environment in 2024 and looking ahead to 2025," he said. "But it makes me feel that this work is more important than ever and that we're well placed to try to keep it moving."

Leanne Webster

## In Rule of Law, Director Seeks Fairness for All

Growing up in rural Utah, Leanne Webster felt out of place. Hunting horrified her, as did eating lamb, even as her brothers geared up with their rifles and her father ranched sheep. In a place where “others” hardly existed, she gravitated to people different from her and despised bullies. She left town the day after high school graduation, armed with a sense of fairness and determined to do good in the world.

In May 2024, Webster joined The Carter Center as the director of its Rule of Law Program, which supports civil society organizations in advocating for their rights, while working with government entities to help make this aspiration a reality through improved accountability and transparency.

“We should all be able to live up to our full potential, and the government is meant to help create the conditions that allow for that,” she said. “I help facilitate those conditions.”

It means, for example, working with the justice sector in Sierra Leone to implement laws that improve the status and representation of women. It’s conducting trainings in Bangladesh, so marginalized groups are aware of their right to information and government officials strengthen their ability to provide it. It’s training police on gender sensitivity in Costa Rica and then seeing those officers train others. It’s empowering youth groups to conduct social audits to hold local governments accountable in Guatemala.

Webster’s path to the Center was circuitous. She first thought she’d make her mark as an environmental lawyer, but the introductory coursework in law school at University of Utah turned her off. After graduating, she joined a firm to do corporate litigation, where she was miscast but managed to pay off her loans. She hit reset, and grew “much happier, much more aligned,” she said, when she turned her attention to public interest work and headed to New York University for a master’s in nonprofit management.

While waiting for clearances to become a foreign service officer with the U.S. Agency for International Development, she served as a community organizer with Planned Parenthood in Utah and got a crash course in politics.

Webster’s more than five years with USAID as a democracy and governance officer took her to posts in El Salvador, Afghanistan, and Paraguay. After leaving the agency, she worked with implementers of U.S. government-funded programs, mostly in Latin America, for another decade.



*Leanne Webster joined The Carter Center last year as director of the Rule of Law Program.*

What drew her to The Carter Center was its diversified funding, its ability to keep politics out of money and do more innovative work with fewer strings attached.

“I just thought there’s got to be another way,” she said. “I wanted to do more than just follow instructions.”

Success shows up in attitudinal shifts, she says, changes that improve people’s lives through a long-game approach. The work requires being OK with taking one step forward and two steps back and recognizing that having a seat at the table is often as important as producing immediate results.

For these reasons, she’s on a mission to push for continued financial support of the Bangladesh program, which took a major hit when the U.S. government slashed funding—leaving only a “skeleton team” behind just as a reform-minded interim government presents opportunities for inroads.

“We’ve made so much investment there, and we don’t want to lose those gains. We don’t want to give up our presence,” she said.

Fortunately, she knows she’s not alone in this fight.

“I find comfort and encouragement within The Carter Center because we all share this passion and dedication,” she said. “I have a lot of faith in our capabilities.”



## President Carter Condolence Events Draw Crowds in Multiple Cities

**A**fter President Carter's passing, The Carter Center recognized the public's need to express their grief and appreciation for him. In response, the Center held events in several cities where guests could sign condolence books and share stories about the late humanitarian.

Events were held at The Carter Center in Atlanta as well as at venues in Austin, Texas; California's Bay Area; Boston; Chicago; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; Minneapolis; New York; Palm Beach and Sarasota, Florida; and Seattle. More than 2,300 people participated.

"Thank you so much for inviting me to sign a condolence book for the Carters in Boston," wrote Tina Strasburg. "To be in a peaceful room with loving people honoring the Carters was quite moving."

Jen Ong-Meyers of New York wrote: "There will never be another President Carter, whose heart, soul and humanity shone through with respect and care for everyone."

In addition to the U.S. events, several Carter Center country offices opened their doors for the same purpose. Condolences were received from Chad, China, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Haiti, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, and the West Bank.

"We are confident that [President Carter] is in a better place with all his work that helped the lives of many people in different parts of the world," wrote Mohib Aziz of Sudan. "His legacy of humanitarian and charitable work remains a beacon for you at The Carter Center and for all of us to follow."



*A woman reads condolence book messages at The Carter Center in Atlanta.*

## Lions Clubs Foundation Renews Partnership to Fight Preventable Blindness

**T**he Carter Center and Lions Clubs International Foundation announced in February a \$2 million renewal of their partnership to end suffering from major causes of preventable blindness in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Venezuela, and Brazil. The announcement was made at The Carter Center in Atlanta.

Since 1994, LCIF has worked in tandem with the Center to bring

an end to river blindness and trachoma—both preventable causes of blindness—on a global scale. This unique collaboration has had a significant impact on the lives of millions of people.

"Thanks to Lions' longstanding support, millions of people are now living free from river blindness and trachoma," said Carter Center CEO Paige Alexander. "Today's signing is a celebration of all that we have accomplished together over the course of three decades, but it is also

a promise to continue this work and to preserve President Carter's legacy—both as a Lion and as the founder of The Carter Center."

The Lions Clubs International Foundation has supported The Carter Center in its fight against blinding trachoma and debilitating river blindness in 14 African and Latin American countries. Local Lions clubs coordinate closely with Carter Center staff to mobilize communities to participate in mass drug administration, sight-saving surgery campaigns, and latrine construction. They also meet with influential national leaders to advocate for continued attention to river blindness and trachoma.

"Lions International and Lions worldwide are immensely proud of our partnership's impact over the last three decades," said Dr. Patti Hill, chairperson of the foundation. "Our collaborative efforts have truly changed countless lives and improved entire communities. We look forward to the joint impact we will have alongside The Carter Center as part of this renewed commitment."

Since 1994, the Lions Clubs partnership with The Carter Center to prevent disease and build hope in impoverished communities has made great impact:

- More than 500 million treatments for river blindness and more than 210 million treatments for trachoma delivered
- More than 820,000 sight-saving trichiasis surgeries performed
- An estimated 3.3 million latrines built as part of the overall trachoma prevention strategy
- Nearly \$75 million in Lions Clubs International funding provided to the Center to address river blindness and trachoma

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, the late co-founder of The Carter Center, was a proud Lion for more than 70 years. Many Carter Center and health ministry staff are members of their local Lions clubs.



*An indigenous Yanomami boy is measured before receiving treatment for river blindness. Funding from the Lions Clubs International Foundation makes this work possible.*

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Kari Mackey is an associate director in the Carter Center's Rule of Law Program.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

## Study: Public Supports Alternative to Police Response

By Kari Mackey

I'm an Atlanta-area taxpayer, and I would rather my local police officers spend their limited resources finding violent criminals than arresting a person experiencing homelessness for public urination. My fellow citizens agree: 71% of respondents to a recent survey commissioned by The Carter Center expressed support for unarmed specialists to respond to certain nonviolent incidents rather than traditional police.

The Carter Center is looking at whether such alternative responses to certain nonviolent charges can benefit people dealing with difficult issues like extreme poverty and mental health concerns. Instead of becoming trapped in a cycle of arrest and incarceration, these individuals could be connected with needed social services.

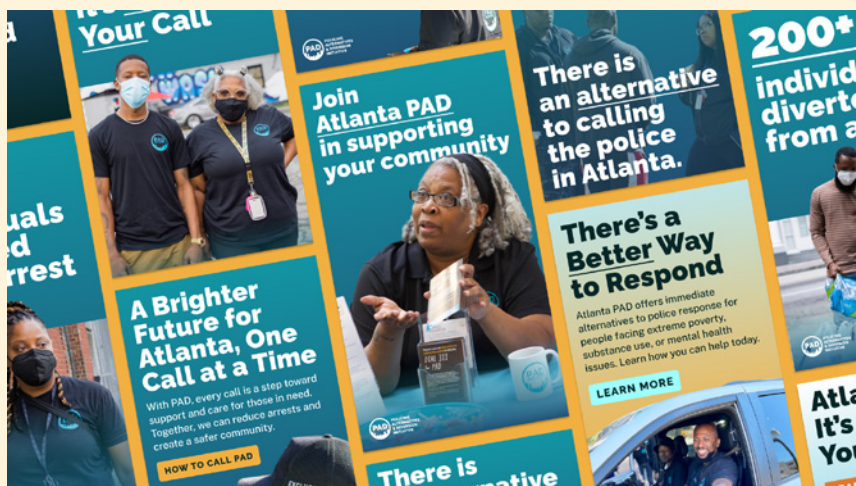
Our partner in this work is Atlanta's Policing Alternatives and Diversion Initiative, known as PAD, a local nonprofit funded by the city to provide solutions outside the legal system. In addition to two-person teams who can respond to calls in the community, the group is a partner in a recently opened diversion center with many resources under one roof.

What is the Carter Center's role in this project? We have three goals: First, increase awareness of policing alternatives in Atlanta, like PAD. In our survey, 77% of respondents did not know PAD existed. If,

for example, a person is to call Atlanta's 311 service line to request PAD's support instead of police through 911 when a family member is experiencing a mental health crisis that does not involve weapons, that option needs to be known.

Second, we want to assist PAD in sharing the data they collect. While we believe that connecting people to the services they need is necessary no matter the cost, the program might receive more community buy-in if the reach and impact of their work is better demonstrated through data.

Third, ultimately, we would like other cities to learn from the Atlanta experience and apply the lessons at home. All communities, large and small, can consider responding to individuals in crisis with compassion instead of arrest.



A series of social media ads were designed to spread awareness of Atlanta's Policing Alternatives and Diversion Initiative.