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positively AFRICA

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This display shows some of the work the teams at positively AFRICA and VIDEA have been able to do.

Report from the Chair

positively AFRICA is well established and respected in Victoria's NGO world. We cherish the links we have to community groups both here and in Africa. Volunteers running pA operate as a caring unit with respect for and concern about one another, and with a deep commitment to our African partners. However, my health has deteriorated, making it hard to continue to 'run' positively AFRICA. Board members have taken on huge responsibilities and we continue to take pride in our work, but no volunteer has stepped forward to 'drive the ship.' If, reading this, you feel drawn to this role, we need to hear from you.

The positively AFRICA team is looking at options and has been working closely with VIDEA, our sister organization. At a strategic session in late February, we openly discussed various possibilities. The Board is certain that we can remain strong, dynamic, and will find the leadership we need. It's challenging times in the world of International Development. Amalgamation with VIDEA is an attractive option because of possible reduction in duplicate administrative areas. Please read Samuel's report on page 6 for more information.

No matter what decision is made, little will change. In Victoria, pA will remain an exciting group of dedicated volunteers, taking action to change the world. Our Water Walk, with the goal of making safe drinking water more accessible to Osopet (Maasai) HIV+ families, is a great example of that. We are also proud to continue working with Therapeutic Touch International Association (TTIA), and to continue supporting the training of health care workers in Africa.

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2010: A Year Filled With Hope and Change

Written by: Jessie Mantle

The year of 2010 was filled with hope and change. Some of our board members were able to travel to Africa to see some of positively AFRICA's projects. Peggy Frank visited projects in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Lesotho, as well as a few organizations in Malawi. Since it has been near impossible to maintain contact with our Zimbabwe groups, Peggy and Marnie Bradfield were happy to be able to visit the region of Howard Hospital. While they were there, they taught local groups some of the healing arts such as Reiki and Therapeutic Touch.

Maery Kaplan-Hallam visited in Kenya and saw two of our schools in the Kibera slum, as well as our Nissi and Osopet projects (see page 4). Su Russell also visited Kenya and really made a difference with her 'beads of support' projects in several of the communities. These visits help us as an organization to see how things are progressing on the ground and further our understanding of the world of our African friends and their project proposals.

Unfortunately, coinciding with co-founder Peter Bardon's move to Vancouver, we have been unable to do as many fundraising events this year, and saw a drop in our income of about 42 per cent. However, we were also able to reduce our expenses by 26 per cent. Our proposed budget for next year takes these realities into account.

We have reduced the number of projects we are maintaining for a variety of reasons. Due to communication problems, we have not been able to maintain our Zimbabwe projects. There is now more international funding available in Rwanda, so we have been less involved there. In Kenya we continue to support the Nissi school and orphanage. They are successfully gardening and producing much of their own food, assisting other groups to do the same. Due to funding cuts by the Kenyan government, our Osopet HIV Support Group continues to expand beyond its initial group of children. In Kibera, we continue to support two schools by selling their jewelry in Canada and returning them the money.

Our wonderful relationship with Garth Homer Society's Community Access Team (CAT) has brought us funds that have enabled us to help with road repairs and buy a truck for the Phelisanong project. Because of other funders coming on board with the Phelisanong, we have been able to slightly reduce our involvement. Our focus in Lesotho is now Rachel's Children Home, where we act as the major supporter.

This year we have new board members to replace the three board members who retired. Samuel Godfrey, who was with us for some time as our paid staff member, has now joined the board, bringing us a multiplicity of skills. Sherri Hohert will take over the Lesotho file. Maery Kaplan-Hallam brings a youthful spirit to the Board and is doing social media as well as assisting with our Nissi and Osopet projects. We also have a new volunteer webmaster to keep our messaging up to date.

Our dear friend Rene de Vos has retired from the excellent work he did in sending "Thank You" cards to our donors. He has a real talent for making one feel that a difference has been made. Paul Eastman, who has been with us from the beginning, retired from the Board after our AGM. Paul brought us his vast experience in international work and his diligence in pursuing matters through to the end.

As we look to the future we are exploring new ways of doing our work and realize that the heavy workload of the board needs to be re-evaluated. As we explore our relationship with VIDEA, despite 2010 being a year of great change, Peggy assured us in the President's report that the vision of pA remains the same and as strong as ever. p. 2



Su Russell helped the women in the HIV support group in Kibera make bracelets of strength. Here one member admires her bracelet.

Our First Annual Water Water

In the afternoon of May 15, 2011, positively AFRICA, along with VIDEA, will host the first annual Water Walk around Elk/Beaver Lakes. Water Walk 2011 simulates the walk to the river made daily by women in our Osopet project in Kenya - a task that brings the necessary water to their villages.

Carrying water is made easier with friends. At Water Walk 2011, teams of 10 individuals will have fun while carrying water. Local groups concerned about water-related issues and the Capital Regional District (CRD) will set up informative displays at Beaver Lake. Over the past few months we have been working with special groups of school children in Victoria to heighten awareness of the importance of clean water, both here and globally. An informative presentation on water is available to any group for a viewing.

We need our community's support. Can you help by...

1. Forming a team of 10 to participate in Water Walk 2011?
2. Becoming an event sponsor?
3. Sending a donation?
4. Coming to Elk Beaver Lake on May 15th?
5. Volunteering and helping to advertise?

We have the water proposal from Osopet, explaining that access to clean water will mean better health, more educational and business opportunities and a chance to have long-term income in these remote villages. Profits from Water Walk 2011 will help the women access cleaner water by either buying a 'lorry' with a large water tank to help the women retrieve clean drinking water or drilling deep wells. The goal is to make the 'water fetching' part of life easier for the women, which is especially important as many of the women live with HIV/AIDS.

A local family visiting Osopet walked with the women to the river. To read their story, book the presentation, and learn more about the Water Walk 2011, go to www.positivelyafrica.org



Photo courtesy of Maggie Ziegler

Mark Your Calendars!



positively AFRICA's



First Annual Water Walk

When?..... May 15th, 2011

What time?.. 1 - 4:30pm

Where?..... Meet at the Beaver Lake Picnic Shelter
There is plenty of room for parking!

'Report From the Chair' continued from page 1

Let me express gratitude and celebrate the work that has been done by our devoted volunteers – whether you have been on the pA Board, helped at events, packaged jewellery, helped with thank you cards, or you have been one of the donors who keep the projects going. Together, we are changing life for thousands affected by HIV/AIDS in Africa, especially orphaned children and women. We look forward to a day when we are no longer needed, but unfortunately that day is not here quite yet. If you have questions, please feel free to email or call.



- Peggy



The Changing of the Board

Written by: Peggy Frank

I don't like saying goodbyes – I never have! Over the past few months I am particularly sad to say goodbye to Board members Paul Eastman, Marnie Bradfield and Naida Hyde.

Let me tell you a bit about what Board members do for positively AFRICA by talking about a few of Paul's contributions. In his youthful past, Paul worked in development as a consultant. Since 2006, he brought expertise and proven ideas to pA. Many of his hours, days, weeks and years of work were done quietly on his computer at home. With Paul, pA developed guidelines for selecting projects, preparing project proposals, project management and project reporting. In collaboration with the Libraries Across Borders group, Paul was able to secure funding for books in the library at the school at Phelisanong. He helped us to organize rigorous reports on pA's projects, all the while working with event partners such as Victoria Children's Choir and African project partners. These are examples of the contributions made by the Board. Paul and other Board members do so much more.



Thank you Paul, Marnie and Naida for your unique and valuable contributions.



Maery's Trip

Written by: Maery Kaplan-Hallam

My name is Maery and I have been a part of the positively AFRICA board for just over a year now. During this time, I have been privileged to learn about the projects that we partner with and watch the process of turning our vision into action. My goal long before joining the board had been to travel to Africa, and in November of 2010 I was fortunate enough to spend three weeks in Kenya with my partner Jesse. We visited some of positively AFRICA's partner projects and their communities.



Maery with a group of the kids at Kisumu Dogo.

Our first week, we stayed in the home of Pastor Victor Ombito, who runs the Kisumu Dogo nursery and primary school. He introduced us to the Kibera slum - the location of the three partner projects we visited. Victor liked to drive whenever possible. I think it made us quite a sight for the Kibera masses - the only white faces in the only vehicle, trying to push its way along the crowded mud paths of the slum. The first days were spent with Kisumu Dogo and the Soweto Junior and Senior Academies, meeting teachers, playing with the children, serving lunches and painting playground equipment. I met some of the men who produce the curios; mostly fathers of Soweto children. We went to their work huts and watched the process of carving, spinning and dyeing that turns cow bones and ebony wood into jewelry and utensils.

At Kibera Community Youth Project (KCYP), I sat in on meetings of the womens' group, who are dedicated to supporting the women of Kibera affected by HIV and AIDS. We discussed their goals and proposal writing techniques and a few of the women invited me to see their homes. As we squished into the single room dwellings, cornered off by bed sheets hung for walls, they told me about their lives and challenges. They talk about poverty, rape, hungry children and, of course, the struggle of HIV. These were difficult conversations to have, especially during the times when I was asked for assistance directly, as Maery, their white visitor from an affluent country.

As hard as it was to hear some of their stories, I also learned about the great spirit that has developed in the community since their involvement with positively AFRICA. The women told me that, since meeting Peggy, their outlook has changed. Hearing about her challenges and how she faced them, they were proud and empowered to pursue independence, community support and personal income. They no longer felt that their only option was to wait to die.

After our week in Kibera we drove two hours east of Nairobi to a rural town called Narok. We spent three days at the Nissi school and Orphanage, run by Johnson Nyabwogi. On our arrival, we were greeted by a mass of jumping, smiling children, welcoming us to the school through traditional Masai song and dance. The classrooms at Nissi are tiny shacks with dirt floors and a few benches where 10 to 20 children scrunch for lessons. During our visit, we spent time in each classroom. With the

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Nissi Project Update

Written by: Kathleen Brennan

There is a popular Kenyan proverb which goes something like this: "A child points out to you the direction and then you find your way."

Children are our most precious resource and positively AFRICA is doing everything it can to help the children of Kenya, especially those abandoned by the rest of the world. For almost five years pA has taken a vital role in sponsoring the Nissi orphanage at Narok, Kenya. The focus has been on improving the lives of the children - and this often means simply feeding them. We have helped Nissi by funding crop production and buying chickens and goats. Nissi has 105 chickens, which not only provide badly-needed protein by way of their eggs, but surplus eggs are sold, helping to generate income. As well, one of the two goats at Nissi had two babies.



*Nissi dance performance at the school
Photo courtesy of Linda Weech*

pA is working to help Johnson Nyabwogi devise an annual farming plan to support Nissi as it becomes more self-sufficient. This year, about 30 bunkbeds, mattresses and blankets were purchased. Every child living at Nissi now has an actual bed to sleep on rather than the dirt floor. The children sleep two to a bed. pA has also been instrumental in helping Nissi obtain access to clean water by providing a water tank, which means a truck delivers clean water to the tank. Founder Peggy Frank and Su Russell, Board member since 2008, say Nissi's needs can be broken down into four main areas: health, accommodation, food and schooling.

pA made a decision to concentrate on health care and food for the 60 children residing at Nissi, especially for the ten children at Nissi who are HIV-positive. These children thrive with regular meals and multi-vitamins. pA now pays for four CD4 blood tests a year. Each blood test costs \$40.00. As well, a Family Health Fund addresses other diseases such as TB, typhoid, malaria and dehydration, never mind the accidents, bumps and scrapes which children experience along the way. pA has helped the children celebrate Christmas each year by helping out with the Nissi Christmas party. It seems daunting to Peggy and Su sometimes because the needs of these children and the orphanage are overwhelming, but they do not despair and instead concentrate on doing what they can accomplish.

If you are able to contribute, your money would be used in very concrete ways to help the children of Nissi orphanage.

Give Twice for Mothers' Day!

Rather than go to the trouble of picking up something that your mother might not like or need, consider making a donation to positively AFRICA. You may truly save a life and will certainly make a profound difference for someone in desperate need.

You can earmark the gift for a specific purpose, such as to sponsor a child or to buy a donkey or goat for an impoverished family in Kenya struggling under the burden of HIV/AIDS. In return, we will email you a specially made gift card describing what your mother has donated and can include a personal message from her in the donation.

Such a gift "gives twice" because:

- A special mother receives something very special and valuable from you: the knowledge that someone in desperate need is being helped in her name; and
- A person or family in Africa who is burdened by the cruel weight of poverty and HIV/AIDS receives support in a practical and substantial way.

Visit www.positivelyafrica.org/givetwice.

pA Considers Merging With VIDEA

Written by: Samuel Godfrey

After several strategic planning sessions and a lot of discussion, the Board of positively AFRICA is unanimously of the view that we should merge with the Victoria International Development Education Association (VIDEA).

VIDEA is a registered charity in Canada. We have been partners with VIDEA for several years already and have maintained a strong relationship. In the past year, VIDEA has gently pushed us to either formalize the relationship or become independent. The Board has seriously considered both options and believes merging with VIDEA makes much more sense.

First, the amount of money and time required for us to become a stand-alone charity would be much better spent on our partners in Africa; there is no need for us to try and duplicate what VIDEA already does well. In addition, all of the additional work of becoming a separate charity would be too much to ask of our volunteers.

Second, we already have developed a good working relationship with VIDEA and they fully support our mission.

Third, VIDEA has twenty years of development experience in Africa and this will help us continue to improve how we support our African partners.

Finally, merging with VIDEA means we can contribute to a great little Victoria NGO and work side-by-side with other people in Victoria who share our passion and priorities. We hope to finalize a draft agreement in the next month or two and invite you to a special meeting to discuss and vote on this change.

positively AFRICA's Special Meeting

On May 17th, 2011 pA will host a special meeting to debate and vote on a motion to become a committee of VIDEA.

The meeting will be held at:
2092 Byron Street,
Victoria, BC

The event is open to the membership (all donors). It begins with a potluck supper at 6 p.m. followed by the meeting at 7:30 p.m. For people wishing to share the meal, please bring a potluck item.

All those planning to attend either or both parts of the meeting please RSVP by
May 14, 2011 to :



Jessie Mantle (jhmantle@shaw.ca) and Peggy Frank (pegfrank@telus.net)



Hope to see you there!

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oldest group, the 15 to 16 year olds, we worked on English using similar games to those we played in high school. We talked about Canada and our lives at home. They asked if we had roads and were shocked to find that, along with roads, there is also poverty, crime and homelessness where we came from. With the younger ones, Jes and I would sing what few nursery rhymes we could remember, and although they almost certainly had no clue what we were doing, the children laughed and clapped along as Jesse, all 6 foot 6 inches of him, tried to make the itsy bitsy spider go down the water pipe.

The last days of our trip were spent with Pastor Peter and the Osopet community. We met the HIV positive children who get support through the pediatric program and the Masai families that pA has assisted with donkeys and goats. Overall, my trip to Kenya was mind opening, exciting and challenging. I feel that being on the ground helped me to understand the projects and the nature of development in Kenya in a way I wouldn't be able to on paper. I brought back pictures, reports, stories and greetings to the rest of the board and believe that the experience has given me some insight for my continued involvement in pA.

positively AFRICA Welcomes...

Maery Kaplan-Hallam

Maery is one of those rare breeds – she was actually born and raised in Victoria. At 20 years of age, she is the youngest board member of positively AFRICA, bringing an abundance of energy which she will focus mainly on the Nissi health care files.



Maery is current finishing her third year at UVic working on a geography major. At this time, she is contemplating pursuing a career in resource management or working in management in emergency response.

Sherri Hohert

Sherri keeps herself busy doing extensive overseas volunteer work, as a mother, and as a grandmother. She is passionate about social justice.



With a Bachelors degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Social Work, Sherri puts her skills into practice, primarily working with low income and First Nation families at the Island Family Counselling Centre.

Your Donations are very appreciated!

The dreams of our African partners become reality because of your volunteer efforts and generous financial contributions. Your donations are carefully spent on African-led project. They greatly improve – and sometimes save – lives. Thank you!

There are many ways to donate. Automatic monthly donations and child sponsorships are very helpful as they enable us to provide stable funding for our African partners. Please contact us if you are interested and we will happily provide more information. Also, please consider including positively AFRICA in your will.

We are also very grateful for one-time donations. Several of our projects are delivered in partnership with VIDEA. Make your cheque payable to VIDEA with 'positively AFRICA' on the memo line. A charitable receipt will be issued.

We also support other grass roots projects. If you would like to direct your funds to these worthy projects please make your cheque payable to positively AFRICA. These donations do not qualify for a charitable receipt.

If you would like more information about donating, please send a message to info@positivelyafrica.org or call Peggy at 250 519 0040.



Thank you for your continued support!

