

THE  
CARTER CENTER



# CARTER CENTER NEWS

FALL 2024

All Eyes on  
Remote Uganda

Celebrating  
President Carter's  
100th Birthday



WAGING PEACE.  
FIGHTING DISEASE.  
BUILDING HOPE.

# CARTER CENTER NEWS

FALL 2024

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## ON THE COVER

**T**his 15-year-old schoolgirl lives in an eastern Ugandan district that has successfully eliminated river blindness with assistance from The Carter Center. As a result, she can look forward to a future free of the effects of the parasitic disease, including intense itching, discolored skin, and eventual possible blindness. Read more about the Center's efforts in Uganda on p. 2.



*From the CEO, Paige Alexander*

## What I'm Thankful For

**T**his is the time of year when I—probably like you—can't help but think about all the things I'm thankful for. The list always starts out with the tried-and-true standards of good health, a loving family, and the comforts of modern life—a cozy home, a working car, a fridge full of Coke Zero.

But as the leader of The Carter Center, my list of blessings extends to some out-of-the-ordinary areas.



*Paige Alexander, Carter Center CEO, is grateful for the sight-saving surgeries, such as this one in Niger, supported by The Carter Center.*

I am thankful that just seven human cases of Guinea worm disease have been reported this year. This is a truly remarkable accomplishment, given that it wasn't all that long ago that cases were counted in the millions. The hard-working people on our

global staff and the hundreds of thousands of volunteers in tens of thousands of villages have made this happen, and I'm so grateful.

Likewise, I'm thankful for thousands of sight-saving surgeries supported by our Trachoma Control Program, the elimination of river blindness in vast areas of Uganda and Nigeria, and the major steps forward in our fight against lymphatic filariasis and malaria in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. People at the end of the road are getting healthier with our assistance, and that is a cause for gratitude.

I continue to be thankful for human rights defenders who fight against oppression and for climate protection, and for those who stand up for the rights of women and girls. I'm grateful to be part of an organization that believes in and supports internationally recognized principles of democracy.

As I suspect you are, I am deeply thankful for President Carter's long and well-lived life and for his and Mrs. Carter's extraordinary example of practical humanitarianism. What a gift.

And finally, I am grateful to you for supporting us in all the work we are doing around the world. We honestly could not do it without you.



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

## Human Rights Defenders Convene in Atlanta

For the first time since before the COVID-19 pandemic began, The Carter Center hosted an in-person gathering of human rights defenders to discuss issues and plan for the future.

The 13th Human Rights Defenders Forum, held May 20-22, drew 65 human rights defenders from around the world and 20 dignitaries, leaders, and representatives from various countries and institutions.

Attendees tackled critical themes such as the erosion of human rights and democratic backsliding, the normalization of violence, and the climate crisis, while also addressing well-being and capacity-building for defenders.

Featured topics of discussion included the rise of authoritarianism; the weaponization of legislation; climate change's impact on migration; and environmental, land, and indigenous people's rights.

Hina Jilani, a human rights lawyer from Pakistan and longtime collaborator with former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, said that despite a tough environment of obstacles and democratic backsliding, she is determined to remain optimistic.

"I cannot afford the luxury of either pessimism or cynicism or frustration," she said. "I always have hope."

## Center Works on Election Observation in Three States

For the November 2024 U.S. election process, The Carter Center supported nonpartisan citizen election observation in New Mexico, Montana, and Georgia.

In New Mexico, with Carter Center assistance, the Observe New Mexico Elections organization trained voters from all 33 counties to observe election procedures and report on how those procedures were implemented. The Montana Election Observation Initiative, supported by The Carter Center, also expanded to more counties after a successful trial run in Missoula County during the June 4 primary.

In Georgia, the Center participated with the Monitoring Team, a select group of election experts, in observing the process in



*Hina Jilani, pioneering lawyer from Pakistan and international champion of human rights, discusses her relationship with former U.S. President Jimmy Carter at the Carter Center's Human Rights Defenders Forum, held in Atlanta in May.*

Fulton County—where Atlanta is located—as approved by the county's Board of Registration and Elections. At press time, the Center also was preparing for a small expert observation of the post-election risk-limiting audit in several counties in the state.

The Carter Center has supported similar citizen observation efforts in several countries around the world to help increase the transparency of election processes. The Center has also deployed more than 120 full and limited observation missions in 40 countries, including the U.S., and three Native American nations.

## Costa Rican Police Receive Gender-Related Training

The first group of 120 male and female police recruits has completed a new training course titled "Human Rights from a Gender Perspective in the Police Forces" at Costa Rica's National Police Academy. The course, which The Carter Center developed in collaboration with Costa Rica's Ministry of Public Security and the U.S. Embassy's

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Section, is now mandatory for all new and current police officers.

The graduation ceremony on Aug. 26 recognized the new officers' achievements and commitment to gender-sensitive policing practices. It also highlighted Costa Rica's leadership in instituting and facilitating mandatory training on gender-sensitive policing, positioning the country as a model for other governments in the region.

Research has shown that inclusive policing can reduce police mistreatment of minority communities, with policewomen generally using less force than male counterparts. However, entrenched cultural and structural barriers have historically limited women's participation and advancement in Costa Rica's police forces. In response, The Carter Center has worked with the Ministry of Public Security since 2021 to develop and embed policies and practices to address key factors that undermine gender equality in the Costa Rican police.

# All Eyes on Remote Uganda

Staff, volunteers monitor border area for signs of river blindness transmission



To reach the River Kayo from Uganda’s capital of Kampala, you must first make a seven-hour drive along a two-lane highway, passing over hundreds of speed bumps in dozens of small towns. Then you board a ferry and cross the Nile.

On the other side, you get back in the car and traverse bumpy, mostly dirt roads to the town of Moyo and beyond, finally leaving the road altogether and driving through waist-high grass. And then, you pull on your rubber boots and start walking.

A kilometer or so later, you finally arrive.

Here, at the River Kayo, Ugandan Ministry of Health and Carter Center staff are carefully monitoring the black flies that breed in its waters for evidence of the parasite that causes onchocerciasis.

Because this river lies within the last area—the last “focus,” as epidemiologists call it—in Uganda where onchocerciasis may still be being transmitted.

Onchocerciasis spreads through the bites of infected black flies that breed in fast-moving rivers, which is why it is also known as river blindness. When the parasite’s microscopic offspring move throughout the human body, they cause rashes and itching so severe that it leads some to scratch themselves until their skin loses its pigment. The tiny worms

*Alex Arinaitwe, program coordinator of the Carter Center’s Uganda river blindness program, carefully crosses the rapid waters of River Kayo in northwestern Uganda. Arinaitwe oversees strategies in the region to eliminate the parasitic disease.*

also can invade eyes and cause blindness. Regular doses of Mectizan® (also called ivermectin), which is donated by Merck & Co. Inc., prevent the disease and block transmission of the parasites to black flies.

The Carter Center has been working with Uganda’s Ministry of Health to reduce river blindness since the mid-1990s. In 2007, when Uganda set a goal of eliminating the disease, about 8.2 million people in over 50 districts were at risk for it. Today, that number has dropped to 569,000—all of them in an area near the South Sudanese border.

The River Kayo runs along that border, and residents on both sides cross it regularly rather than pass through official border control checkpoints. Because onchocerciasis is still endemic in much of South Sudan, eliminating the disease here presents extra challenges.

“Flies have no borders,” said David Oguttu, program manager of Uganda’s National River Blindness Elimination Program. “They go to South Sudan, then they also cross into Uganda.”



*David Oguttu, program manager in Uganda's Ministry of Health, shows how black flies are tested to determine if river blindness is still a threat to the community.*



*Kalisto Londre remembers developing rashes, itching, and swelling in the 1990s, before river blindness treatment was offered in his village. His mottled skin scared community members, who thought he might be contagious. Today, after years of treatment, his symptoms are gone, and he says he is content with life.*

And so The Carter Center and Ministry of Health remain vigilant. They check vegetation in rivers for evidence of fly larvae. They train and equip volunteers like Evans Kenyi and Julius Nyara, who sit beside the river early in the morning and again at dusk, rolling up their pant legs and using their legs as bait to catch flies for laboratory testing. And twice a year, they go house to house to distribute doses of Mectizan.

Ministry of Health and Carter Center staff have good relationships with military and public health officials across the border in South Sudan and coordinate with them when they need to pass from one side to the other.

Those relationships should grow even stronger, as earlier this year The Carter Center began supporting river blindness elimination in South Sudan, where it already works with the Ministry of Health on Guinea worm and trachoma.

“Expansion to South Sudan gives us the ability to help support elimination in a comprehensive bi-national manner, coordinating interventions on both sides of the border,” said Gregory Noland, director of the Carter Center’s River Blindness Elimination Program.

That’s welcome news for Maurice Vuzi, chairman of one of the local councils on the Ugandan side of the border.

“I would like to thank you because the treatment you have given us has saved lives,” he told a group of Carter Center and Ministry of Health officials visiting the village of Demgbwele, which sits in the shadow of a mountain that separates Uganda and South Sudan.

“My people go and fish in South Sudan,” he said. “If we are treated here, and they are not treated, we shall not be safe.”

Village resident Kalisto Londre knows too well the dangers of no treatment. In the 1990s, he developed rashes, itching, and swelling in his groin and neck. The community shunned him.

“They thought that because of the way my skin appeared, they might get the disease from me, from my skin,” he said. “Even at the hospital, people moved away from me.”

Before receiving ivermectin, he said, “I was using a stone for scratching myself because nails were not enough.”

Today he’s a contented father of five and grandfather of 20, still taking the medication and feeling “very OK—I’m even able to do my garden work.”

Edridah Muheki, the Carter Center’s country representative in Uganda and a former Ministry of Health official, believes the expansion into South Sudan will help Uganda clear its last focus—and thus achieve elimination countrywide.

“It is so exciting, so gratifying, to know that Uganda is in the lead in the African region,” she said. “We’re thrilled to have the chance to prove that something once thought impossible can be done.”



*Northern Ugandans Julius Nyamara (right) and Evans Kenyi use their bodies as bait for black flies, the insect that spreads the parasite that causes river blindness. Flies that land are captured in a tube and sent to a lab for testing.*

# President Carter's 100th Birthday Celebrated With Concert

An eclectic mix of musical artists and presenters came together in Atlanta on Sept. 17 for a star-studded 100th birthday tribute to Jimmy Carter, former U.S. president. “Jimmy Carter 100: A Celebration in Song,” held at the city’s historic Fox Theatre and hosted by the Center, featured a wide-ranging set of musical performances—from rock to gospel to country to pop. In between songs, national and local personalities noted the enduring legacy of the Carter Center’s co-founder.

“This is the first time ever that people have come together to celebrate a 100th birthday of an American president,” said Jason Carter, chair of the Center’s Board of Trustees, to kick off the concert. He thanked the audience for attending the event “to honor my grandfather and the legacy that he and my grandmother created.”

The audience of 4,000 clapped, danced, and sang for more than two hours. New wave dance band the B-52s turned the theater

into a “Love Shack,” and a video message from President Joe Biden sprouted a chorus of hoots and hollers. The crowd sat rapt as music star Chuck Leavell of the Allman Brothers Band described a visit to their Macon, Georgia, recording studio in 1973 by then-Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter, who showed genuine interest in the music business and inspired the band to later campaign on his behalf when he ran for president.

“We were so proud of him then, and we were so proud of his administration, and we’re proud of all he has done since,” Leavell said. “Above all, I’m just proud to call him a true friend.”

In addition to listening to President Carter tributes from the likes of Renée Zellweger and Atlanta Braves legends Dale Murphy and Terry Pendleton, the audience learned about the ongoing work of The Carter Center to bring peace, health, and hope to communities around the world.

CEO Paige Alexander sent a video



Chuck Leavell, Renée Zellweger, and Duane Betts



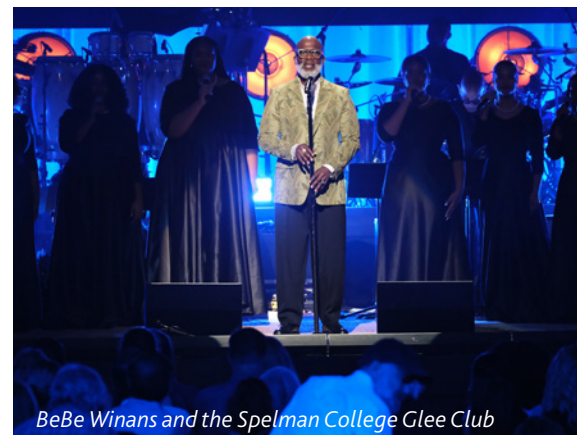
Drive-By Truckers



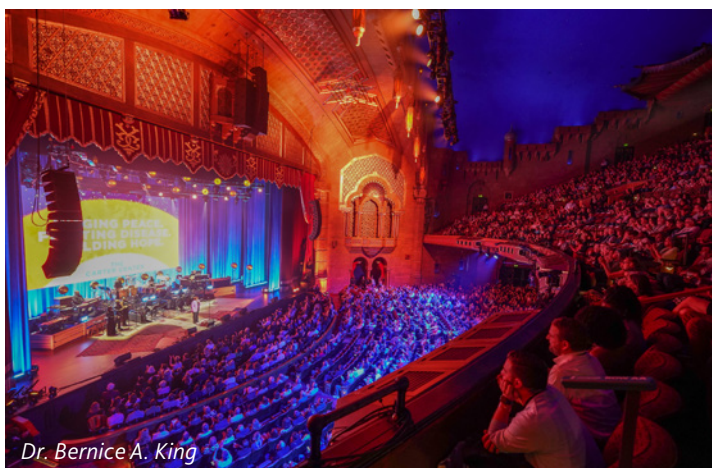
Eric Church



Angélique Kidjo



BeBe Winans and the Spelman College Glee Club



Dr. Bernice A. King



B-52s

postcard from Chad, where the Center continues to make progress against Guinea worm disease, and Atlanta journalist Monica Pearson described the Center's pioneering work in the field of election observation.

The night closed with "Georgia on My Mind," performed by The War And Treaty, who were joined on stage by the concert's other artists and the Carter family.

Under hospice care since early 2023, President Carter could not attend the concert in person, but Jason Carter assured the audience that his grandfather would see the program on Georgia Public Broadcasting from his home in Plains, Georgia, on Oct. 1, his actual birthday.



Watch the concert on demand through Georgia Public Broadcasting: [gpb.org/jimmycarter100](http://gpb.org/jimmycarter100).



India.Arie



Carter Family with Musicians



Lalah Hathaway



Carlene Carter



The War And Treaty

### Heard at the Concert

## President Carter Tributes

He touches people. He changes lives for the better.

—Jon Stewart

His character, wisdom, and choices in international service to humanity and as a family man have always represented the gold standard.

—Renée Zellweger

For the last 40-plus years, he's shown us just how much a former President can accomplish, from promoting democracy in honest elections to combating disease and advancing peace. And through it all, he's been guided by his faith and the simple belief that we all have the responsibility to build a brighter world.

—President Bill Clinton

I often refer to President Carter as a hero because he has taken what most would view as a vulnerability and turned it into a superpower. That superpower is caring for the human condition.

—Angélique Kidjo

Time after time after time, with all the odds against him, he still did what he thought was right. That's not a bad pattern for all of us to follow.

—Willie Nelson

### Heard at the Concert

## Birthday Messages

Your hopeful vision of our country, your commitment to a better world, and your unwavering belief in the power of human goodness continues to be a guiding light for all of us. You're one of the most influential statesmen in our history.

—President Joe Biden

Your presidency stood out for your efforts to dismantle racial discrimination.

—Dr. Bernice A. King

I just want to thank you on behalf of everyone for your work for justice and peace and ethics—and your incredible presidency. Thank you for a life so beautifully lived.

—Bonnie Raitt

The nation and the world celebrate you with deep gratitude, admiration, and affection. You are a confirmation that one heart with courage is a majority.

—Martin Sheen

# Journalist Explores Generational Impact of Racism

Lee Hawkins was a child when he first heard his father crying out in his sleep. When Hawkins worked up the courage to ask what the nightmares were about, his father said, “Alabama, son. Alabama.” As an adult, Hawkins embarked on a journey to investigate 400 years of family history to answer a burning question: What happened in Alabama?

With support from a Rosalynn Carter Fellowship for Mental Health Journalism, Hawkins spent the past year uncovering how slavery and Jim Crow laws affected multiple generations of his family and Black Americans overall. His 10-episode podcast, “What Happened in Alabama?” and his book, “I Am Nobody’s Slave: How Uncovering My Family’s History Set Me Free,” explore the ties between past injustices and the mental health challenges Black communities face today. His work brought him some answers to his central question.

“Alabama was more than a place,” Hawkins said. “It was a word that brought a suffocating heaviness to our lives.”

For example, stretching back to 1837, each generation of his family experienced a racially motivated homicide with no consequences for the offenders. Many family members migrated from Alabama to Minnesota, where they shared stories from their past with Hawkins. There were happy memories, but the recollections were often laced with pain and fear.

Moved by his own family history—riddled with violence, intergenerational trauma, and chronic stress—Hawkins seeks to illuminate the



Journalist Lee Hawkins was awarded a Rosalynn Carter Fellowship for Mental Health Journalism in 2023 to investigate racism’s effects over time and in his family.

lasting effects of racism. Through conversations with experts and loved ones, he connects the dots between his family’s past and the negative cycles that permeated through generations. His work emphasizes that the legacy of legal white supremacy in America continues to shape the realities of many Black children and adults.

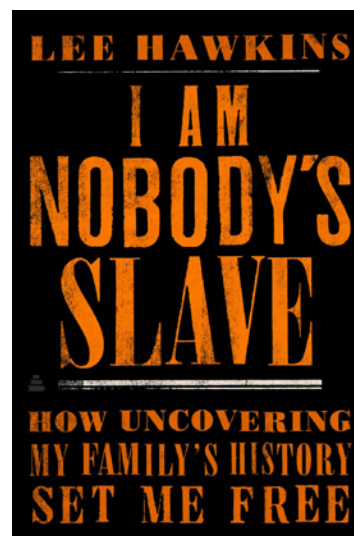
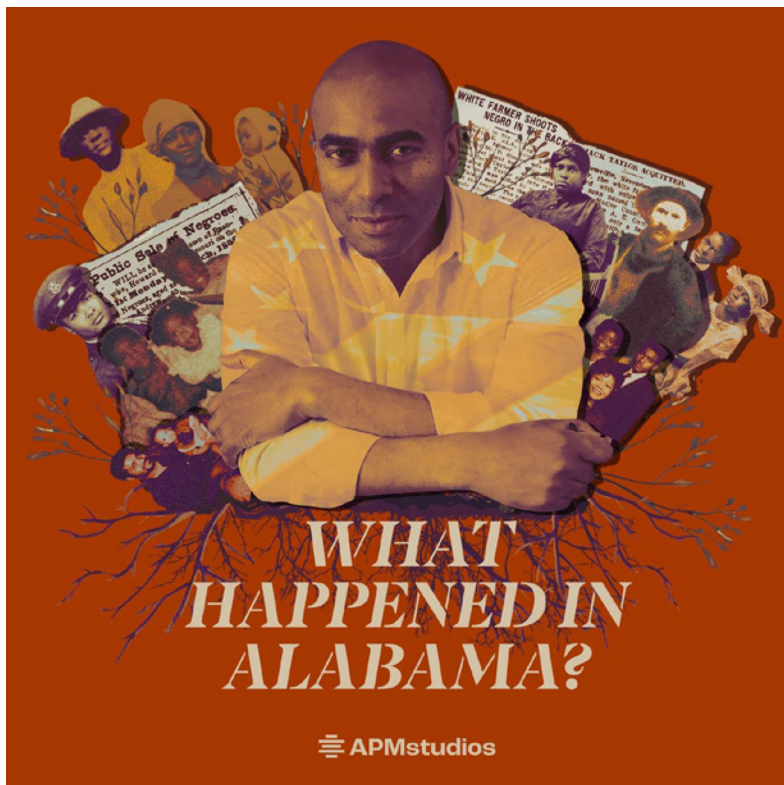
Hawkins found that trauma experienced by one generation—like violence, displacement, or systemic oppression—can affect the emotional and mental well-being of subsequent generations, even if they did not experience the original trauma directly.

Hawkins stressed the importance of the support he received from The Carter Center, which enables journalists to undertake in-depth, long-term projects that might otherwise be unfeasible.

“This is work that is breaking new ground,” Hawkins said, “and the fact that The Carter Center saw the importance of doing it and provided the opportunity for me to delve deeper into it meant the world.”

Hawkins said his findings underscore the need for dialogue about the intersections of history, mental health, and social justice. One of his goals is to inspire future generations to address these challenges with compassion and understanding.

“By infusing even more consciousness and evolution into our families with each generation,” he said, “we can continue to thrive.”



Hawkins hosts a podcast and wrote a forthcoming book about his family’s history.





# Center Finds Democracy Thwarted in Venezuela

When incumbent Nicolas Maduro falsely claimed victory in Venezuela's presidential election in July, The Carter Center was the only international observer organization on hand to raise the alarm.

"The world was counting on The Carter Center to say whether this election was legitimate or not," said Jennie Lincoln, the Center's senior advisor for Latin America and the Caribbean, who led the Center's team in Venezuela.

In the end, it was not.

Venezuela has advanced electronic voting technology, Lincoln noted. The system produces two paper trails: a ticket for the voter signifying their vote has been recorded, and a tally sheet, or *acta*, that shows the total number of votes cast for each candidate in a precinct. By Venezuelan law, party poll watchers are entitled to receive official copies of the *actas*. Opposition poll watchers collected *actas* from 80% of precincts; those showed challenger Edmundo González Urrutia carrying an overwhelming 67% of the vote.

However, Venezuela's National Electoral Council made just one announcement on election night, simply saying Maduro had won. It

provided no results from the country's 30,026 voting precincts. A statement from The Carter Center called this omission "a serious breach of electoral principles."

"The Carter Center cannot verify or corroborate the results of the election declared by the National Electoral Council," the statement said. The Center also noted the lack of respect for basic democratic norms throughout the process.

The Carter Center has observed 124 elections in 43 nations. The 2023 Barbados Agreement, which set this Venezuelan election in motion, specifically named The Carter Center to be invited as an independent observer.

"This is an example of the respect and trust that people around the world have in The Carter Center," Lincoln said. "It's 45 years of the Carter Center legacy that produces this kind of trust."

The Carter Center and the European Union were invited by the election commission to observe the election. The U.N. also sent a small panel of experts. The Center assembled a team of 17 electoral experts from 11 nations. The EU had planned a large observation mission, but the Venezuelan

*People line up to vote in Caracas, Venezuela, on July 28, 2024. According to The Carter Center, the election did not meet international standards, and the results did not reflect the will of the people.*

government summarily disinvited it just weeks before the vote.

"The Carter Center was the last international observer organization standing," Lincoln said. "We knew we couldn't opine on an election without witnessing it, so we did what we could with the small team we had."

Mission members fanned out to several cities to capture the mood across the country.

Election day was sunny and turnout was strong, Lincoln said. Opposition supporters were hopeful as reports began to circulate that González Urrutia was winning in a landslide. By midnight, joy turned to outrage as security forces clashed with opposition supporters who felt they had been robbed.

Maduro's government has continued to crack down on protests, and González Urrutia and other opposition activists have fled the country or gone into hiding.

"This election was an unfortunate example of the will of the people being ignored," Lincoln said, "but we will keep standing up for democracy."

Rachel Fowler

## In Zambia, Leader Puts Human Rights First

Rachel Fowler, country representative for the Carter Center’s Zambia program, knew as early as fourth grade that she wanted to pursue human rights work. Raised in rural South Carolina, she watched her grandparents and her mother, a public schoolteacher and administrator, model kindness and social justice daily. “Those values were instilled early,” she said.

When a representative from Amnesty International visited Oglethorpe University to mobilize youth leaders while Fowler was a student, she jumped at the opportunity. “This was the type of work I wanted to do,” she said. She went on to co-found Oglethorpe’s first Amnesty chapter.

After graduation, Fowler went to work at a used bookstore, where she oversaw the women’s studies and political science sections. When the head of the Center’s Human Rights Program, a one-time Amnesty prisoner of conscience, asked her to join The Carter Center in an entry-level position, she didn’t hesitate. “It wasn’t even a question,” she said.

Fowler spent the next 16 years working to advance human rights and strengthen civic engagement in democratic processes, first with the Center’s Human Rights Program and later with the Democracy Program. She worked on youth concerns and women’s issues in Guyana



Rachel Fowler, Carter Center country representative, Zambia

and observed multiple elections in East Timor, Ethiopia, Guyana, and Venezuela. She then spent eight years at the U.S. Human Rights Network, promoting human rights awareness—including rights to housing and health care—in the United States, before returning to The Carter Center.

Today, in Zambia, Fowler works with women, youth, and people with disabilities seeking to gain greater access to political decision-making roles to advocate for themselves and their communities. She works with partners to promote the appointment and election of these up-and-coming leaders to key positions, and she partners with agencies to make use of international human rights processes such as the United Nations’ Universal Periodic Review to advance their rights.

“We’re engaging civil society leaders to identify barriers to democratic participation and to develop solutions,” she said. One goal is to increase the very low number of women in elected positions in Zambia by 10% in the 2026 election.

In keeping with the Carter Center’s philosophy of helping people help themselves, Fowler and the Center’s Zambian office recently undertook a pilot project to address drought, deforestation, and other aspects of climate change in the country. Assisting rural communities—especially women and youth—to address these challenges, Fowler says, is crucial to devising solutions with real-world impact.

“These individuals know better than anyone how climate change is affecting their lives,” she said. “They’re the on-the-ground experts.” She hopes the pilot, now successfully completed, will be implemented on a broader scale in the future.

In a challenging field with constant pressures, Fowler admits it sometimes feels like she’s pushing a boulder up a hill. But she strives to stay curious, to listen, and to encourage the team members around her, reminding them that everyone has something worth contributing. She holds onto the memory of her grandparents, who insisted that all human beings have dignity and deserve compassion and respect. And she’s grateful to President and Mrs. Carter for founding the Center on core beliefs that make a veteran human rights advocate like Fowler feel at home.

“Anyone who is lucky enough to work at The Carter Center is very fortunate,” she said. “It’s important work. It’s not easy, and it doesn’t always move at the pace you want. But you don’t stop trying. You keep moving forward.”



In Zambia, Rachel Fowler (fifth from right) helped rural communities address climate change, including by assisting with planting more than 4,000 seedling trees near Gwembe.

## Delta, Sponsors Make Concert a Hit

The Carter Center is grateful for the corporate and individual sponsors whose support made the “Jimmy Carter 100: A Celebration in Song” concert a rousing success in Atlanta on Sept 17. The event paid musical tribute to Jimmy Carter, 39th U.S. president and co-founder of The Carter Center, who turned 100 on Oct. 1. Featuring a range of musical artists and presenters, the concert took place at the city’s historic Fox Theatre.

Delta Air Lines was the presenting sponsor of the event.

“Delta was honored to celebrate the 100th birthday of former President Jimmy Carter and to support The Carter Center as part of our commitment to keep climbing toward a more just and equitable world,” said Tad Hutcheson, managing director - community engagement. “Giving back to the communities where we live, work, and serve has been core to Delta and our culture for nearly 100 years.”

Other corporate sponsors included Pfizer, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Chateau Elan, and Merck. Pfizer and Merck are long-time partners of The Carter Center. For decades they have donated medications to the Center’s trachoma and river blindness programs, respectively. A news organization, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution serves as a vital source of community information for people across Georgia. Chateau Elan is a respite just outside the city as a wine and culinary destination.

In addition to these headlining corporate sponsors, more than 20 individuals, foundations, and companies helped underwrite the concert. The Carter Center appreciates these special friends and partners who helped us celebrate President Carter.

## Donors Welcomed to Atlanta, Plains

Members of the Carter Center’s Ambassadors Circle and Legacy Circle donor groups enjoyed a long weekend in Georgia Oct. 3-6 for the Center’s annual Executive Briefing and Visit to Plains.

In Atlanta, at the Carter Center campus, guests got a close-up look at the organization’s work, including a sneak peek at a new documentary that chronicles the campaign to eradicate Guinea worm disease in South Sudan amid many obstacles. Attendees heard frontline reports from experts in the Center’s peace and health programs and took tours of the gardens and art collection.

The group headed to Plains, Georgia, for the second half of the event to see President and Mrs. Carter’s hometown. Son Chip Carter gave a personal talk and answered questions, and guests also heard from a ranger with the Jimmy Carter National Historical Park. They



Former Ambassador Andrew Young is interviewed before the Sept. 17 concert celebrating the 100th birthday of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

also attended a rededication of a public housing apartment unit where Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter and family spent a year after he returned to Plains from the Navy to run his father’s business.

While in Plains, attendees celebrated President Carter’s 100th birthday, which had happened just a few days before.

Ambassadors Circle members support the Center’s work with unrestricted gifts of \$1,000 or more annually, while members of the Legacy Circle provide support through their estate and financial planning.

## Event Raises Over \$2.8 Million to Support Peace, Health Programs

The 2024 Carter Center Weekend raised more than \$2.8 million in donations and auction sales to support the Center’s mission of waging peace and combating disease, profoundly impacting millions worldwide. The annual fundraiser held June 26-30 in San Diego, California, included presentations by Center staff, excursions, and social events, in addition to live and silent auctions.

“We are incredibly grateful for the continued generosity and commitment of our loyal supporters,” said Carter Center Chief Executive Officer Paige Alexander. “These contributions will advance The Carter Center’s ongoing work to promote peace and health around the world.”

The highest bid was \$1 million for President Carter’s artist tools, along with a limited-edition, signed giclée print of a painting he completed in 2005 depicting The Carter Center.

Other auction items that commanded top bids included a guitar autographed by Stevie Nicks for \$250,000 and memorabilia related to the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. for \$210,000.



At the Carter Center’s auction this year, the top bid was for \$1 million for President Carter’s artist tools and a limited-edition, signed giclée print of a 2005 painting by President Carter. The auction was held in June in San Diego.

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*Alba Lucia Morales is health education advisor with the Carter Center's Onchocerciasis Elimination Program for the Americas.*

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

## Animated Art Ignites Interest

By Alba Lucia Morales

**A**t The Carter Center, we are sensitive to local cultures and believe in community-driven interventions.

Our team is dedicated to working alongside national ministries of health to eliminate river blindness, also called onchocerciasis, among the indigenous peoples who live along the Brazil-Venezuela border in what is called the Yanomami focus.

The Yanomami focus is the last remaining area in the Americas with active river blindness transmission, which has been eliminated in Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Guatemala.

River blindness is transmitted by the infected bites of certain species of black fly. The flies deposit tiny worms that live under the skin, often causing severe itching and rashes. Eventually those worms can migrate to the eyes, potentially causing blindness. The disease can be eliminated through long-term treatment with Mectizan® pills, donated to us by Merck & Co. Inc.

In collaboration with country program staff and other partners, we recently created a 6-minute animated video that depicts indigenous characters discussing the symptoms and causes of river blindness, as well as the benefits of taking Mectizan.

Through a participative process, we created versions of the video in five indigenous languages, plus Spanish and English, and adapted the housing structure, clothing, and body decoration in each version. Indigenous people translated the script, recorded the audio in their languages, and reviewed the illustrations to ensure proper representation.

When health agents showed the video in indigenous communities on tablet computers, the people were delighted to see themselves portrayed so accurately and asked to watch it repeatedly. Its message got through, too: Many who saw it requested Mectizan—an ideal outcome.

Innovative tools like this will help us eliminate the last reservoir of river blindness in the Americas.



*The creators of a video about river blindness produced for the indigenous Yanomami people made several versions so that cultural details could be tailored to specific communities.*