



Center for Health & Hope Action Newsletter

Fall 2023

www.centerforhealthandhope.org

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Center Makes Children & Youth a Priority

Speakers Stanley & Mary Gitari, nurse educators from Maua, Kenya, emphasized making children & youth a priority during the annual Gathering to HEAL (Helping End AIDS in our Lifetime) breakfast. They cited the need to address period poverty, education, counseling, & female genital mutilation. Too often children & youth are not diagnosed & treated for HIV. Over \$15,000 was raised to help Center projects in Africa. Chin Keong Tan shared his musical talent & Wes Lopez, University of Denver counseling master's student, spoke about his experiences at Center Drug Treatment program in Kenya.



Candlelight Walk & Healing Service: World AIDS Day on December 1

Keynoting community World AIDS Day observances sponsored by the Center for Center for Health and Hope at Park Hill UMC at 6:00 pm December 1 will be Davina Conner, a young woman living with HIV since 1997. Activist & advocate, Conner, Colorado native, is well-known internationally for her efforts to end stigma. Rev. Dr. Valerie Jackson is chairing this year's event. Center participants will march in remembrance of many friends who have died from AIDS or are living with HIV. Especially to be remembered are founding Center Board member Steve McCeney & the late friend of the Center from India,



Ashok Pillai. McCeney wrote the Center's mission statement & Pillai formed the Indian Network of People Living with HIV.

Immersion Experience in Kenya & Rwanda



Fifteen Center friends engaged in an immersion experience in East Africa during July, 2023. In Kenya the group spent time visiting Center programs, including time with the 315 AIDS orphans being supported, interviewing most of the 35 AIDS orphans now sponsored for postsecondary education, launching a period poverty reusable sanitary supplies project, spending time at an alcoholism & drug treatment facility, & dedicating two of 20 homes built for AIDS families. Hosting a dinner honoring marginalized LGBTQ+ persons in Meru, the group learned of increasing persecution & stigmatization. Five persons also traveled to Rwanda where they held a human rights conference with concerned citizens who are supportive of equal rights for persons living with HIV as well as LGBTQ+ persons & visited three Center economic empowerment initiatives.

PEPFAR in Danger: Right-Wing Politics

American politics has become so polarized that now one of our country's most bi-partisan & successful foreign assistance program is in danger, because of a handful of right-wing Republican politicians in the US House of Representatives.



Dr. Don Messer met in New York with Center donor at UNAIDS/World Council of Churches breakfast focused on PEPFAR & children

PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief) initiated by President George W. Bush has been supported on a bi-partisan basis through the days of Obama & Trump, but now is being threatened. Needed are grassroots Americans to speak & advocate to their federal Congressional representatives. Legislation is needed to extend the program for another five years.



Why? Many reasons can be cited, but, above all, we need to recognize that since 2004, child AIDS deaths have been reduced by 80%. Yet even today 84,000 children still die each year from AIDS globally. 92% of those deaths are preventable. 10.3 million AIDS-orphaned children in Sub-Saharan Africa need economic & social support, such as the Center supplies in Kenya & Rwanda. Without PEPFAR, a million more new child HIV-infections will occur by 2030. Without PEPFAR, 460,000 more child deaths by AIDS will happen by 2030. Without PEPFAR, 2.8 million more children will be orphaned by 2030.

What can we do? Write, call, or email your Senator & Congressperson. Let them know that you care. Do it today—please don't wait!

Donald E. Messer, Executive Director

Messer Attends 19th European AIDS Conference



Eastern Europe & Central Asia is the only region where both new HIV infections & AIDS-related deaths are increasing. Why? In large part, not because prevention & anti-retroviral medicine are missing, but because stigma against key population groups (gays, transgender persons, prisoners, migrants, persons injecting drugs, & commercial sex workers) & others suffer from serious stigmatization & marginalization.

Executive Director Don Messer noted that the 19th European AIDS Conference, meeting in Warsaw, Poland, “emphasized the chapters of stigma—shame, blame, humiliation, violence, & mistreatment—undermine significant medical progress. Women comprise 53% of the world's 40 million people living with HIV, but still are severely under-treated. Messer says the sign, “**We are here until the day we beat HIV**” epitomizes the Center for Health and Hope!



AIDS in India: Often Overlooked

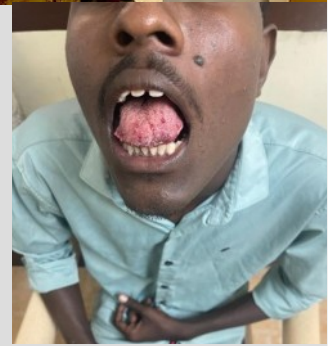


India ranks second in the world with 2.1 million people living with HIV. South Africa is first; Nigeria third. But because of India's mega size, AIDS is often overlooked. Yet HIV impacts the most impoverished, stigmatized, & lowest castes. In a Kolkata AIDS orphanage, the Center provides computers, science/math/English education, & college scholarships. Since the fifty plus children lack protein in their diet, a recent grant provided chicken for but a second time in their weekly meals.



In Chennai, the social service outreach provides monthly supplementary nutrition for 30+ impoverished HIV impacted families, tutors young girls from lowest castes, & helps male sex workers start alternative businesses. In rural Namakkal a free HIV

clinic led by Professor N. M. Samuel faces many challenges. He reports helping 43 women get eye glasses, since HIV distorted their vision. "Many cry," says Samuel, "as they once again can see." One young man with HIV has a tumor growing under his tongue; radiation & removing part of his tongue is recommended. He declines, as it will impact his speech. Money is needed for a surgical oncologist specialist to explore options. Another young lad has a retinal viral infection causing double vision. He needs a specialist too. Born with HIV, they struggle to survive & complete their education. Poor Indian mothers & children are often treated as "expendables," but the Center believes in the dignity & worth of all. We affirm the Talmudic saying that declares "Whoever saves one life, saves the world."



New Part-Time Staff



(Left to right) **Bobbie Morrell**: Administrative Assistant; **Christina Werner**: Records Administrator (volunteer); **Pam Merrill** (& not pictured **Lauren Bourgoyne**) Co-Financial Administrators; **Jann Folsom** Assistant to Executive Director.

India Committee

Center's India Committee met recently to review projects, plan January 2023 India trip, & to honor Pam Merrill's retirement from her life's work in health care (plus reminding her to keep working part-time for the Center!



Are You Required to Take RMDs?

Are you required to take RMD's (required minimum distributions) from your IRA in 2023? If you like saving money, especially money you would pay in taxes, then explore humanitarian options the Center provides around the world.

REINVESTING YOUR RMDs

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW...

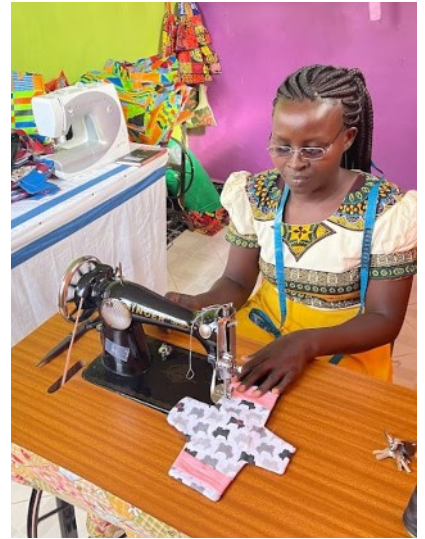


Beware of penalties if you fail to meet requirements. Check out IRA rules with your accountant. The Center cannot give legal advice, but we encourage you to invest in projects that give life, love, & hope around the world. Give a child in Africa or Asia a helping hand!



Period Poverty: Reusable Sanitary Supplies

Young women face humiliation & uncertainty, often missing 5 to 7 days of school a month because they lack clean, sanitary supplies to deal with menstruation. Sometimes to get money, they are exploited sexually & risk pregnancy & HIV. The Center has launched a program making reusable sanitary supplies in Maua, Kenya. Seminars are held to educate girls & their mothers on hygiene & self-care. To combat the evils of period poverty in Africa, additional funds are needed. A special thanks to those who contribute regularly! The need persists; women are often forgotten.



Rwanda Empowerment Projects Flourish

Three Center economic empowerment projects (sewing, hair salon, and brick-making) in Rwanda, employing marginalized LGBTQ+ persons or persons living with HIV, are flourishing.



The Future Depends on People Like You: Leave a Legacy of Love & Life

None of us live forever, but we can influence life into the future by the way we designate life's resources & estates. Regardless of how much we accumulate over the years, we cannot take it with us! But we can make a difference by ensuring our written will specifies how we want our money and properties shared with family, friends, & charities we cherish.

Have you included the Center in your will?

Learn more about leaving a gift for the Center's future work:

Watch our recorded Webinar with Jon Kraus: "Doing Good: In This Life and Beyond"



At www.centerforhealthandhope.org & Don Messer at 303 877 1955 or globalaids@gmail.com



2023 "Swinging at AIDS" Golf Great Success

Jumping for joy! Thanks to many volunteers, generous sponsors, a vibrant silent auction, and about 100 golfers, the August 2023 "Swinging@AIDS" Golf Benefit was a great success. Over \$55,000 was raised at the annual event! Funds were used to support the Center's work in India & to meet the daily costs of operating a non-profit (staff salaries, insurance, supplies, etc.). Make plans to join us next August—the date has not been confirmed, but it is expected to be Tuesday, August 6, 2024.