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*Title Page Photo: Children playing with Peggy, 2010. Osopet Project, Narok, Kenya.  
Photo: Linda Weech*

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## Message from Peggy

Much has changed since Peter and I brought 35 projects from our 2005/06 visit to Africa. positively AFRICA was born and through working with donors, VIDEA, volunteers and community leaders, we have seen life change for thousands of project participants and their families. For more information about the Board, volunteering and our projects visit our website - [www.positivelyafrica.org](http://www.positivelyafrica.org).

We now have about 10 active projects. Some of the original projects have achieved their initial goals, such as building a girl's dormitory at Bokoro High School in Lesotho. Others are ongoing, such as the Osopet Pediatric Program in Kenya. And in some sad cases, we have lost contact with our partners because of communication challenges.

Recently, I returned to visit African projects for the first time since positively AFRICA provided support to them. As well as monitoring progress, I was able to pass on basic training in Therapeutic Touch (for home-based care) and Capacitar (which teaches self-care) to groups in each country I visited. (More information on this training is available on the positively AFRICA website.) Board member Marnie Bradfield joined me in Zimbabwe and provided Reiki training. Board member Su Russell joined me in Kenya and we spent several inspiring days with our partners immersed in the predominantly Maasai community.

HIV itself, and the stigma associated with AIDS, makes life more difficult for our African friends. Throughout my trip, I worked with leaders to recognize their achievements as well as their problems. What follows are stories from my three months in Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Kenya. I feel pride in all the partners we have chosen.

...continued on page three.

# Ambassadors of Good Will

By Brandie Reimer, a pA volunteer and Camosun College student

In 2003, Hilda, a child psychologist, and her husband Godwill, an ordained minister, built a four bedroom house on purchased land in Maputsoe, Lesotho. This part of the country struggles financially, especially since clothing factories closed several years ago.

With the assistance of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Hilda and Godwill opened the doors of the Rachel's Children Home to 12 orphaned children. They now have 43 youths living at the home and provide them with their basic needs without any government assistance. With help from the Canadian Presbyterian church, three school rooms have been built and provide free primary education, not only to the



*Hilda and the children of Rachel's Orphanage, 2009. Photo: Sharon Channer*

children who live at Rachel's, but also to other children in the community (100 in total). A small kitchen is used to prepare one meal a day. The World Food Program provides the basic staples, which are supplemented by "hand outs" from the community, together with vegetables from their garden. Profits from Hilda's nearby clothing shop also help. With so many children to care for and no government funding, the situation is extremely challenging.

The HIV epidemic in Lesotho has left many children in a hopeless situation. Safe houses, like Rachel's Children Home, are desperately needed. Lesotho has the third highest rate of HIV infection in the world, a staggering 29% of the 2 million people who call Lesotho home are infected with the deadly disease. Consequently approximately 300,000 orphaned and vulnerable children are left to fend for themselves.

Hilda's goal is to make Rachel's Children Home self-sufficient by working with partners to develop income-generating projects. Gardening and livestock are essential for the home to flourish. Enter Garth Homer Centre's 'Community Access Team' (CAT), who have raised \$15 000 for other projects in Lesotho that positively AFRICA is working with. The CAT collects refundable recyclables from businesses and condominiums in Victoria.

Recently, CAT spokesperson, Tawnya Jones excitedly announced that the group would support Rachel's Children Home. Their first project is to establish a small chicken farm. The chickens will help Hilda supply essential protein to the children as well as provide income when chickens and eggs are sold. Their next project is to fund the construction of much needed Ventilated Improved Pit latrines at Rachel's. Just in the past few months, the CAT clients' recycling team has raised an amazing \$9,075.00!

Volunteers at positively AFRICA, the clients of the CAT program, Victoria businesses that donate their recyclables, and the caregivers and volunteers in Lesotho are working relentlessly to make a brighter future for orphaned and vulnerable children of this beautiful African country.






# Returning Hope where Hope has Run Away

*The following is an excerpt from a larger article written by Robert Kheyi, one of the founders of the Kibera Community Youth Program in Kenya.*

For the last 8 years I have volunteered with Kibera Community Youth Programme (KCYP), a community-based organization working in the Kibera slums in Nairobi. My motivation has always been to return hope where hope has run away. With a lot of support from positively AFRICA, we have, since 2007, transformed the lives of 30 desperate HIV/AIDS positive and single women from a bleak life to a bright life. Moral support, education, food, simple medication, encouragement and acceptance help these women who have grown into a strong team. Individuals who were merely tolerated are now celebrated as heroines who have a tale to tell. This is just one example of many. However, we should not tire; we must keep on redefining our strategies to fire our momentum. It is just a long way fraught with many obstacles that we can overcome and outlast. Stigmatization, discrimination and abuse will not bring about change. Love for the infected and acceptance within society is the way to go. After all, who is immune to HIV/AIDS?



*Women in KCYP project with Su Russell, pA Board Member.*

Women have played a key role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Unfortunately, they are the most affected and infected by the disease. I abide by the common phrase that says 'educating a girl is educating a community'. For a woman to survive in Kibera and in most of the developing world is an achievement. Our attitudes and traditions do not promote equal opportunities for women. In fact they demote women to the lowest social status. Nobody celebrates women's achievements and yet they are the bedrock of our societies. A successful woman will be branded a pariah. Women depend on men's attitudes to change. We must all tackle negative myths about women if we hope to promote the success of women and if we want to win this battle. I listened carefully to one of the beneficiaries of Kibera Community Youth Project, as she said, "as a father and as a mother of my children, and as a single mother living with AIDS here in Kibera, I only wish my children don't live the same life as I do. I wish to request any opportunity that would guarantee my children a chance to go to school. I want them to have a good life and only education guarantees this". 


'Message from Peggy' continued from first page.

Deep in the hills of Lesotho, I met two support groups near Quacha's Nek. Women there spoke for the first time about the factors in their lives that led to HIV infection. Although I have heard similar stories before, these women opening after years of silence brought tears to my eyes. They had told no one their story. It was wonderful to watch two women walk away, hand in hand, no longer alone with their secrets.

In Narok, rural Kenya, conditions reflected three years of drought and political instability and have led to increased poverty, water shortages, and increased disease and deaths. But everywhere there was no shortage of smiles and hospitality. I know that positively AFRICA/VIDEA has helped thousands of people across sub-Saharan Africa, but meeting Osopet's 28 HIV+ children who donors have helped keep alive was exhilarating, especially when one girl reported that she wished to become a neurosurgeon. positively AFRICA/VIDEA is looking at supporting a similar pediatric HIV care program for the orphans at nearby Nissi orphanage. As well, we are working with both Osopet and Nissi to establish a health care program that will treat serious and life-threatening illnesses when they arise. So many people suffer and die needlessly.

Since returning to Canada, friends and I have explored new ways to raise awareness and support. Our Hair for Health Care Campaign, potluck dinners, and "water walks" are described elsewhere in this newsletter.

I know there is much for us to celebrate, and more left to do. We can only do this with your continued encouragement. I am deeply grateful for your support over the years. Without you, we could not have made a difference in the lives of those we reach out to daily.

With thanks, Peggy. 


# Volunteers: Our Greatest Asset

Where would positively AFRICA be without its fantastic, enthusiastic group of volunteers?!

Over the past several months, volunteers have generously given their time and skills to a wide variety of tasks. These include, but certainly are not limited to, recording minutes of monthly Board meetings, writing articles, and media releases, creating hand-written and electronic thank you cards, managing our website, assisting with clerical duties and selling African handicrafts at local events.

We always welcome new volunteers to help us with tasks both large and small. Recently, we have been developing an expanded list of volunteer tasks. A sampling includes: public relations, editing our newsletter, managing our handicraft inventory, and helping to build awareness in schools about the projects we support. These are just a few of the jobs we would like to fill. Some jobs may be for just a few hours per month, others take a larger time commitment, and other tasks are on an "as needed" basis.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering with positively AFRICA, we would be delighted to hear from you! Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Sabine Laubental at [sabine@positivelyafrica.org](mailto:sabine@positivelyafrica.org) or call her at 250-598-0708.

Sabine is happy to answer any of your questions. 

## Briefly....

### Hair for Health Care

On June 5th at Fisherman's Wharf in Victoria, Peggy, her god-daughter Svea, and friend Cathy planned to shave their heads to raise funds for health care in Kenya. Lawrence, Nic and Yogi joined in too and Michael shaved his legs for \$40. Sarah and Hillary were unable to join the Fisherman's wharf crowd, but also went hair free! The VIDEA/positively AFRICA campaign went international with students at the United World College in Italy and friends in Brazil becoming honorary "baldies". The campaign raised almost \$9,000 to date with pledges still coming in. For more details check out Peggy's new blog at [www.peggyfrank.ca](http://www.peggyfrank.ca)



*Shafia, the official hairdresser, made the bald heads look beautiful!*

### Acknowledging and Thanking

Earlier this year, three positively AFRICA Board members visited and worked in some of our projects in Africa. Su Russell worked in Kenya, Marnie Bradfield worked in Zimbabwe and South Africa, and Peggy Frank worked in Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Kenya. By mid-March all three had returned home. This presented an ideal opportunity to invite friends and supporters of positively AFRICA to an evening where we shared stories from the projects and showcased our work that is changing and saving lives. Thank you to The Little Piggy for the donated goodies that complemented our own baking, to Francis Yee for arranging the excellent Camosun venue, and to all who attended for their interest and encouragement.

...continued on page six

# Changing Faces

## New Board Members

We are delighted to welcome two new Board members. In their own words:

### Maery Kaplan-Hallam

I am a second year student at the University of Victoria majoring in Geography. I have been volunteering with positively AFRICA for just over a year. With the hope of pursuing a career in international development I appreciate the work done by positively AFRICA to support small scale, grass-roots development projects as being incredibly important to our world. This Fall I plan to spend a few weeks traveling through Kenya and hope to visit some of positively AFRICA's partners. I believe this will strengthen my capabilities as a volunteer now and provide insight for future development work.

### Naida Hyde

I am delighted to join the positively AFRICA Board of Directors and assume responsibility for the Lesotho country file. Soon after moving to Victoria two years ago, I volunteered with positively AFRICA and was impressed with the projects it is involved in. In the spring of 2007 I had gone to Lesotho as a trauma psychologist and gender equity specialist with a Canadian NGO, Help Lesotho, to help girls and women understand and heal the sexual violence in their lives. I went back to Lesotho this past winter as a volunteer and worked with grandmother groups and young leaders as they struggled with grief and loss in their lives. Now I look forward to returning to Lesotho to engage with Rachel's Children's Home, the orphanage and school that positively Africa has recently begun to support.



*Naida Hyde*

## Notable New Volunteers

**Janeen Sam** grew up in South Africa and recently moved, with her family, to Canada. Although she is very busy - she works for Investors Group, South Vancouver Island - she is making time to volunteer for positively AFRICA. Janeen has taken over the bookkeeping from Laura Thomson and Laura is now focusing on donor relations. Welcome aboard Janeen!

**Ron Nye** is a skilled website designer who has generously offered to manage our website, [positivelyafrica.org](http://positivelyafrica.org). He has already added new content and lots more changes are on their way. Thanks Ron!

**Adrienne Gregory** has a strong track record working for not-for-profits and we really appreciate her contributions to positively AFRICA. She is recording minutes at our Board meetings and will be helping out in other ways. She will be traveling in Africa starting in September.

**Brandie Reimer**, a student of anthropology, is writing articles about positively AFRICA and our partners. Thanks Brandie! Read her story about Lesotho and Garth Homer in this newsletter.

**Helga Jacobson** has made a valued contribution as an editor to this newsletter. Helga is a professor emerita at UBC and taught Anthropology there for many years. She also helped start the UBC Women's Studies program. Among other subjects, Helga taught Women and Development for many years.

## Notable Changes

Marnie Bradfield has resigned from the pA Board. We cherished her contributions and presence and wish her all the best. We'll miss her. A big big thank you, Marnie.

Samuel Godfrey has worked hard as our Coordinator over the past 2 years. But with his young family and full-time job at MLA Lana Popham's Constituency office, there are not enough hours in the day for him to continue on in his current role. Thank you for all your excellent work Samuel! We are very grateful that Samuel will continue to work with us as much as he is able to.



...continued from page four.

## Fundraising Ideas

We are always looking for new and better ways to raise awareness and generate funds for our African partners. Earlier in the year, we were introduced to Judy Lightwater, a professional fundraiser in Victoria. Judy spent an evening with us and generously shared her knowledge about effective fundraising. Her suggestions and recommendations were incredibly helpful. Thank you Judy.


## Potluck Dinner

Joan Richardt, a long time supporter of positively AFRICA, hosted a fundraising pot-luck dinner at her home to raise funds for Nissi Orphanage in Kenya. The only requirements to participate were a dish to share at dinner and a contribution to the orphanage. Joan's potluck was great fun and it raised \$2,845 for Nissi. Some of the guests are planning to host another dinner in the coming months.

## Water Walk

At Ecole Victor Brodeur, a 24-hour fundraising fast included a water walk to give students an understanding of the walk that many African women do each day, often on an empty stomach. While we turn on a tap, African girls and women collect and carry 20 Kg of water in a plastic bucket on their heads for over 10 km, often more than once a day.

## African Jigsaw

In April positively AFRICA partnered with the Victoria Children's Choir (VCC) in their memorable performance of African Jigsaw. We helped the VCC promote the concert and sell tickets. VCC helped us by providing an information/handicraft booth and by connecting us to a wider circle of people. The concert was absolutely incredible. The singers, all children between the ages of 8 and 15 years old, were remarkable. Don't miss the chance to experience the VCC at their next concert ([www.victoriachildrenchoir.ca](http://www.victoriachildrenchoir.ca)). 



*Practising Therapeutic Touch  
in Quacha's Nek, Lesotho.*

# 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 projects. 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.

Please mail your donation to positively AFRICA, 2092 Byron St. Victoria, BC, V8R 1L9.

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

Thank you!