

March
2008

Freitas Flyer

HIV Happenings:

A lot has been happening in the area of HIV and AIDS education! On January 29 the Maasai AIDS network held its first major HIV education event. It was a smashing success with over 200 people in attendance! More than 15 different organizations participated in sponsoring the event in one way or another. Our partners from the Maasai Pastoralists for Evangelism and Development (MAPED) provided most of the "entertainment" with their singing and several speakers gave encouragement and testimonies about



being tested for HIV. The event was directed at Maasai who live and work in Arusha town. Most of these young people work as night watchmen and work to bring money back to the village in order to help their families. Many of these young men are at very high risk for contracting HIV and then taking it with them to their villages. Each of the 10 MAPED members was tested for HIV and none were infected! This news was a tremendous encouragement to them. Over

the following several days, we took them to several areas in the city where Maasai young men "hang out" and to a village and school (about an hour drive from Arusha) where they sang and taught about HIV. They were very excited to say they had all just been tested for HIV and to encourage others to be tested as well. The reception was overwhelmingly positive at each location. Many people responded saying they were willing to be tested for HIV. In the past Maasai have not believed they could contract HIV and have been very resistant to testing; this is a tremendous breakthrough!

On February 1, the film crew for the Maasai AIDS education video arrived. We spent the next two weeks driving, interviewing, directing, and capturing video for the production. It was one of the most challenging and exciting things I have done in my life! The pre-taping activities included building a storyline and culture appropriate theme for the video and then trying to pull all of the pieces together to make



*Media 7 video crew filming in Olbili
(Paul Bahn and Bob Rosenbaum, from Modesto)*

it work. While some interviews fell through, others appeared as divine appointments that hopefully will prove to be even more valuable.

One of the major miracles of production was the “chance” connection with Dr. Motika who is a Maasai doctor who heads the department of Tuberculosis, HIV, and Malaria for the Tanzanian Ministry of Health. Dr. Motika reviewed and translated much of the raw video footage. His assessment of the video content was extremely positive. He stated that the video production is, “exactly what Maasai need to hear.” He even said of the young warriors who told their story, “They know more about HIV than I do!” Wow, what incredible encouragement! It was so nice to hear our efforts to bring HIV education have “stuck” and these young men are able to express themselves so effectively to teach their own people. The video editing is now in progress and we expect to see a finished product by early June.



CHE among the Maasai

Community Health Evangelism (CHE) training continues moving along. In November, Holly's cousin, Eric, and his wife, Leah, came to help with a health screening in the first target community and organizational capacity training for MAPED. The health screening led to a community meeting where the results were presented to the community by members of MAPED. Three hundred and twenty people were screened for common preventable illnesses and health behaviors, such as sleeping beneath mosquito nets and using latrines. This screening typically brings awareness to the community about their health status and health education needs, and it did just that! As we sat and listened to the community meeting we were cheering inside! Participants suggested forming a health committee and then educating people who would take health education from home-to-home; **exactly** the strategy of CHE! Since then we have held another week-long training for MAPED members in our home and a CHE health committee has been formed in the target village of Obili **and** a neighboring village! The program has multiplied before it has even started! Only God can do that! Praise Him!

President Bush visits Arusha!

Excitement was in the air and all of the roads were closed due to President Bush's visit to Arusha. Bob and Paul, our video crew, were supposed to be leaving, but couldn't get to the airport, so what better to do than to try to see the President! Hundreds of people lined the streets and we joined them, finding a great place in the front, right on the street. We waited and waited and finally the motorcade passed. Just as the third car passed, there was President Bush, waving at us! It does help that we “stuck out” from the crowd. As we waited along the road in another part of town, on the way to the airport, the motorcade passed again and this time Laura smiled and waved when she saw us! When we finally arrived at the Arusha airport;



the flight was delayed, but we had a very fun chat with the crew of Marine One, the support helicopter for the President. It was a fun day and felt really good to have “our guys” on the Tanzania soil.

Picture taken from Yahoo! News: U.S. President George W. Bush is escorted by Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete as he waves goodbye before departing Julius Nyerere International Airport in Tanzania's capital Dar es Salaam February 19, 2008. Bush is on his way to Rwanda, the third leg of a five-nation tour. *REUTERS/Antony Njuguna (TANZANIA)*

Tony's Technology Corner:

Clean Water in Olbili

As we spend more time with the Maasai in their villages we are constantly discovering new problems that need to be addressed. It is tempting to bring them the solutions before they ever discover the problems themselves, but that's not the way Community Health Evangelism (CHE) works. We give the community the time they need to discover their problem and then guide them through the process of finding a solution. By giving them this time the community takes ownership of their problem and, most importantly, the solution.

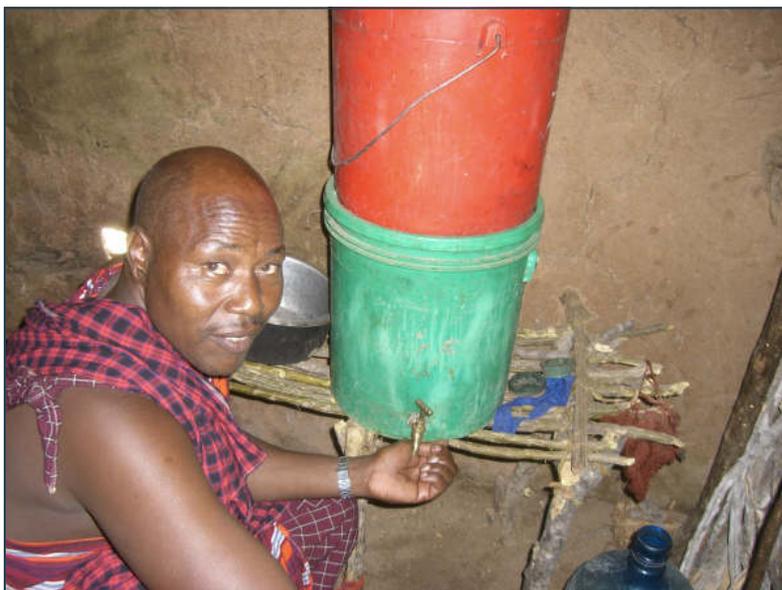


When we began working with Maasai I had some discussions with the village leadership concerning their water. During our discussions I learned that in the prior year the village had many deaths from Typhoid. I thought to myself, "Wow these people must know just how bad their water is." I thought somewhere during our conversation they would ask if I had a way to help them find a solution to clean their water. The question never came, nor did they realize the seriousness of their problem. We revisited this issue many times over the past year, and in September the village leaders asked if there was a way to test the water in a way the community could visually see what is in the water so they might understand what is making them sick. We put some of the river water they drink daily in a test vial with a smorgasbord of food that helps bacteria reproduce. Within 24 hours we had a vial so full of bacteria we could no longer see through it. The village leaders took this to many different Bomas (Maasai homes). They told the people that when they drink the water it may look

okay, but when it is in their body it turns into the yellow, smelly water in the vial. They explained how this water was what was making the people sick. Finally the community met and decided they needed to do something.



In October they asked if I could help them make a simple, inexpensive filter. We looked to see what might be available in the village and found that buckets and sand were available in most of the homes and simple inexpensive pipe fittings were available in town. I helped them develop a very simple filter. After training the CHE trainers they, in turn, trained some of the community members. Now people all around the village are making water filters for themselves and their neighbors. This was a slow and sometimes painful experience, but definitely worth the wait. The people who have the filters are reporting the health of their family and children has improved significantly. The total cost to complete each filter is less than \$5! What a great solution for better health.



The Maasai have a CHE office

Last Month a team from our home church in Modesto, Mill Creek, came to visit and help construct a roof on an office building for the Maasai non-governmental organization (NGO) we are training to do CHE. It is a requirement of the government for any NGO in Tanzania to have a physical place of operation to be considered legitimate. The Maasai had already constructed the walls, but did not have the skills or training necessary to complete the roof.



Many Maasai "Morani" Warriors were very excited to learn how to construct a roof and we discovered very quickly that many of them can swing a hammer as good as any carpenter I have seen in the states. The Maasai are very thankful for Mill Creek Church and their willingness to sacrifice their time and money to help them with this very important project.

Thanks Mill Creek!



*Tony, Holly,
Lauren, and Devin
Freitas*