

# Center for the Church and Global AIDS Action Newsletter

For more  
information:  
[www.churchand  
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Spring, 2012

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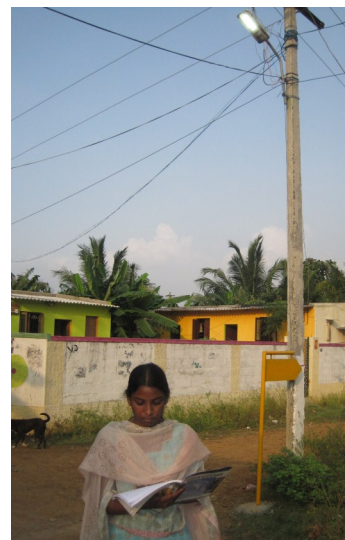
Women & 4  
AIDS

## UNDER A STREET LAMP, YOUNG WOMAN IN INDIA STUDIES COLLEGE CHEMISTRY



A girl without an education is a woman without a future. But thanks to a Center program, "Imagine," 100 girls in India get short term tutoring at the 10th & 12th high school level. Failure means no more education ever, but passage provides hope.

Roja (Rose), 17, entered college to study chemistry and physics in 2011. Living in a home with a mud floor and thatched roof, she has no electricity. So at night she steps outside on the dirt road to study. Families infected and affected by HIV face many challenges. Yet with assistance, they can overcome poverty and stigma.



## TV ANCHOR & UNITED NATIONS LEADER KEYNOTE SPRING BRUNCH TO BENEFIT AIDS ORPHANS

Dr. Pauline Muchina of UNAIDS will keynote the annual "Spring is a Time for HOPE" brunch (*Helping Orphans by Providing Essentials*). A native of Kenya, she holds a master's from Yale University and a Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary, New York. At the United Nations, she is noted for championing an end to gender-based violence, discrimination against women, & HIV infections.



Dr. Pauline Muchina



Theresa Marchetta

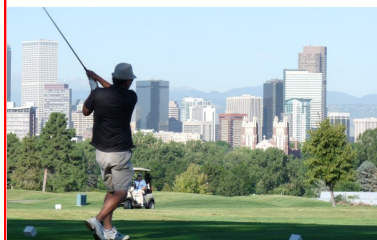
Persons giving \$150 to support a Kenya orphan are provided two free tickets, thanks to a generous donor. Set for 11:00 a.m., Saturday, April 14, at the University of Denver, register now by contacting [shawnalayman@gmail.com](mailto:shawnalayman@gmail.com) or call 303 877 1955. Plan on attending!

Emcee will be Theresa Marchetta, Denver's award-winning CBS Channel 7 anchor. An investigative reporter, she has exposed health risks endangering Coloradans. A two-time cancer survivor, she encourages others & inspires people to keep fighting.

Sarah Harrington, Center volunteer Ambassador, again chairs this successful event.

## GOLFERS "SWINGING AT AIDS" IN 2012

When golfers in **Grand Junction** tee off on **May 18** at the colorful Adobe Creek National Golf Course in Fruita, they will raise funds for western Colorado and Africa. The 6th Annual event in **Denver at City Park on August 16** will benefit programs in Asia, as well as help African-American, Latino, & Native-American AIDS agencies in Denver. **Sponsors, golfers and silent auction items needed!**



Contact: [globalaids@gmail.com](mailto:globalaids@gmail.com) (303 877 1955).



Grand Junction Co-chairs, Annie Arnoldy & Buzz Schoenbeck, present check to Mary Beth Luedtke (l), Western Colorado AIDS Project.

# STIGMA KILLS AS EFFECTIVELY AS AIDS

Donald E. Messer, Executive Director

At the 10th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific in Busan, South Korea, in 2011, there was much discussion about a new United Nations goal that envisions “zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.” Recent scientific developments make that goal more probable, but progress in reducing and eliminating stigma has been nearly nonexistent.

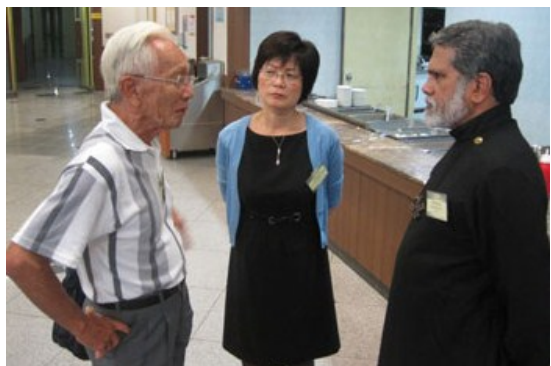
Stigma kills because it prevents people from becoming educated, being tested and receiving life-giving medicine. Those living with HIV infections often experience physical and social isolation, verbal and physical violence, lack of medical care and loss of livelihood.

The Rev. Youngsook Kang of Denver told the conference about a young Korean woman living with HIV: “except for her elderly mother, she had never told another human being about her disease. She lives in a country and culture that stigmatizes and discriminates against persons who are HIV-positive.” Isolated, alone and voiceless, Mary told Kang that “I feel like I am

an island, not a human being.” Kang noted that women comprise nearly half of the 33.4 million globally infected with HIV.



*Youth emphasize stigma and discrimination of those living with HIV and AIDS by wearing masks at the 10th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific in South Korea.*



*Former Singapore Bishop Yap Kim Hao confers with the Rev. Youngsook Kang, Denver, & the Rev. Philip Kuruvilla from India.*

## Beginning of a dialogue

A breakthrough at the conference was the beginning of a dialogue among Asian religious leaders and representatives of key populations affected by HIV — men who have sex with men, transgendered persons, commercial sex workers and people who inject drugs. A young gay man from the

Philippines asked, **“What is there in your religion that causes you to hate me?”** An HIV-positive leader from Guam described stigma as “when the God in you does not recognize the God in me.”

The Rev. Philip Kuruvilla of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India declared, “If we want to end AIDS, then it is time for a new Christian theology that is accepting of key affected populations.” An Indonesian woman, Dr. Erlinda Senturias of the Christian Conference of Asia, called on churches to “break the silence on HIV” and “to become HIV- and AIDS-competent.” Swami Sadyajatha of India called on Hindus to join with other persons of faith “to fight, not only a body of illness, but also a body of stigma.”

Scientific breakthroughs will flounder and fail, not just because of a lack of political will and inadequate funding, but also because of dehumanizing cultural traditions and religious bigotry. Since stigma is based primarily on fear, misinformation and moral prejudice, interfaith leaders need to explore their sacred texts and theological resources to transform persons of faith from being condemning to caring, stigmatizing to liberating, fearful to helpful and apathetic to action-oriented.



*(The Center for the Church and Global AIDS sponsored forums and workshops at this conference on stigma and discrimination. These excerpts are a Commentary published by United Methodist News Service.)*



# INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD ASSISTS CENTER

Since the Center's inception, a volunteer International Advisory Board has contributed their good names and assistance to promote the work of the Center for the Church and Global AIDS. Meet the members below:



**Bishop Ivan Abrahams** of South Africa has been elected Executive Director of the World Methodist Council, after years fighting apartheid & HIV/AIDS.



**Presidential Nominee & US Senator, George McGovern**, has been honored with Medal of Freedom & World Food Prize.



**Dr. Musa D. Dube**, Botswana, wins United Methodist Global AIDS Award & was guest professor at Union, New York.



**Dr. Kent Millard** retires from St. Luke's UMC, Indianapolis, travels to Africa, & becomes interim Sr. Pastor in Colorado.



**Professor N. M. Samuel, M.D.** of Chennai, India, was elected President of AIDS Society of Asia & the Pacific in 2012.



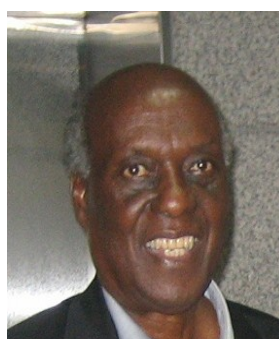
**Dr. Bob Edgar**, head of Common Cause, calls for Supreme Court Justices to adopt ethical code and challenges ruling declaring corporations "persons."



**Dr. Pauline Muchina** of Kenya has been appointed Senior Partnership Advisor for UNAIDS in Washington, DC.



**Herb Bacon**, banker & philanthropist, Grand Junction, named to Colorado Business Hall of Fame.



**Retired Kenya Bishop Lawi Imathiu** envisioned Kenya Methodist University & won the World Methodist Peace Prize.



**Retired Russia Bishop Ruediger Minor** founded Russia United Methodist Seminary & headed UM Council of Bishops.

## KENYA TRIP SLATED FOR JULY 2012

Center Director, Dr. Donald Messer, will lead an immersion experience to Kenya beginning July 8 in Nairobi. Focusing on understanding the HIV and AIDS pandemic and the response of churches and other agencies, persons are invited to contact Dr. Messer if they are interested in participating. Email [globalaids@gmail.com](mailto:globalaids@gmail.com) or call 303 8771955. Experience first-hand the challenges facing the continent.



## INTERNATIONAL AIDS CONFERENCE IN DC

With the lifting of restrictions forbidding HIV positive persons from entering the USA, the International AIDS Conference will be hosted in Washington, D.C., July 22-27. Some 4,000 persons are expected. A pre-conference inter-faith event on AIDS will be held at Howard University. Center Director, Dr. Donald Messer, also attended past conferences in Thailand, Canada, Mexico, & Austria.

**Center for the Church  
and Global AIDS**

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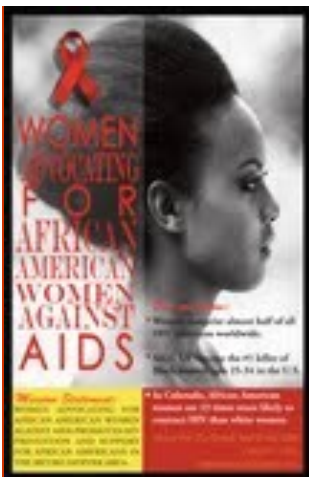
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## **WOMEN ADVOCATING FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AGAINST AIDS**

A bi-racial, inter-faith group of women has formed for the purpose of advocating for African American women against AIDS. Convened by Alice Washington and Bonnie Messer, the group is alarmed that :

- Women comprise almost half of all infections worldwide.
- AIDS has become the #1 killer of black women ages 25-34 in the USA.
- In Colorado, African American women are 33 times more likely to contract HIV than white women.

Working with Ms. Imani Latif's organization, It Takes A Village, and the Center for the Church and Global AIDS, the group invites other women to join.

## **LATINO WOMEN PROMOTE AIDS TESTING**

Using a grant from the Center, the Latino AIDS outreach, Sisters of Color United for Education, headed by Dr. Belinda Garcia, purchased much needed HIV tests. In the USA, 1/4 of those infected by HIV do not know it. Major stigma and discrimination focused on the Hispanic community makes testing very difficult.



Dr. Belinda Garcia

## **NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN'S RETREAT**

The National Native American Prevention Center conducted a Native American Women's Retreat last fall in the Rocky Mountains, thanks to a grant from the Center for the Church and Global AIDS. Women account for 30% of all infections among Native Americans.



