



WORLDWIDE FISTULA FUND

HEALING WOMEN, RESTORING LIVES

Community Celebrates the Opening of the Danja Fistula Center

As many of you know, the Danja Fistula Center opened its doors last week to the women of west Africa. So far, each day has been an exciting and special treat as community members and civic leaders have poured onto the grounds not only to offer assistance but also to show their support for both the DFC and all women suffering from fistula. Highlights of this incredible time include:

- The Minister of Health of Niger cutting the ribbon for the clinic and spending time encouraging patients to stay strong and live with purpose after their surgeries.
- The first day of surgery (February 8) ending with three successful operations! With the best training, equipment and facilities, the DFC doctors and nurses are confident that many more successes are to come.
- The official dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring speeches by our founder, our clinical consultant, the Secretary General of Niger and the U.S. Ambassador. A large and happy crowd gathered to cheer the historic event. When the Ambassador cut the ribbon to the operating room, it was clear that the final step in the long journey to open our first fistula hospital was taken.





One of the most special moments in a very special week was the Friday before the official dedication, which the WFF devoted to a celebration of fistula patients. In the middle of the day, staff members brought roasted lamb, juice, treats and music to the "village" where nearly 70 women had gathered awaiting treatment. The dancing, eating and singing went on for hours. As executive director Mark Shaker said, 'These ladies often are not honored or even respected in their daily lives. We were able to give them the tribute they deserve for their courage and perseverance.'

Later that evening, a ten-person band began to play on the front steps of the hospital. Within 20 minutes, hundreds of people arrived and began to dance. DFC staff, patients, locals and visitors celebrated the momentous occasion with each other for more than three hours. Mark wrote, "It was as exciting and emotional of an event as I've ever seen."

The hoopla and hubbub has been a wonderful start to the hospital, but we know there is a lot of work to be done to keep giving the women of west Africa the care and support that they need to live healthful, happy lives free of the horror of obstetric fistula. Please continue to help us spread the word about this condition -- and what's being done to fight it. We have already come so far; now let's do even more.

Please give today to ensure a brighter future for tomorrow.

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