



The  
CENTER for  
VICTIMS of  
TORTURE

THE  
**storycloth**

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# The Struggle to Rebuild After Surviving Atrocities

CVT has had a small growing presence in Gulu, Uganda, for nine years now. Over the last year, we have begun working with individuals and families victimized by the notorious Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the 1990s and 2000s.

The LRA is infamous for horrific human rights violations, including forcing abducted children to become child soldiers or “wives” of fighters. Sometimes children were forced to kill their own family members—or be killed themselves. The individual and collective pain

in the stories our staff has heard from thousands of survivors defies description. But with CVT's help these survivors are picking up the pieces and rebuilding their lives under circumstances that few of us can begin to comprehend.

CVT's role in Uganda is becoming even more critical, because the country is also home to the world's fastest growing refugee crisis. Violence in South Sudan and the looming threat of famine is driving a mass exodus of refugees into already overwhelmed camps in Uganda.

Last year CVT sent a team to assess the situation in the area. As we traveled to different camps, we heard many stories of torture, horrific journeys to reach the camps, and ongoing stressors that confirmed an urgent need for CVT's healing care.

We are fortunate to be able to expand our work in this area at this time as individuals, families and entire communities struggle to move forward, determined to rebuild lives filled with potential, promise and hope.

Refugee settlement, Bidi Bidi, Uganda ▼



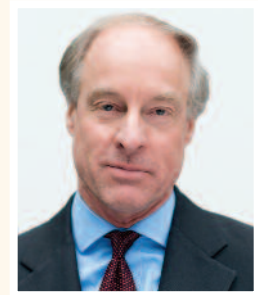
PHOTO BY NEAL PORTER

RESTORING  
THE DIGNITY OF  
THE HUMAN SPIRIT

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## Letter from the Executive Director



**Curt Goering**

Dear Friends,

In a severe blow to torture survivors in the United States and around the world, the Senate voted to confirm a torturer as director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The Senate could have taken an important step to acknowledge the horrible mistake the U.S. made when it decided to use torture post 9/11. They could have begun to reignite the light of hope we once carried around the world. They could have sent a clear message that the U.S. does not give promotions to torturers, that we are far above the sickening practice employed by despotic regimes and dictators.

Instead, the U.S. Senate chose to reward Gina Haspel, who had an important role in the CIA torture program and was a significant figure in one of our nation's darkest chapters.

However, this is not an ending—this is a beginning.

Gina Haspel was confirmed only after she admitted that the CIA torture program was wrong and should never have been implemented at all. She admitted that the torture program damaged the reputation of the United States. And she declared that the torture program should never again be resuscitated. These admissions are powerful evidence of the influence of thousands of you who stood together and raised your voices to reject torture.

Even with her admissions, CVT will be watching to ensure Haspel holds true to her words, and we will speak truth to power whenever torture is even hinted at.

With your generosity, CVT will never stop fighting to bring an end to torture. We will never stop raising our voices when torturers like Haspel are rewarded. And we will never cease being the moral beacon the United States so badly needs. Your partnership in our life-affirming mission is invaluable and we are so grateful for your support.

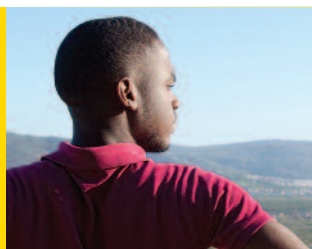
With my thanks,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Curt Goering". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Curt" and "Goering" being capitalized and prominent.

Curt Goering

"I can take care of myself better now,  
and I'm less afraid."

— a survivor of torture



See page 4 for news  
from CVT's healing  
center in Atlanta, Georgia.



# Mary T.'s Lifelong Commitment to Care

**M**ary M. Tjosvold founded Mary T. Inc. in 1976 to make a difference in people's lives, with programs and services for seniors, people with traumatic brain injuries, children and adults who are medically fragile, individuals with physical and developmental disabilities, and those who need accessible housing.

As a humanitarian and philanthropist, Mary T. has long been passionate about CVT's work. She first visited CVT in West Africa in early 2000, and our work in the refugee camps made a strong impression on her mind and heart, she says.

Most recently, Mary T. travelled to Kenya and Uganda where she visited with CVT staff and survivors at our healing center in Gulu. "The stories are heartbreaking and legendary, of the cruelty of the LRA forced on the people of Gulu," Mary T. reflected. She was



"The stories are heartbreaking and legendary, of the cruelty of the LRA forced on the people of Gulu."

—Mary T.

moved by what survivors shared and by the music a CVT psychotherapist/field representative named Gabriele played on a string instrument that lay at the front of the church where the group met. "It was a transformational moment for all of us, a way to connect,"

she said.

Mary T. was impressed to see how CVT counselors handle hearing survivors' stories and seeing their pain. It reminded her of something she saw hanging on the wall next to a counselor's desk at CVT's healing center in Kenya—a hand with "grounded" written on the palm, and on the five fingers the words "trust," "motivated," "happy," "hopeful" and "calm."

If you ask Mary T. what she finds most meaningful and inspiring about CVT's work and why she so generously supports it, she'll tell you, "talking with the beneficiaries and learning how their lives have been transformed—and that is the word, *transformed*." CVT is deeply grateful to Mary T. and all of our supporters who make our life-changing healing care possible.



PHOTO BY FAWN BERNHARDT-NORVELL

# Clearing the Path for Torture Survivors So They Can Focus on Healing

**T**orture survivors coming to CVT's healing center in Atlanta embrace our holistic model that incorporates psychotherapy, clinical case management and professional interpretation—an important approach since our clients have such widely diverse backgrounds.

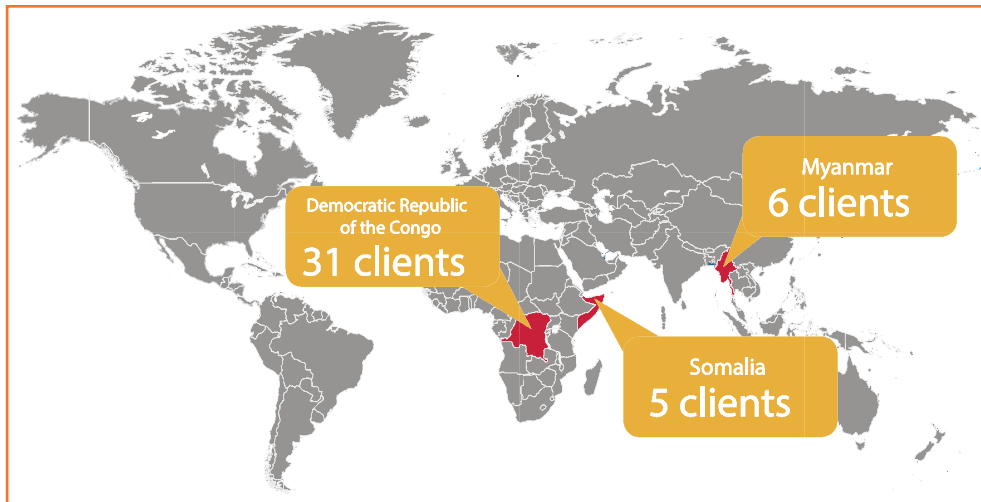
CVT also works on advocacy initiatives that will support human rights and the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in the state of Georgia. We're here to help clear the path for survivors of torture so they can focus on their healing.

CVT Atlanta has also referred clients to numerous additional services, including legal representation, medical care and other community resources that go far beyond mental health care.



"Clients said that after coming to CVT, they were no longer overwhelmed with feelings. They don't feel lost."

— CVT Client Services  
Director Andrea Northwood,  
Ph.D., LP



Survivors at CVT's healing center in Atlanta come from 15 different countries of origin. They represent 13 different ethnicities and speak 20 languages. CVT is caring for 32 primary victims of torture and 27 secondary victims of torture with interdisciplinary psychotherapy and intensive case management services.

## Survivors' Reported Social Improvements

SAFETY	80.9%
STABILIZATION	78.5%
EMPLOYMENT	67.1%
ADJUSTMENT	83.7%
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	79.6%

## Survivors' Reported Improvements in Post-Trauma Symptoms

DEPRESSION	85.3%
ANXIETY	81.4%
PTSD	81.9%
SOMATIC	72.2%



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2356 University Avenue W, Suite 430  
St. Paul, MN 55114  
[www.cvt.org](http://www.cvt.org)

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