

American Missionary Sued After 105 Children Die in Her Unlicensed Medical Clinic

An American missionary faces a civil lawsuit in Uganda after 105 children died in her nonprofit ministry, Serving His Children (SHC). She is also accused of impersonating a medical doctor and running a medical facility without a license.

Renee Bach ran SHC to help malnourished children in Uganda but has no professional medical training. As a high school graduate, Bach tells NPR that she felt God call her to help needy children in Uganda 10 years ago.

Bach's ministry started in the city of Jinja. In the fall of 2009, a local children's hospital worker asked Bach if she could take in several children who were severely malnourished. Bach notes that from a medical standpoint, these children were stable, but they needed to be fed back to health. She agreed to the task.

Bach tells NPR that she soon felt that God's plan was to run a center where malnourished kids and their mothers could come stay until the children were healthy. According to Bach's blog, where she chronicled her ministry's story, SHC officially started in 2010.

But of the 940 sick and malnourished children SHC took in between 2010 and 2015, 105 died.

Two Ugandan mothers whose children died in SHC say that Bach deceived them into thinking she was a medical doctor. Now Women's Probono Initiative (WPI) is leading the charge in suing Bach.

"She was often seen wearing a white coat, a stethoscope and

often administered medications to children in her care,” says a WPI press release, according to *People*. “When their children died, however, they were told that Ms. Renee has no training at all in medicine. In 2015, the District Health Officer closed her facility and ordered her to not offer any treatment to any child.”

Two former SHC employees also thought Bach was a doctor, according to an ABC News affiliate. Jackie Kramlich, an American volunteer for SHC, tells NPR that her initial admiration for SHC turned into horror as she witnessed Bach administering medical aid to children with complicated illnesses.

“Pneumonia, intestinal parasites, tuberculosis, many were in stage 4 HIV,” she says.

Bach admits she would sometimes administer medical help, including blood transfusions and IVs. And although it was sometimes “without a medical profession standing right next to me,” she says, “it was always under the request and direction of a medical professional.”

The death rate in SHC went from 18% in 2012 to 10% in 2013 after she hired two doctors. But that number is still high, according to UNICEF’s Saul Guerrero, an expert in childhood malnutrition.

In 2015, Kramlich filed a police report regarding her concerns with SHC, and a month later, the ministry was shut down.

The publicity of Bach’s case has grown to such an extent in Uganda that she doesn’t feel safe to live there anymore.

“I get death threats all the time,” she says. She now lives in Virginia.

Bach’s next hearing will be January 2020.