**Background of Sally Test Pædiatric Centre**

Sally Test Pædiatric Centre was started in August 2000 as a 2 hour play program between pediatric wards of Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital by Sarah Ellen Mamlin. This was after she discovered children used to stay in their beds for the whole day with no provisions of play or any other form of entertainment. Sally Test who was our main donor gave money that helped build a play room in 2004. The play room was opened in 2005. STPC has since grown to be a model Child Life centre in Kenya

STPC has continued since then to provide settings for children to experience the hospitalization process with minimal stress and anxiety. The playroom welcomes all children within the hospital to enjoy organized activities from 8AM to 4.30PM daily. Preschool teachers oversee themed activities as children play games, solve puzzles, dance, paint, sing, read books, play outside at our playground, engage in parachute games and even do academic work. Activities are taken to the bedside of non-ambulatory children by Child Life Health Workers and Child Life Assistants.

**Project Activities:**

1. **CHILD LIFE**

Child Life support is the provision of comprehensive psychosocial, developmental, and information services to children and families in order to normalize the hospital environment and cope up with treatment stress, pain and trauma that accompanies hospitalization.

The Sally Test Pædiatric Centre’s Child Life Health Workers prepare children for medical procedures and teach them coping skills so they are less frightened and more familiar with medical equipment and personnel. This aspect becomes very important in a setting where children are not given a chance to express themselves and their views ignored. Child Life Health Workers (CLHWs) do this through medical play, preparation, and explanations of WHY procedures are required and how they can assist the medical team so that children’s anxiety is lessened. CLHWs provide distractions and divert children’s attention during painful procedures while educating parents and encouraging their support.

1. **PLAYROOM**

STPC has a large play area that will allow children able to leave their beds to a safe place to play and grow developmentally. Teachers will provide units of study, games, outdoor activities, dancing, stories and much more throughout the day. The Centre will provide joy and anticipation to many children’s otherwise dull days. Children can access supervised activities from 10AM to 4PM daily. Our outside playground is fairly equipped with a slide, a tree house, a sew saw and two slides.

1. **ABANDONED CHILDREN**

Caring for abandoned children has become an unexpected part of the STPC role. Abandoned infants and toddlers are bathed, diapered, fed, massaged, and given developmental stimulation and love during the day before being returned to the wards each evening. These children receive care in the STPC until they are placed by the District Children’s Officer in nearby orphanages or private homes. Hospital stays may vary between six weeks to a year or more.

1. **OUTREACH**

The STPC Outreach team visits five nearby AMPATH pediatric HIV clinics one day weekly for each clinic to provide activities for young HIV positive patients and health instruction to their parents.

1. **PROJECTS FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS**

When children enjoy play time at the STPC playroom, parents or caregivers can learn sewing from our two machines outside. Getting to interact with other parents with recovering children helps them share their feelings and find comfort among themselves.

Health lessons are offered to parents on Mondays and Fridays by Sally Test and hospital staff