

Amesbury for Africa News

Volume #16

Fall 2003

Two visitors from Kenya learn about HIV/AIDS prevention

EXCHANGE VISIT--FOCUS ON AIDS

“HIV virus is the biggest danger we are facing,” says Sherry Otwoma - one of two Kenyans who visited Amesbury this summer. “Our duty is to learn what we can so that others may not suffer and die.” Sherry is the advisor of the Esabalu Youth Group and also a member of Esabalu Health Group in Amesbury’s Sister Village of Esabalu in Western Kenya. She and three others have been trained by Kenya AIDS Intervention Prevention Project Group (KAIPPG) to be the ones to organize prevention efforts. James Mukanda, our other HIV project visitor, is a volunteer at KAIPPG. Their AIDS exchange visit was funded by a grant from Sister Cities International. The two arrived in Amesbury in July and attended a leadership training in St. Louis with other grant recipients from Kenya and Ghana. On returning to Amesbury they began an intensive training program which was organized by OASIS AIDS Services in Danvers. They visited testing

Congressman John Tierney met with Annette Christian, Mark Bean, Sherry Otwoma and James Muckanda to Welcome our Visitors

centers, a group home for HIV patients, the Lemuel Shattuck Hospital, and a homeless clinic in Haverhill. They met with a nutritionist, an AIDS outreach worker, a case manager, and a youth group facilitator. Sherry and James also attended youth meetings and a meeting of the OASIS client advisory board. “We now feel prepared to serve as resource persons to the people in Esabalu,” concludes James. “The exposure we have gained in visiting the U.S has given us much confidence in handling AIDS issues.” On returning to Kenya James and

Sherry have developed a three month timeline for community education. The goals are to establish resource persons as centers of AIDS information and counseling, to hold an “AIDS Awareness Week” campaign, and to design and distribute AIDS brochures to schools, women’s groups, churches and public places. “We look forward to showing Amesbury visitors the fruits of our work when they come,” say James and Sherry. (Kat Couree, Mary Ann Moughan, and Chris King will visit Esabalu in January on part 2 of the exchange.)

Annual Meeting Sept. 24

The Annual Meeting of Amesbury for Africa will be Wednesday September 24th at 6:30 PM at the home of current president Ruth Whaley, 220 N. End Boulevard, Salisbury. A report on the Peak’s Island Retreat will outline exchanges and other activities for the coming year. We will also elect new officers. President - Mike Donohue. V.P. - Bernadette Lucas. Secretary - Mark Bean. Treasurer - Gay Main. New members and those interested in travel to Kenya are welcome to attend.

AFA Now on the Web

A big AFA thank you to Ms. Hillary Straw who headed up a six month effort to create a beautiful and informative website highlighting the 15 year history of the Amesbury/Esabalu linkage. Our new web address is www.amesburyforafrica.org Click on the tabs at the site and you can check out the calendar, the photo galleries, membership information and other features of our new site.

News from Esabalu

TRAINING OF TRAINERS

Jerusa Ongondo, the newly elected Chairman of Esabalu Self Help Group, and two youth leaders - Samuel Estikah and David Orao attended a seminar this summer at the Kenya Aids Intervention Prevention Project Group in Mumias. The two week course led to their certification as AIDS trainers. The course included instruction in home based care of HIV affected patients and educating others about AIDS prevention. Family counseling and how to train families to take care of the family member with AIDS was stressed. "We learnt good nutrition practices and how to reduce the stigma and fear of AIDS among family and friends of the AIDS patient," says team leader Jerusa. "The youths especially benefited from teaching about safe sex practices. The ABC's of AIDS prevention are: Abstinence, Being faithful to your partner, and Condoms." Following their graduation the three volunteers are certified to train others in what they have learned.

COMMUNITY MOBILIZES AGAINST HIV

On May 13-16 a joint AIDS leadership conference sponsored by Amesbury for Africa and KAIPPG was held in Luanda for leaders in the Esabalu community. The purpose of the four day seminar was to teach community leaders about AIDS and to encourage them to spread the word about HIV prevention to their groups. There were 28 women and 24 men who took seminar including leaders of church groups, schools, women's groups and youth groups as well as the local government administrators. One topic was presented each day: Day 1-Communication, Day 2-Leadership, Day 3- Income Generating Activities and Day 4 -Home Based Care. The leaders were trained to

identify families that might be affected by AIDS and to direct them to appropriate resource persons to obtain help for those families who are suffering. Fear of AIDS and discrimination against AIDS patients was discussed. Stigmatization and exclusion of families who have an ill family member is a common concern. The leaders agreed to increase AIDS awareness in their own organizations and to organize a community-wide "AIDS Awareness Week" to fight the fear and stigmatization of AIDS victims.

PRIMARY SCHOOL VISITOR

Amesbury for Africa is working to bring Mr. Tom Amakoye to Amesbury in November for a one month visit. Tom is the Headmaster of Eblulako Primary School in Esabalu. The purpose of his visit is to start a school-to-school exchange program with Cashman Elementary School in Amesbury. Tom will be hosted by Cashman's Principal Mr. Peter Hoyt and will be studying all aspects of primary school education in the U.S. He will also be teaching children in Amesbury about life in Kenya. A pen-pal program and exchange of email are possible outcomes of the visit. During Tom's stay in Amesbury we hope to invite parents and the general community to an African dinner and culture night.

This linkage will be Amesbury's second "sister school" relationship with Esabalu. The Amesbury Elementary School has been linked with Ebussamba Primary School for about 11 years. Teachers, photos, books and artwork have been exchanged between the two schools over the years. Children who studied Esabalu in fourth grade at AES have even visited Esabalu on a teen exchange in 1999! The last AES project was the "buy a book build a library" program that was completed this year.

Next Meetings of Amesbury for Africa:

(meetings are the third Wednesday of each month - call Mark 388-0933 for directions)

September 24 - 6:30 PM - Ruth Whaley's - 220 N. End Blvd. Salisbury 465-2056

October 15 -6:30 PM - Mark Bean's house - 23 Unicorn Circle 388-0933

November 19 - to be announced - call Mark at 388-0933 for info

clip and mail to: Amesbury for Africa, 24 Morrill Place, Amesbury, 01913

Enroll me as a member of Amesbury for Africa for 2003 (Circle one)

Regular member	Sustaining Member	Business	Other
\$15	\$25	\$60	\$ ____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Let's talk. Please call me so I
I can get more involved.