



Upendo Village

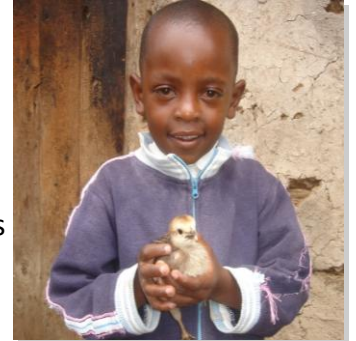
Life and Hope for Kenyans Living With HIV & AIDS

The Assumption Sisters of Nairobi Are Building a Global Village of Love

November 2010

Dear Friends,

I bring you greetings, best wishes and heartfelt gratitude from Upendo Village. We simply cannot thank you enough for continuing to be an important part of our mission – a mission that brings a beacon of life and hope for thousands of Kenyans living with HIV/AIDS.



The stories at Upendo Village are powerful – stories of despair, poverty, extreme illness and hopelessness. The people who come to Upendo Village are resilient – filled with tragic life experiences, yet seeking refuge and help when all seems impossible. At Upendo Village, we take pride knowing that our model programs, dedication, spirit and a resilience of our own empower those who set foot in our Village.

As we enter this holiday season, I want take this opportunity to share a few stories that will help you better understand why we continue to build upon our mission of life and hope:

Six year-old Robert, an HIV positive orphan, lost his parents at an early age. His only living relative, the wife of his great uncle, is an elderly woman who is doing her best to tenderly care for him. Robert is an amazing child who still tries to hold tight to life and hope. He and his guardian are responding with warm smiles as they are being embraced by the loving care of Upendo Village. Caregivers have provided them with nutrition and medical care, and Robert is even able to attend school. And – with the generosity of donors who provided chickens and goats, Robert and his great aunt have some means of supporting themselves by starting their own farming business.



Joseph, age four and his seven-year-old sister, Joyline are the youngest of eight children and they too, are HIV positive. Their oldest sister Patricia, age 24, asked Upendo Village for help after their mother died in 2008, and she was left with the challenge of caring for her seven siblings. She and her 22-year old brother Nivelles, depend upon casual jobs such as cultivating land by hand to help sustain the family, but it was Joseph and Joyline for whom they were most worried. Through the caring hand of Upendo Village, Joseph and Joyline are enrolled in the Kids Club, a supportive program for HIV positive children. Upendo Village is also aiding Joseph's entire family with nutrition and counseling. Today – with the generosity of a donor, Joseph's pre-school and medical care expenses are covered, and eldest sister Patricia still has a dream to study social work. Maybe ... this dream could become a reality with the stewardship of Upendo Village.

The stories above are a tangible account to both the reality of the world surrounding Upendo Village and the successes of their programs. Upendo Village not only works to provide basic needs such as food and medication to women, vulnerable orphans, child-headed households and elderly guardians but also promotes self-reliance through comprehensive programs that support income generating activities, education, prenatal care, support groups, voluntary testing, counseling, rape prevention and legal needs.

Without the stewardship and generosity of our donors, Upendo Village would be unable to sustain its critical programs. It is together, with our charitable partners, that we are able to make a true, tangible and meaningful difference in the lives of so many Kenyans living with HIV/AIDS. Like many organizations in these challenging economic times, we have cut costs in every way possible with minimal staffing and stringent budgeting. This, coupled with a rapidly growing clientele – more than 4,000 per month – a 49% increase over last year at this time – makes it extremely challenging to provide the programs that contribute to our “global village of love.”



I leave you with one final thought from a well respected leader in our community: *“Upendo Village provides the people in this area with the only help and assistance that is available. How Sr. Florence accomplishes all this with only minimum support is a minor miracle,”* said Joseph Imesch, retired Bishop of Joliet upon his return from service at Upendo Village with a mission team last year. *“I have traveled to other parts of Africa, but I was not prepared to see the poverty that exists in Kenya. Upendo Village and the Sisters represent the only hope for many of the people. I heartily endorse any efforts to support Sr. Florence and her coworkers.”*

On behalf of Sister Florence Muia, founder and president of Upendo Village, and her partners, The Assumption Sister of Nairobi and The Wheaton Franciscans, we thank you for considering a charitable gift to Upendo Village. *“I want to take this opportunity to thank all our donors who have continued to support our project,”* said Sister Florence. *“We have been able to touch and change the lives of many clients who have lost hope and a sense of living. Challenges come and pass and we move on with life. I, with all our clients, send blessings on our donors and on all the staff and volunteers, who serve tirelessly.”*

For more information, we invite you to read the enclosed newsletter that includes up-to-date happenings and positive results from the meaningful work at Upendo Village.

Blessings for a wonderful holiday season and New Year!

Peace and all good,
Sister Theresa

Sr. Theresa Langfield, OSF
Executive Director

P.S. As you consider your holiday giving plans for this year, we ask that Upendo Village be on your minds and in your hearts. Your \$100 gift will provide basic needs and hope for those who have none.