



CURALINK

Welcome to CuraLink—a newsletter for innovators building a healthier future for all.

Welcome back to CuraLink, a newsletter and interview series featuring the most pressing issues in human health, unmet medical needs and the emerging innovations and technologies directed to address them.

As the holiday season approaches, it's the perfect time to reflect on the power of compassion, innovation, and hope to create meaningful change.

I recently had the pleasure of speaking with Dr. Courtney Cash, a remarkable leader who joined Manny Ohonme's Samaritan's Feet and World Shoe initiatives to transform lives around the globe. Dr. Cash's journey is one of vision and determination. He blends humanitarian aid with entrepreneurial ingenuity to address pressing global health challenges.

In this season of giving, his story is a beautiful reminder that even the simplest solutions—like a pair of shoes—can make an extraordinary difference.

I invite you to read on and be inspired by his work. Together, we can build a brighter, healthier future for all.

Warm Wishes,

Robin L. Smith, MD, MBA
Cura Foundation
President and Chairman of the Board



Robin L. Smith, MD

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From Bare Feet to Boundless Hope: Transforming Lives with the World Shoe and Dr. Courtney Cash

A shoe is a small solution in a world where a billion people suffer from preventable foot-borne illnesses.

But to Dr. Courtney Cash and his team at World Shoe, it's a foundation for transformation.

Sitting at the intersection of humanitarian aid, social enterprise, and global health, Dr. Cash and his collaborators have woven a story of innovation and hope that inspires change—and challenges us all to think differently about how we serve others.

A Lifelong Journey of Service

Dr. Courtney Cash's path to global health began with something other than shoes. It started within the four walls of a church, driven by a calling to ministry. But a pivotal trip to Madagascar shifted his perspective, unveiling a world where serving extended far beyond spiritual boundaries.

"That trip redefined what ministry meant for me," Dr. Cash explains. "I saw that doing good could be so much more than traditional service—it could be innovation, entrepreneurship, and cross-sector collaboration."

"I wanted to help people create lasting change."

His journey took him through international missions, fundraising, and mobilizing resources. But eventually, Dr. Cash found himself at a crossroads. "I wanted to help people create lasting change without begging for resources their entire lives. That's when I discovered the power of social entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility."

Enter Samaritan's Feet and, later, the birth of World Shoe. Both organizations reflect his commitment to tackling poverty, disease, and inequality through innovative and sustainable solutions.

Shoes as a Symbol of Hope

Why shoes? For Dr. Cash, the answer is both practical and profound.

"On a practical level, wearing shoes protects people from diseases like hookworm and podoconiosis," he explains. These soil-transmitted illnesses affect nearly a billion people globally. A simple pair of shoes could prevent many of these conditions, improving health and productivity for workers and students alike.

"Soil-transmitted illnesses affect nearly a billion people globally."



Dr. Courtney Cash, President, The World Shoe Fund

But shoes are more than protection—they're a symbol. "The lack of shoes represents poverty on a global scale. It affects people mentally and psychologically. Shoes are about hope. They're about opportunity."



World Shoe Community Distribution

World Shoe's work continues beyond providing footwear. The shoes are educational tools featuring embedded reminders to wash hands and feet. They also serve as incentives in broader health initiatives, bundling hygiene education, vaccinations, and menstrual health interventions into a single distribution event.

"Investing in global health from the ground up."

This integrated approach is what Dr. Cash calls "investing in global health from the ground up." It's not just about covering feet—it's about building pathways to better futures.

From Factory to Feet: A Model of Sustainability

World Shoe's unique model combines for-profit and non-profit elements to create lasting change.

- World Shoe Limited: The manufacturing arm, based in Africa, empowers local communities by creating jobs and building infrastructure.
- World Shoe Inc: A for-profit enterprise that oversees the retail brand, ensuring global reach and economic sustainability.
- Samaritan's Feet: The legacy non-profit distributing shoes and running hygiene programs.
- The Impact Fund: A backbone organization that facilitates charitable donations, advocacy, and research.

By integrating these entities, World Shoe combines the credibility of Samaritan's Feet with the innovation of a retail brand. It's a model designed to scale—and it's already working.

"Our factory already has a capacity of five million pairs of shoes in a single year."

Samaritan's Feet has already distributed 10 million pairs of shoes. "We're 18 months into the World Shoe, and our factory already has a capacity of five million pairs of shoes in a single year," Dr. Cash said.



World Shoe Factory in Ghana

"We have partnered with the Pan African Youth Union to look at 15 different African countries, with 100,000 people per country who will receive a pair of shoes."

Empowering Communities, One Shoe at a Time

Local buy-in is at the heart of World Shoe's success. By partnering with governments and health organizations, the team ensures their solutions are culturally relevant and sustainable.

"Shoes are about hope. They're about opportunity."

For example, health workers traditionally required large teams in Ghana to administer deworming medications in schools. Local volunteers now lead hygiene stations by incorporating the World Shoe into these campaigns, dramatically increasing efficiency. This approach allowed 2,500 people to receive care in just four hours in one clinic.



World Shoe supporting the Community

"It's about co-creation," Dr. Cash emphasizes. It's important to do more than hand someone a tool and expect it to work. Critical is the need to understand their culture, resources, and challenges. That's what makes this model so powerful.

The Road Ahead: Scaling Hope

Looking to the future, Dr. Cash envisions a world where the World Shoe becomes synonymous with health, empowerment, and dignity. Upcoming initiatives include:

1. Hygiene Shoes for Africa: Bundled interventions targeting 15 countries, reaching hundreds of thousands with critical health education and supplies.
2. Global Health Pilots: Research projects with organizations like USAID and the Gates Foundation to measure the shoe's impact on infection control and menstrual health.
3. Retail Expansion: Launching the World Shoe brand in Africa this fall, with plans to enter the North American market next spring.

"This is about more than charity shoes," Dr. Cash explains. "It's about creating jobs and a brand that communities are proud of—a brand that represents hope, opportunity, and self-reliance."

Join the Movement

World Shoe is a success story based on the vision and service of co-founders Manny and Tracie Ohonme. Their desire to inspire HOPE among the most underserved populations resulted in more than 10,000,000 people receiving much needed shoes. Their dedication to lasting transformation and ending poverty in Africa led to the innovations behind the World Shoe products and African factory.



Manny Ohonme, Founder, pictured at the Ghana Pilot Project

As readers of this newsletter, you can be part of this movement. Whether through donating, purchasing a pair of shoes, or volunteering with Samaritan's Feet, your support can make a tangible difference. To learn more, visit: theworldshoe.com. Together, we can take the first step toward a world where no one walks barefoot into a future without hope.

Thank You for a Great 2024

As the year comes to a close, the Cura Foundation extends our heartfelt gratitude for your support and compassion. Together, we've taken meaningful steps toward a healthier and more equitable world. This holiday season, we wish you and your loved one's joy, peace, and renewed hope for the future.

Thank you for being part of our journey. For more information or to donate, visit TheCuraFoundation.org

Happy Holidays!

The Cura Foundation Team

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