



Upendo Village, NPF

HIV/AIDS WOMEN PROJECT-KENYA

A Project of the Assumption Sisters of Nairobi

November/December 2008



Sr. Agnes, with UV family, enjoy goat and kids

Upendo Village – A Beacon of Hope

Sister Florence Muia, with Sister Agnes and the Upendo Village (UV) staff and volunteers, partnering with the Wheaton Franciscan Sisters, are generously supported by a global village of loving, donors and volunteers. Together we are creating a haven of hope for the poorest of the poor women and children in Naivasha, Kenya. Thanks to this collaborative outreach, clients receive comprehensive services along a continuum of care, that help them become self-sufficient. At present UV has close to 1075 clients.

Life-Promoting Programs

Thriving programs include the education, nutrition, health care, support groups and income generating projects.

Childhood Education: One outstanding program is CUSP (Children of Upendo Sponsorship Program), directed by Mary Rittman and Karen Claeys. CUSP has, since 2006, elicited sponsorship of 78 children of Upendo Village. For \$880.00 donors provide an elementary school child with tuition, a uniform, a pair of shoes, medication, soap, and nutrition for one year. Achievement is tracked and problems are addressed so as to encourage success for each child, in spite of issues around poverty, trauma and illness.

HIV/AIDS Awareness & Support: A contributing factor to the spread of HIV (prevalent in Naivasha, where Upendo Village is located) is lack of education and available testing services. One way that Upendo Village staff are addressing this need is through a campaign designed to increase

awareness of and sensitivity to HIV/AIDS issues, while also promoting peace among the people. The result is better understanding and support of HIV positive people. Since March, they have reached more than 3,500 children of all grade levels. Support for those living with HIV/AIDS includes resources to improve their health, restore their self-respect and increase their lifespan. One example is the Kids Club for children who are HIV positive. HIV positive kids meet for encouragement in dealing with their daily challenges. Thirty-two children, with their guardians, participated in August, 2008.

Prison Support Group: Upendo Village is engaged in an ongoing education/support group and treatment program for HIV/AIDS inmates in the maximum Security Prison. One hundred fifty inmates are in treatment and another 50 have been released. Upendo Village also supplied soap and toilet paper. Which were greatly appreciated.

Income Generating Opportunities The Harambee Project:

Crafts: Microeconomics projects provide women & children a “hand up” to care for themselves without relying on a handout. Under the direction of Dr. Kathleen Harrison, the Harambee Project is helping Upendo Village clients to help themselves. Beautiful jewelry is sold, and proceeds pay for supplies and then go to the craft makers. A more



Most people in the area have no access to clean water

recent project is teaching clients how to create beautiful bags from discarded plastic.. These are already becoming best sellers!

Mission Statement

The Mission of Upendo Village is to spread the Gospel message of love to women, men and their children, who have HIV/AIDS so that they can live with dignity, self-esteem, self-sufficiency and respect. We are committed to networking with other agencies and providing healthcare so that our clients can enjoy a free and full life.

Upendo, the Kiswahili word for Love. We are building a village of love and hope for women and their children living with HIV/AIDS In Kenya.

Contact Information

Theresa Langfield, OSF
Executive Director
P.O. Box 667
Wheaton, IL 60187
630-909-6604
Email: contact
@upendovillage.org

Kenya Contact

Sister Florence Muia, ASN
Upendo Village
P.O. Box 1919-20117
Naivasha, Kenya
Email: admin@upendovillage.org

Thank you to those, who provided content for this *Update*:

Pat Merryweather,
Mary Jane Trinkus and
Sister Florence Muia

Web Links

www.upendovillage.org
To read Pat Merryweather's full account, please visit:
www.napervillerotary.com/pdf/upendo_village_09_08.pdf

See more regarding the Joliet Teams visit to UV at

Bee Hives, Chicken & Goats: The dairy goat project is growing as the 21 initially-donated goats are kidding. Each dairy goat produces 1½ to 2 liters of milk daily. This is enough to provide the family with nutrition as well as income from the remaining milk that is sold. The first kid from each goat is given to Upendo Village to share with others. Thoughtful Donors are helping to pay for specially bred chickens (\$8.50 each) and goats (\$85.00 each). Harambee, which means "all put together" in Swahili, is certainly well named!

Water Well

One of the centerpieces of Upendo Village is the water well and de-fluoridation system, made possible by generosity of Rotary clubs of Naperville. The well supplies Upendo Village and its clients with clean water for all their needs. A water kiosk can be accessed on the outside of Upendo Village without ever entering Upendo Village. Through the kiosk community residents can take advantage of the clean water service.

Medical and Construction Experts From Joliet Illinois Give Selflessly

The Joliet team of 30 volunteers – surgeons, physicians, nurses, lab technicians, a physical therapist, and six skilled construction workers - ranging age from 30 to 78 spent two weeks in the area in September. Eighty-six surgeries were performed in a hospital near Upendo Village In a very poor hospital near Upendo Village seventy-nine major and seven minor surgeries were performed with skill and compassion and pre and post operative care were given. In addition hundreds of patients were cared for at Upendo Village. All these loving volunteers paid their own way and gave selflessly throughout the trip despite being exhausted from the rigorous surgery and patient visit schedules and construction work. The medical team was In addition to The construction crew, (5 men and one woman) who built four 20' by 12' homes and remodeled another in just 12 days.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

The needs of the people in Upendo Village and Naivasha are vast. However, with grass roots involvement of the people. Sister Florence has developed multiple ways to make a positive difference in the lives of her people. With this *Update* we hope to raise much-needed funds at least \$50,000 to help



with operations – staffing, supplies, vehicle upkeep. Capital needs are sought throughout the year, largely through grant requests, special appeals and generous donors. Other needs are funded in targeted ways, e.g. the CUSP program for education of our children and purchase of goats and chickens. We hope that readers will join hands and hearts in our global village of the heart that extends from Kenya to all parts of our country. Perhaps **your** church, school or organization will have an event or special collection or, perhaps, you and/or your family will want to contribute in whatever way you are able. Of course, we count on your prayers.

We hope that the accounts within this *Update* assure each one that your donations to Upendo Village are well-utilized, providing vital needs for the clients of Upendo Village and residents of Naivasha. We view Sister Florence as a beacon of hope for her suffering people and she views the Rotary Clubs, organizations, churches, and individuals that continue to give or will give for the first time, as beacons of hope for her, her staff and volunteers and for all those, whom they serve They are forever grateful.



And so are Robert Njoroge and I!

Sister Theresa Langfield,
Executive Director