

Center for Health and Hope Action Newsletter

Spring, 2019

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[www.centerfor
hopeandhealth.org](http://www.centerfor
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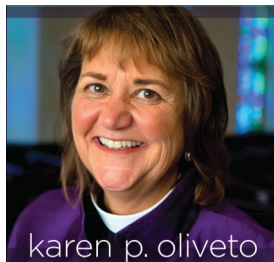
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WELL-KNOWN CELEBRITIES KEYNOTE

April 27 "Spring Is A Time For HOPE" Brunch



Caring for 260 Kenya vulnerable children & AIDS orphans will be the focus of this year's "Spring Is A Time For HOPE (Helping Orphans by Providing Essentials)" Brunch April 27 at the University of Denver. Denver's First Lady & popular soloist, Mary Louise Lee will be the featured soloist. Bishop Karen P. Oliveto, recently featured in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and NPR as the United Methodist's first openly lesbian bishop, will share stories from her many trips to Kenya, where she & her wife Robin have long been engaged in humanitarian service. Emcee will be well-known Theresa Marchetta, former Denver news anchor & now spokesperson for Denver's mayor. Tickets are available at \$100 each at our website or send check to the Center at 7185 S. Niagara Circle, Centennial, CO 80112. Support for a child for a year is \$200. Adopt one or more orphans this year!



INDIA'S SICK & MARGINALIZED OVERLOOKED

Though India has the third largest number of persons living with HIV in the world with 2.1 million, HIV & AIDS barely registers on minds of India's leaders. Why? Because those impacted are among the most stigmatized & marginalized in India's massive population of about 1.3 billion. The Center for Health and Hope sponsors various programs that reach out to the impoverished & the mistreated. During a January visit, a Center team held an AIDS workshop in Jaipur at the request of the bishop of the Church of North India, spent time at a Calcutta AIDS orphanage, spoke to a theological school conference integrating LGBTQ concerns into the curriculum, met with women living with HIV, consulted with gay men forced into prostitution, visited Dalit children learning English, & spent time distributing nutritional supplements to 175 patients at an AIDS hospital & the free Messer Clinic for Women. Those overlooked by others are the primary focus of the Center.



TERI TODD: "2019 SHERO OF THE YEAR"

Whether walking bare-foot for 30 days on the famous El Camino de Santiago Pilgrimage in Spain to raise funds for AIDS orphans, or challenging her new Elizabeth United Methodist Church to build a house for an uneducated, impoverished woman in India forced into "survival sex" when her husband died of AIDS,



or to leading a yearly campaign to ensure a school in the wretched slums of Kenya has sufficient funds to pay rent on the property, Rev. Teri Todd has broken barriers with care & compassion. The term, "shero," was first used in 1836 says Merriam-Webster, to designate a woman of high achievement and courage. Teri epitomizes both! She will receive the award at the Spring Bruch April 27.



FACING THE HEARTBREAK OF YOUTH SUICIDE: WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

My heart breaks when I hear a friend tell me her grandson has tried to commit suicide twice. When asked, “why?” he said simply, “Because I’m bi-sexual.” The bias & stigma of church & society becomes internalized. In the United States suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among young people ages 10 to 24. Lesbian, gay, & bi-sexual (LGB) youth seriously contemplate suicide at almost three times the rate of heterosexual youth. The rate for transgendered youth is higher. LGBTQ youth are almost five times as likely to have attempted suicide compared to heterosexual youth. 92% of these individuals reported having attempted suicide before the age of 25. LGBTQ youth who come from highly rejecting families are 8.4 times as likely to have attempted suicide as LGBTQ peers who reported no or low levels of family rejection.

How can we help stop suicides? Many churches, including my own United Methodist denomination, by their negative teaching about same-sex relationships & marriage undermine the self-worth and dignity of young people. We must resist & repudiate such false teaching & speak out in support of our LGBTQ brothers & sisters everywhere in the world. I seek to do so, whether I’m speaking in the USA, Africa, or Asia. Life is precious & no one should be rejected because of whom they love.

How do we become a voice of support, love, and affirmation to our young people? Let everyone, especially your family, know that you accept LGBTQ persons. Advocate for your LGBTQ child. Go to a Pride Parade with your child. Share Trevor Lifeline 1-866-488-7386 for counseling. Welcome your child’s friends. Above all, love your kid!



(Messer speaking in Calcutta to church leaders)

Donald E. Messer, Executive Director



MARLA PETRINI RECOGNIZED

After 13 years of active service as a Center Board member, Marla Petrini was named an Honorary Board member of the Center. During her tenure on the Board she served as Vice President of the Board, spearheaded the annual spring brunch to raise funds for AIDS orphans in Africa, organized volunteer Ambassadors, helped chair events, committees, golf tournaments, etc.. “A humanitarian *par excellence*,” Executive Director Don Messer declared. “Marla truly is both incredible & irreplaceable.”



ANNE BARAZA VISITS AMERICA

In the heart of one of Nairobi’s worst slums, Anne Baraza defies the odds of survival by operating a school for the most vulnerable children. Over 50 children are living with HIV & several teachers are HIV positive. Yet thanks to the Center’s support, 188 children get fed twice a day, education happens, & AIDS prevention occurs in the area. During Baraza’s visit to Indianapolis, Denver, & Tucson, Center Kenya Kommittee Chair, Bonnie Messer said, “Anne’s heart of love transforms lives.”

AIDS WORKSHOP IN COTE D’IVOIRE

The Center will help sponsor AIDS Seminar for West Africa May 17-20 with the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee. Laity & clergy will be challenged by Dr. Don Messer to promote prevention & care, reaching out especially to key population groups like sex workers, men who have sex with men, & drug users often shunned by the church.



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COUPLE BRINGS LIFE EXPERIENCES TO VOLUNTEER WORK IN HIV/AIDS COMMUNITY

The lives of Jon Stetson & Noel Floresca intertwine while volunteering to help those in southern Arizona's HIV community. Their work in fundraising, feeding & comforting the sick, preparing care packages & educating families &



workers about HIV and AIDS for more than 20 years earned them the Center's 2019 Leadership Award at the Tucson Swinging@AIDS golf benefit March 23. Stetson suffered polio at the age of 9. He sees similarity between that fear & what people perceive about AIDS. He began caring for persons with HIV in 1987. His partner of 20 years, Floresca, was diagnosed with HIV in 1989 & nearly died from AIDS in 1996. He benefited from the Tucson Interfaith HIV/AIDS Network (TIHAN) when he was ill. After becoming healthy he began with Stetson to volunteer with TIHAN, led by innovative & compassionate Scott Blades.

(Floresca, left, & Stetson, right.) Based on article by Carmen Duarte, Arizona Daily Star, March, 2, 2019.

Jesse Losoya & Pat Fox Spearhead Tucson Golf & Concert Benefit

Two new leaders spearheaded a successful golf event & concert March 22/23 in Tucson. Mobilizing a cadre of helpers to seek a \$25,000 goal were Jess Losoya & Pat Fox! Congrats!



GOLFERS & SPONSORS INVITED TO 13TH ANNUAL DENVER SWINGING@AIDS

"Help us find new golfers & sponsors to add to those who helped in the past," is the appeal of this year's leaders of the Denver Swinging@AIDS golf benefit, Megan Armstrong & Bruce Berger. "This event is vital to the future of the Center & the services it provides globally." Over \$40,000 was raised last year. At the Kennedy Golf course, the limit is 120 golfers @ \$125.00 each. Register soon!



CENTER DISTRIBUTED OVER \$200,000 IN 2018

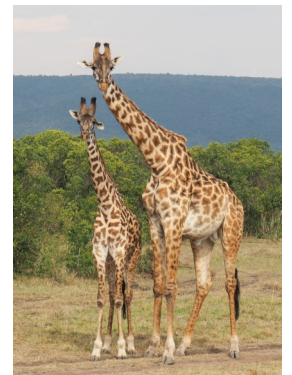
Thanks to the generosity of donors to the Center, over \$200,000 was distributed to assist our partners around the world in their efforts to prevent & mitigate the impact of HIV & AIDS. This record amount eliminated great pain and suffering for people of all ages, particularly vulnerable children. The Center has low operating expenses since the Executive Director has never received a salary & the Center operates from the Messer home, thus no expenses for rent, electricity, heat, etc.

Below-AIDS workshop, Jaipur, India)



JOIN US IN AFRICA! LEARN ABOUT AIDS & ENJOY A SAFARI

Join a ten member team visiting Kenya July 8-18 & learn about how HIV & AIDS are impacting Africa, plus experience a once-in-a-lifetime Masai Mara safari. Be a part of an AIDS workshop, visit a school serving the poor in Nairobi's slum, participate in a medical camp, & dedicate homes for people with HIV. Then marvel at the splendor of Africa's wild animals. Contact Don Messer immediately 303 877 1955.

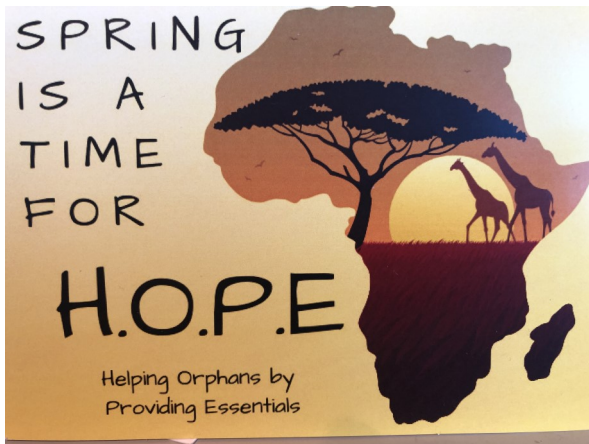




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*Purchase tickets to Spring Brunch
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STORIES OF HOPE AROUND THE WORLD

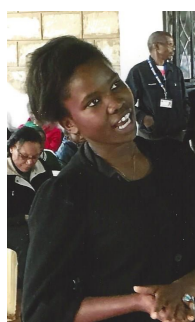
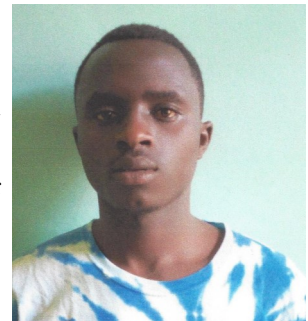
TUTORING IN INDIA



Under the visionary leadership of Pam Merrill, the Imagine Tutoring Project since 2007 has provided tutoring for impoverished & marginalized high school girls from the lowest Hindu caste in rural India. To date, **1,022 girls** have been successfully tutored in English, math, and science in preparation for critical exams. Failure means the end of their education. Additionally, **Imagine Scholarships enabled 14 of these girls to graduate with B. A. degrees; 8 more are currently in college.** "A girl without an education matures into a woman without a future," says Executive Director Don Messer.

SCHOLARSHIPS IN KENYA

Eric Muthuri is one of eight Kenya students being sponsored for post-secondary education by friends of the Center. An AIDS orphan, he is excelling in his 2nd year of medical school. In a letter of thanks, he says he "prays for our families. If it were not for you, I could not be in school, since my ailing & aging grandmother could not pay the costs." Christmas gifts given at Park Hill UMC provide his fees. Other scholarship students are pursuing their dreams of studying theology, auto mechanics, & business. It costs about \$1,000 a year to give orphans like Eric or Susan Wakeli a lifetime skill!



Susan Wakeli

DATES TO REMEMBER

"Spring Is A Time For HOPE" Brunch

April 27, 2019

Denver "Swinging@AIDS" Golf

August 14, 2019

A Gathering to HEAL Breakfast

October 19, 2019

World AIDS Day Sunday

December 1, 2019