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Helping women with HIV and Aids in South Africa find hope in Jesus Christ.

January 2008 Newsletter:

SEWING CLASSES:

A total of 19 women and men attended two sewing courses that lasted the year-the beginner class of twelve women and that advanced class of seven students. The twelve new students received their new sewing machines at the December 11 graduation. The advanced class received certificates to mark their accomplishment.

We were pleased to have Merle Prince with us for an eight day teaching course attended by 17 students. As a result there is a new assistant teacher to the 2008 class.

For 2008, we plan to conduct two six terms courses with a maximum of twelve students. The first term which has started will end in July and the second will start in August and end in December. Thanks to the generous support of the VAWMU and others, we, for the first time were able to purchase new sewing machines for our classes.

COMPUTER CLASSES

During the year there were nineteen students, most of who came from the sewing class and six others who came in for a short time from the Living Hope Health Care Center. At our December graduation, eleven of the sewing students received Certificates of Completion for their computer work.

BUSINESS TRAINING

Eight students received certificates for their participation in a Business course taught by Rev. Steven Nicholson from ServLife. They also worked individually with a MBA student from the United States who went to their homes and counseled with them.

EVANGELINE MINISTRIES/LIVING HOPE/LIVING WAY

Evangeline Ministries works in partnership with the Rev. John Thomas, pastor of Fish Hoek Baptist Church and Chairman of the Trust of the Living Way Community Center I assist John Thomas with writing articles as needed. In 2007, I helped him prepare a submission that won him and the church the first International Courageous Church Leadership Award from Bill Hybels of the Willow Creek Church and World Vision. Because of the recognition this award gave him, Rev. Thomas was one of the featured speakers at Rick and Kay Warren's annual summit on HIV and AIDS at the Saddleback Church.

As a result of the model set by the skill training and subsequent bag cottage industry by the women, Rev. Thomas was encouraged to start a new organization called Living Way to address the economic issues that underlie this growing HIV pandemic in South Africa.

SAVINGS CLUBS

Because the women and men in this project are often denied access to the banking system here, Living Way has begun savings clubs with our students to encourage them to save and help them grow economically.

LOOKING AHEAD

This South Africa project is now in its third year. We have seen great progress, especially in the style of project. We now use four teachers, all of whom are from the informal settlement of Masiphumelele from which the students come. For the first time this year, we planned the classes together and their input was very good. They are excited about their involvement. My prayer and goal is to increase their skills so they will one day, two to three years, be able to run this program, mostly on their own.

BAGS ENTERPRISE

In 2006, we began to make African print tote bags as a class project. This small business has grown and now provides significant income for 12 women and men. Plans are underway with Living Way to increase this work project. VAWMU has helped us by selling bags at the meetings and we would love to continue this.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Everything we do here is done in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and our intention is to make disciples to follow Jesus. Almost all of the students come with some spiritual background but little knowledge of the Bible. At all of our classes I read and discuss the Scripture and pray with them after our afternoon tea time. I can see the change already but even better is the testimony from one of our students, Beauty. She told me how much she loved the tea, but even more that time of opening up the Bible. Our sewing teacher Namgamso is now involved in a Bible study and Siphokazi is an evangelist in the neighborhood.

HOW WMU CAN HELP

PRAY FOR ME

I cannot begin to tell you how much I appreciate those people who pray for me when sometimes I cannot do it for myself. I have a lot of responsibility to make all the things go, and the needs are huge and never ending. HIV and AIDS take a big toll on a person's life, kills their self worth and makes them even poorer than they are. I cannot and must not do this in my own strength. Pray for:

- wisdom for the daily decisions I must make
- the teachers and students
- safety on the roads and at home
- an end to HIV and AIDS
- Living Hope which ministers to people with HIV and AIDS and runs prevention programs for children, youth and adults
- for continued excellent health

CONTINUE TO GIVE

Our program is based on giving women the tools to help them build better lives. This is the reason we give them brand new sewing machines when they graduate. Anyone who desires can help purchase a new sewing machine for US \$130.

We desire to have South African businesses and people donate computer equipment but if someone desire to purchase one for the class, the cost is \$US 800 for a desk top.