



Progress Report

March through May 2011

Compiled by Elias Mashishi and Melissa Stachowiak Peace Corps Volunteer

Accomplishments:

HIV Campaign

Rendering service to the community is still vital for Mmametlhake Family Care Centre. We recently had another successful HIV campaign in a nearby village within the Dr J.S. Moroka Municipality. Attracting people of all ages to the campaign, we continued to educate our community members in the importance of HIV prevention and testing.

The campaign included testimonies from two local women living with HIV. They discussed the challenges they have overcome and the importance

of getting tested and protecting one's self from contracting the virus. Between speeches the crowd was entertained by a local gospel singer and the entire audience engaged in dancing. The campaign also included a presentation by the local Victim Empowerment Centre. They discussed how victims of domestic violence and child neglect can obtain help.

We are happy with the response of the community and the interest that they show to having information. As they say, "knowledge is power". It is what we are striving to do in our community – to empower them with knowledge.



Counsellor Peter Letswalo addressing those attending the HIV awareness campaign.



Pastor France introducing Granny Onnicah, a woman who shared her story of living with HIV.

Teenage Pregnancy Presentation

The Mmametlhake Family Care Centre was invited by the Department of Education in the Tshwane School District to come and address the youth that gathered together at Philadelphia High School in Soshanguve on Saturday, May 14th. They had leaders from schools around Tshwane District and seventy learners attended.

Pastor France and Melisa travelled to the school to address the students. They presented information to the students about preventing teen pregnancy and a brief introduction to the True Love Waits program.

Melisa's presentation included ways to prevent pregnancy and strategies to talk to their peers and help them do the same. She really talked about the

sensitive issues of life. The young people were challenged when she asked them if they know how much it costs per year to raise a child and how little the grant money many of the girls want is in comparison. When bringing out the figures, youth were so challenged.

Two young people ended up sharing with the group what is really happening in their families. One of the girls shared what it is like growing up without a father. Tears were all over their faces because they really needed help. Pastor France visited their homes and talked to their parents in Winterveld (South of Pretoria) and advised them to visit their local Pastor to receive ongoing counselling. After a recent follow up, the families and girls are doing just fine.

Pastor France had an opportunity to introduce the True Love Waits program to them. The educators really loved it and would like us to bring it to their schools when the school opens next quarter. Overall the presentation went well and had great results.



Ruth, working with children in the after school program.

Activities:

After School Program

Fifty-six children attend the after school programs run by the Centre from area primary schools in Mmametlhake. Ruth does activities with the children (about twenty of whom attend on any given day) Tuesday through Thursday such as practice with their numbers, colouring activities,

outdoor games, and bible stories.

Other Programs

The Centre is experiencing visitors almost every day. Some ask about the services that the centre is rendering to the community. Learners from secondary school and high school come to the Centre for assistance with their assignments. The computer studies were just resumed in the month of May. People are showing interest again even though there is no certificate issued, but they are looking forward to come for practice and to improve their skills.

Challenges:

Our home based care (HBC) workers face challenges while trying hard to improve the well being of the community. A challenge one of the HBC workers is facing is a family conflict between a mother and daughter. They are fighting because the mother believes the daughter isn't contributing around the house. The mother was away for many years, leaving

them to take care of themselves. However, when the mother became sick and HIV positive, she came home looking for care from her daughter. The daughter is now also HIV positive and not well, she herself refusing to go to the clinic for treatment. The daughter is in a critical situation.

Another challenge faced by our HBC workers is the difficulty their clients have in getting their medications due to transport. Their family members don't care for them or accompany them for their medical check-ups. When some are getting better (especially males) they start drinking alcohol and smoking dagga and stop taking their medications.

Words of Appreciation From Our Client's Families:

I want to thank the Centre for taking care of the deceased. They brought some small groceries to help with the funeral. When they dropped them off, the pastor also helped us with the grieving process. We appreciate the Centre's help.

Thank you for the interest and support that you are giving to the Mmametlhake family care centre.