

GOOD NEWS

SUMMER EDITION - JULY 2009

HIV/AIDS MINISTRY

By RODNEY SUDDITH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



EVERY MINUTE FIVE PEOPLE DIE OF HIV/AIDS!

OVER 24,000,000 PEOPLE LIVING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA ARE LIVING WITH HIV!

HIV infection rates have leveled off in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, but not in Northern Uganda or Nairobi, Kenya. These locations remain in the epicenter of the global HIV pandemic. In Northern Uganda the HIV rate is approaching 18% of the population of those 16 and over, while the rate in the slums of Nairobi is reportedly even higher. Only 10% of the world's population lives in Sub-Saharan Africa but it is home to over 60% of those living with HIV.

Women are disproportionately affected. Poverty and cultural issues leave women with little power to negotiate for safer sex and monogamous relationships. Young women, in particular, are three times more likely to be infected than young men.

HIV and AIDS also affect children, more so in Kenya and Uganda than in just about any other place in the world--reports indicate that 15 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Children have to drop out of school to care for dying parents and younger siblings. Orphaned, they are at greater risk of malnutrition, illness, and abuse which can increase their susceptibility to HIV infection.

The risk of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS can be practically eliminated with proper treatment and information. Unfortunately this information is rarely available to mothers in Africa and only a fraction of these children have access to basic support services, let alone the treatments that could prolong their lives.

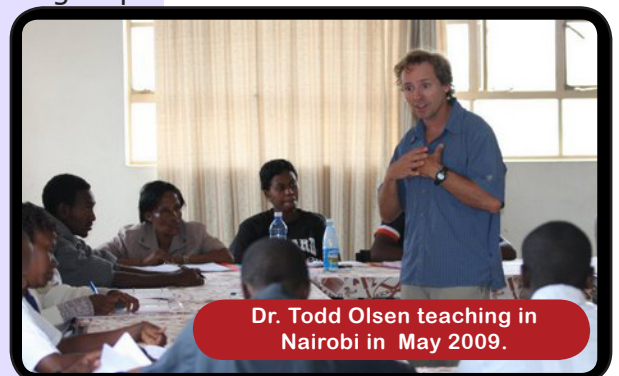
THE STATISTICS ARE BLEAK ... BUT ... SPORTS OUTREACH IS THERE

Every day, Sports Outreach caregivers, Esther Kyazze in Gulu, Uganda and Carol Wachira in Nairobi, Kenya, visit families affected by HIV/AIDS. Esther, Carol and others on the Sports Outreach staff have formed and lead HIV/AIDS Support and Care Groups that provide fellowship, education, spiritual nurture and practical assistance. Once formed, these groups reach out and invite others to join the group or form new ones. These groups have proven to be a great source of encouragement and stability as the members compassionately care and assist one another.

Sports Outreach has recently teamed up with Lynchburg College in Lynchburg, Virginia to provide a certification program in Public Health and HIV/AIDS Treatment and Awareness for SOM staff and volunteers. Dr. Todd Olsen, professor of epidemiology at Lynchburg College, was in Uganda and Kenya last month and trained over 80



SOM Gulu staff member Christine is also part of the AIDS Support Group in Gulu.



Dr. Todd Olsen teaching in Nairobi in May 2009.

SOM potential caregivers. Together with previously trained staff and volunteers these newly certified SOM partners are armed with good, up-to-date, practical information needed to educate the local population about HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention and treatment.

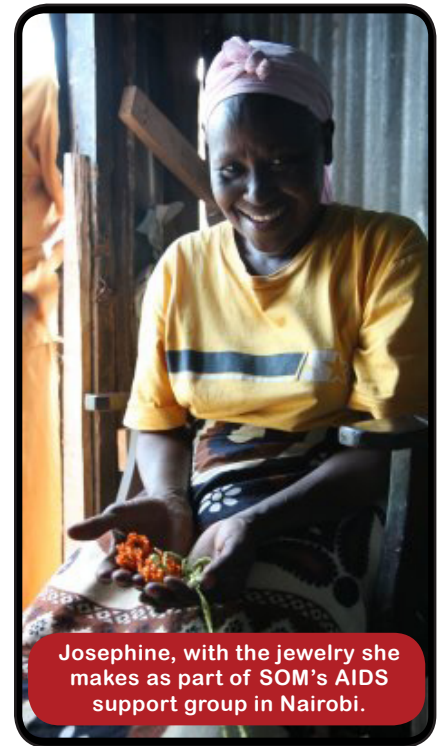
Along with educational help, Sports Outreach offers small micro-finance loans that help HIV/AIDS affected women start up small businesses or farming projects to provide food, shelter and education for their children. The Sports Outreach staff walks alongside these women praying with them and assisting them in all areas of life. HIV/AIDS affected women and children face ostracism and alienation from a culture that fears and does not understand how HIV/AIDS spreads or how it can be treated. More than offering good information and practical resources, Sports Outreach staff are becoming friends and mentors to women and children who face so many difficult challenges.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- ✦ **Pray** – please pray for all those affected by HIV/AIDS as well as the SOI staff and volunteers who serve and assist them.
- ✦ **Raise Awareness** – Set up information tables at your school, workplace or church. You can get fact sheets from HIV/AIDS awareness agencies or from your city's public health office. Or contact our office for information specific to the areas served by Sports Outreach staff and volunteers.
- ✦ **Fundraise** – Hold a fundraiser at your workplace or church to raise money for HIV/AIDS care and treatment programs or to help provide more micro-loans to those affected. Perhaps even raise money to help cover the cost of educational training and distribution of appropriate literature.
- ✦ **Give** – Complete the enclosed Response Card to make a donation to support the on-going ministry of Sports Outreach to HIV/AIDS affected individuals and families. Your gift will be used to financially support staff, provide additional training and education, assist HIV/AIDS affected women and children with a micro-finance loan, as well as, help feed and educate the children who have lost one or both parents.

Sports Outreach Institute is compelled by the unconditional love of God, witnessed to and manifested through Christ's healing ministry, to join efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. Providing care and treatment to those who are already infected and ill, upholding the preciousness of God's creation through the sharing of the Gospel, and being messengers of hope, mercy, and reconciliation to the poorest of the poor is just the beginning in answering the call of James 1:27:

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."



Josephine, with the jewelry she makes as part of SOM's AIDS support group in Nairobi.



SOI staff members, Rodney Suddith & Deborah Hallgren, visiting Mary's Home in Nairobi.



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A higher purpose.*