

UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND VISITS KZN HIV AND AIDS DESK !

In May of this year, through the referral of Rev. Patrick Coltman, two delegates from Scotland visited the KZN Region. They visited many ministries in our region, including Eastwood, Noodsberg, and Groutville. They were so inspired by the work done by the Desk and the various ministries that they returned home to raise funds to bring a work group from Scotland later in the year to construct playground equipment at some of the sites they visited.



Thafamasi Purchases Stoves, Cylinder, and Pots for Soup Kitchen

Rev. Zodwa Mzoneli explained to the Desk that a soup kitchen is being run for about 40 Sunday School children, many of whom are positive orphans. Funds are scarce for this ministry, as most of the church members are pensioners. The Desk has agreed to sponsor the purchase of equipment that will enable the food to be cooked locally at the church, rather than from kwaDukuza (Stanger).

Editorial:

Situation between Manto and Routledge a Shame for the UCCSA!

Both the axed Deputy Health Minister (Routledge) and the current Health Minister (Msimang) are graduates of the UCCSA's Inanda Seminary. They both received a holistic Christian education that was intended to prepare them for a world full of complications and temptations. The Desk feels that the current state of affairs in the Department of Health, towing the AIDS-denial-ism line, has long been deplorable. However, with the sacking of the Deputy Minister for reacting to a health crisis in East London and for attending a scientific forum in Spain held to seek epidemiological paths toward alleviating the greatest health crisis in South Africa today, the situation has reached new depths of embarrassment. It is deeply saddening that cooperation between two 'Old Girls' could not be reached concerning the single most catastrophic epidemic facing our country. Both leaders have spoken at Inanda Seminary where Shale and Rev. Susan Valiquette counsel many young girls who are secretly positive. What example of leadership is Routledge providing those girls? Conviction, sacrifice, truth-telling, and faith. What example of leadership is Manto demonstrating? Denial, personal entrenchment, privilege, arrogance, and obedience to power. The battle to decrease HIV and AIDS in South Africa has lost a warrior and is left with a minister that should be convicted of 'culpable inertia.' The prophetic stance by Routledge is to be admired. She has lived out her faith, and paid dearly for it. We pray that millions with HIV do not now also have to sacrifice.

KZN HIV and AIDS Desk

United Congregational Church

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ITHEMBA LOMUSA

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Bethel Congregational Church Adopts Cebelihle Orphanage

Ms. Princess Msane, a new member of Bethel introduced the Cebelihle (outside Pietermaritzburg) as an outreach opportunity to the church. On 17 March, members of the church visited the ministry and were amazed at the work being done by so few and with so little. In April, on Easter Sunday, all the Cebelihle children and caregivers attended morning worship at Bethel, treated to a lunch, a movie, an afternoon at the Botanical Gardens, and finally evening worship at Berea Congregational Church that hosted them for supper! During its Members' Meeting on Sunday, 24 June 2007 the church agreed to support the Cebelihle with a monthly contribution towards the purchase of food and other expenses incurred by the home. The manager of the ministry, Delly Sibisi, regularly travels all the way from Pietermaritzburg to worship at Bethel, bringing some of the children in tow. The Desk recently sponsored the school tuition at the Marion Primary School for one promising child at Cebelihle, Nosipho Mohlakoana (Grade 5). The Desk encourages all churches to partner with others and cooperate to take care of the most vulnerable.

Shale and KZN Health MEC Nkonyeni



CD Launch Celebrates + Life!

On Sunday, 20 September 2007 at the Pietermaritzburg City Hall, Ms. Hanelien Anthony (daughter of Rev. Awie Booysen of Eastwood United Church) entertained all by singing selections from her newly released album "Reach Out for Me." The performance was as professional and inspiring as the CD is. The CD was sponsored by the First Congregational Church of Winter Park (FL, USA), Global Ministries, and the Desk. The CD highlights issues related to HIV and AIDS, faith, and love and will be sold in the USA, Europe, and to delegates attending the UCCSA Assembly. CDs can be purchased from the KZN Region at a cost of only R 60.00. All proceeds from the CD will contribute to the various ministries under the auspices of EASHCOR-FS.

NATIONAL STRIKE EFFECTS HIV+ UCCSA MEMBERS

The national strike affecting the health care industry took its toll on members of our churches who could not access vital antiretroviral medications. Those members known to the Desk were able to access "bridging funds" to pay for medication. The Desk facilitated their appointments with a private doctor and pharmacy. Those taking anti-retrovirals can not stop taking them. Doing so increases the possibility of building a resistance to the medications. The expense of consultations, lab fees, and new medications prevents those who had to stop from starting again with a new regime.

KZN HIV and AIDS DESK Budget Breaks the R 100,000.00 Barrier!

Although ministry can not be solely evaluated by finances, finances can point to the fact that exciting things are happening and that the work being done is worthy of support by others. Ms. Nomvula Shale's arrival to the Desk has greatly increased its exposure to the members of our churches; so many clamor for her counsel. This year the Desk has embarked upon many projects that seek to bring the Desk to the members, through the radio (96.8 FM Imbokodo, Thursdays 5-6pm), through music ("Reach Out for Me"), through counseling, through education, and investment in local church's efforts to minister to their communities. Shale's ability to sensitively tell her story encourages those who travel from overseas to want to share in our work. However, the Desk has not simply relied on Regional funds or donations from overseas. By selling memorial pins (R 10.00), devotional CDs (R 50.00) and cassettes (R 25.00) produced by Shale, the Desk has sought to combine its outreach initiatives with means by which to financially support other work. A large budget was needed this year to support Shale's travel to so many of our churches each Sunday, bringing the HIV and AIDS quilt to even our most rural churches. Thus far, for 2007, the Desk is expected to raise over R 112,000.00 and spend over R 106,000.00 on equipping local churches and members to serve those most affected by HIV and AIDS.

"Gracious God, guide us with love, peace, healing, and happiness. Make us relevant; make us faithful. May we be extensions of You. Amen."