

hope through health

improving health. providing hope.



Winter/Spring 2008



photo by Jared Macary

hope through solidarity

Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to write to you in my new role as Executive Director. I have just returned from a three-month visit to Togo and there is much to be excited about. During my stay I was privileged to participate in the first-ever Community Mobilization Conference. The Conference aimed to generate local support, both political and financial, for the care and treatment of people living with AIDS. In this respect, it was a tremendous success. As the traditional Chief of the Kara region reminded Conference participants, "The time has long passed for talking about AIDS. It is now time to start doing something about it."

Upon returning from Togo I found that similar efforts are underway to generate local support throughout the United States. On pages three and four you will read about some of the many events organized by our local chapters and vast network of volunteers here in the US. I have been impressed by the creativity and ingenuity employed by HTH supporters in their quest to raise awareness and funds for our work in

Togo. From art auctions to African bars, our team is always thinking of exciting ways to get more people involved. I have also been inspired by the significant commitments of time and energy made by our supporters, all of whom are volunteers. These individuals believe deeply in the words spoken by the traditional Chief. On his behalf I thank them.

The result of these efforts taking place in Togo and in the US is greater than any one event, or even the funds raised. The result is solidarity. The result is a community that spans an ocean. The result is Americans and Africans fighting for the same belief that health is a human right.

There is still so much more to do. I invite you to join a local chapter, buy a red ribbon, check out our website, and sign up for the Stand With Us campaign. This movement is bigger than any one of us and it has only just begun. Please join us.

In Solidarity,
Jennifer Schechter, Executive Director-HTH

HTH Chapters

LOCATED IN CITIES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES, HTH CHAPTERS EDUCATE AND MOBILIZE THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES. INDEPENDENTLY RUN WITH CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION, EACH CHAPTER HAS CARVED OUT A UNIQUE PATH. ALWAYS OPEN TO NEW MEMBERS AND NEW IDEAS OUR CHAPTERS NEED YOUR HELP. FIND THE HTH CHAPTER NEAREST YOU TO STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH INDIVIDUALS LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS IN POVERTY.

Chapter Progress (from January– May 2008)

Funds Raised	\$ 8360
Number of Events Organized	6
Number of Active Chapter Members	27
Number of Active Chapters	6

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

Please contact Lauren Dockweiler for more details at SD@hthglobal.org

PITTSBURGH CHAPTER

Please contact Joan Marshall to get involved at PITT@hthglobal.org

WASHINGTON DC CHAPTER

Please contact Melanie Spence to learn more at DC@hthglobal.org

LOS ANGELES CHAPTER

Please contact Bryan Rash for more information at LA@hthglobal.org

DENVER CHAPTER

Please contact Laraine Martin by email at CO@hthglobal.org

NEW YORK CITY CHAPTER

Please contact Mike Stockman to get involved at NYC@hthglobal.org



photo by Jared Macary

CHECK HTH WEBSITE FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

www.hthglobal.org

state-side news



Jennifer & James Schechter, brother sister MC duo

HUNTINGTON 2ND ANNUAL AUCTION

The Schechter family (Duncan, Evie, James, & Jennifer) organized the second annual HTH Benefit including a silent auction in Huntington, NY this past January. The event was attended by almost 100 family and friends. Evie Schechter solicited donation items from local merchants throughout the Long Island area. In total, the Schechters raised over \$16,000 for HTH at the event. As a result of the enormous success, plans are already under-way for the third annual event next Winter. If you are interested in contributing please contact Jennifer Schechter, jschechter@hthglobal.org.

announcement

Please watch the new short film entitled *The Espoir Campaign* produced by HTH. The film was released in early 2008 and features interviews and images from Togo. It can be viewed on our website

www.hthglobal.org

OYSTER BAY BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

The Oyster Bay Boys and Girls Club chose HTH as this years recipient of its annual community service project. This motivated group of high school students went door-to-door with decorated coffee cans collecting change to benefit children in Togo. In just a few weeks this group raised over \$600 for HTH. Many thanks to the initiative demonstrated by HTH youth supporters!



SAN DIEGO ART EXHIBIT

San Diego Chapter members, led by Lauren Dockweiler organized an art exhibition and auction of works by both local and Togolese artists. It was hosted at the Bluefoot Bar & Lounge with generous sponsorship from Planned Parenthood-San Diego County. The event generated over \$2,888 for HTH.

DC KICK-OFF AT GHANA CAFE

The newly created Washington DC chapter inaugurated its formation with a happy hour event hosted at the Ghana Cafe. By 9:00 pm there was a line out the door to get in. The lead organizers were long-time HTH supporters Jolie Dennis & Stacey Maslowsky. Over \$1000 dollars was raised for HTH from the event. We are looking forward to great support from the DC community!



a full house at the Ghana Cafe

announcement

Hope Through Health can accept stocks as donations. Such gifts will help support our mission to provide access to comprehensive health care. If you interested in making such a donation please contact Associate Director, Kevin Fiori Jr. at kfiori@hthglobal.org

HTH Annual Board & Member Meeting



On January 12, 2008, Hope Through Health members met in Washington D.C. for the annual membership meeting. A special thanks to Sara Bushman who organized meeting space at the Meridian House.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008

Louise Krumm- President
Dawn Fiori- Treasurer
Danielle Murphy -Secretary
Kevin Fiori Sr.
Christiane Geisler
Erica Myruski
Gavin Oxman
Lauren Dockweiler (San Diego)
Joan Marshall (Pittsburgh)
Laraine Martin (Denver)
Melanie Spence- (DC)
Michael Stockman (NYC)
Bryan Rash (Los Angeles)

STAFF

Jennifer Schechter - Executive Director
Kevin Fiori Jr. - Associate Director
Dr. Aboukouwou Saibou - Medical Director
Kerim Abass - Psychosocial Director
Elizabeth Tung - Field Director

Peter Dennis - Field Liaison (Kara)
Jon Lascher - Field Liaison (Kande)
Aimee Delahoussaye - Field Liaison (Ketao)
Gwyn Prater - Field Liaison (Bafilo)
Danielle Hess - Field Liaison (Bafilo)
Patrick Aylward - Field Consultant
Jared Macary - Communications Specialist

ADVISORY BOARD 2008

Jerome Agba
Alex Annani
Philippe Chiliade
Christophe Gbeleou

Don Krumm
Ramya Lindsey
George Monagan
Doug Murphy
Sarah Pallas-Wood
Ednam Songhai
Don Weak

Inaugural Community Mobilization Conference Organized in Togo



Conference organizers Ednam Songhai, Elise Agba, & Jennifer Schechter

On April 23, 2008, Ednam Songhai, HTH advisory board member, organized the first community mobilization conference in Kara, Togo. Songhai explained to participants, "We cannot expect that external assistance will resolve this epidemic. We have to take the responsibility ourselves to find local solutions." The goal of the event was to engage local business, political, and cultural leaders in generating financial support within Togo for people living with HIV/AIDS. Over 200 individuals participated in the conference and proposed a series of funding possibilities. HTH staff who participated in this historic event see the possibility of extending this campaign to the national level in the coming year.



Conference participants discussing local funding opportunities

Field Notes

The Community Directed HIV Initiative in Kara, Togo

The Community-Directed HIV Initiative (CDHI) is a community-based model of health care developed by HTH with local partners. The Initiative provides free comprehensive medical care and support to Persons Living with HIV/AIDS. In addition, it assists in developing similar treatment programs for other HIV/AIDS associations and trains health professionals and volunteers throughout Togo.

Bringing Services within the reach of Patients

The goal of the Community Directed HIV Initiative is to minimize the barriers to care by developing a model that maximizes access to comprehensive support. One crucial element in improving access to care involves bringing services closer to patients. Most patients in rural villages have to travel hundreds of miles to seek care. In response, Hope Through Health began decentralizing its services in 2006 with the opening of a satellite health center in Bafilo (see adjacent map). This past year the Initiative launched a second satellite center in the border town of Ketao. HTH plans to open a center in the northern town Kande by the end of 2008. These satellite centers serve as an indispensable lifeline for rural villagers. For more information about how you can help with these efforts please contact Kevin Fiori Jr., kfiori@hthglobal.org



New Field Developments

- In early 2008, Hope Through Health opened its second Satellite Health Center in Ketao. The Center is providing medical and psychosocial services to over 100 patients in the surrounding villages.
- The prevention of mother to child (pMTCT) program has observed a significant success rates in its first two years. Over 97% of infant participants were HIV negative at 18 months of age.
- HTH has formed a new advisory committee based in Togo charged with advancing the scale-up of the CDHI model. The committee consists of the following individuals:
Ednam Songhai- United Nations Development Program Officer
Christophe Gbeleou- Director Monitoring and Evaluation Corridor
Alex Annai- Assistant Director Peace Corps Togo

by the numbers

Adults receiving medical and psychosocial care	1355
Percentage of female patients	75%
Children living with HIV/AIDS receiving comprehensive support	107
Patients receiving life-saving anti-retroviral therapy	357
AIDS orphans supported	1398

spotlight: Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission Program

Notes from the Front Lines

by Elizabeth Tung- HTH Field Director

On the first Saturday of every month, you can hear the sound of babies crying from the top of the dirt road leading to AED-Lidaw (AED-Lidaw is Hope Through Health local partner in Togo). As you get closer, though, the reassuring sound of mothers hushing their children and chatting with friends unfolds into the happy, bustling sound of a get-together. It is the day of Groupe de Parole, the monthly support group meeting for couples enrolled in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission program. With about fifty mothers and their infants present, the scene borders on chaotic until order is called out in Kabiyé, chairs are turned towards the center of the room, and the day's discussion begins.

Each Groupe de Parole focuses on an educational topic, like nutrition, hygiene or family planning, but the topic itself is not always the main point. The gathering aims to be a respite, an anomalous space in Togo's patriarchal and hierarchical society. There are medical and program staff present, but the new mothers are encouraged to speak, share their ideas and get to know their peers. The success of the day is heard in the sound of women laughing with their friends. The point is the community.

Every woman in the room has a story of how she got here. Though the details differ, the general story for most of the women is depressingly the same. Take Adjowa Ekpai as an example. She is a compact, muscular woman, who is usually seated somewhere near the front during meetings. Her son, Essoham, is one year old, curious and incredibly dirty from his constant exploration. Adjowa has the confidence and charisma of a natural leader, and it is easy to imagine her as a teacher or an executive in a different setting.

Adjowa found out she was HIV positive when she was already pregnant. She had been losing weight, getting dizzy and noticed skin infections that didn't seem to go away. In the back of her mind, the echo of radio shows and educational ads warned her that she should get tested for HIV/AIDS, but the enormity of the possibility made her shut out the worst-case scenarios.

Being pregnant, though, forced her to face her own fears because she was ultimately responsible to and for her unborn baby. After three more months of not feeling well, Adjowa walked to the hospital and asked for an HIV test. Two days later she received her positive result. When she told her husband, he refused to be tested and fled to his home village. Her own family kicked her out of the house. Word got around the neighborhood, and people refused to buy food from her rice and beans stand, leaving her without a livelihood. Now, in once life-changing punch, she was HIV positive, pregnant, homeless and alone.



photo by Jared Macary

Adjowa, like many of the women of AED-Lidaw, arrived scared. Many are alone, not just abandoned by their husbands but also by their families. But all of them, by accepting their positive status and taking a step to improve their own and their babies' health, have shown tremendous courage. AED-Lidaw cannot fix everything. We can reach out to husbands, but can't force them to find the courage to get tested and to accept the outcome. We can't make neighbors understand HIV/AIDS, or provide women with new homes and jobs. What AED-Lidaw can offer, though, is a roomful of women who are going through the same thing, and the care and education that will allow them to be mothers to their healthy babies for a long time.

spotlight: Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission Program

At a glance: pMTCT program

The Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (pMTCT) program is one of the major components of the Hope Through Health directed Espoir Campaign. The Espoir Campaign aims to provide comprehensive medical and psychosocial services to infants and women affected by HIV/AIDS. More specifically, the Campaign aims to: (1) prevent the transmission of HIV to newborn infants, (2) provide treatment to children already living with the virus, and (3) support children orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS.

The pMTCT program addresses the first objective of the larger Campaign.

The program coordinates and funds pre- and post-natal consultations, lab tests, and medications for pregnant women living with HIV/AIDS. Most of the services are coordinated at centers that specialize in pediatric and maternal services. At the time of labor, mother and baby receive a combination of anti-retroviral drugs that significantly reduce the transmission of HIV from mother to infant. After delivery and depending on specific circumstances, new mothers and HTH medical director decide whether the baby will be breast-fed or provided artificial milk. Each newborn receives comprehensive medical care. For more information about how you can support this important program please contact Kevin Fiori Jr. at kfiori@htglobal.org



pMTCT program numbers

Number of women participating	49
Number of supervised births	33
Percentage of mother/child couples receiving prophylaxis	97%
Percentage of participant receiving nutritional support	94%
Percentage of infants HIV negative at 18 months	97%

From Patient to Program Coordinator

Meet our newest staff member, Florence Assiki. A program patient, Florence was recently hired as the pMTCT Program Assistant Coordinator.

When Florence arrived at AED-Lidaw she was 23 years old, three months pregnant, unemployed and living with HIV. The first thing she noticed was how well the young mothers got along. "I felt so alone. I longed to be a part of that group," says Florence. She quickly became a model participant in the pMTCT program.

After giving birth to a healthy baby girl, Cynthia, she asked the Program's Coordinator to help her find work. When the Assistant Coordinator position became available Florence was the natural choice. "When I stayed at home I worried all the time and lost weight as a result. Now I come to work everyday and think about my pMTCT women. I don't think about being HIV positive anymore." Florence is a living example and a source of encouragement to young mothers in the pMTCT program.

Florence says, "when a mother learns that her child is HIV negative, she is overjoyed. She gains weight, she becomes healthier and she no longer worries. The fear she had disappears and she finds hope for the future." Florence is encouraged by the progress she sees in her peers. The pMTCT program is a source of pride, for her, and the entire AED-Lidaw staff.





photo by Jared Macary

Stand With Us Campaign 2007-08

What is the Campaign?

Hope Through Health has created a new way for you to stand in solidarity with those living with HIV/AIDS in West Africa. For only \$20 per month, you can ensure the health of one HIV patient in Togo for an entire year. All proceeds from the Stand with Us Campaign go directly to providing medical and nutritional support to our patients.

What is the goal?

We need 200 members by January 1, 2009 to pledge their support to 200 individuals living with HIV/AIDS and in poverty.

How to join?

Our secure online service facilitates convenient, automated monthly payments directly from a credit card or checking account. Visit www.hthglobal.org and make a monthly, recurring donation of twenty dollars or more and you are a member! Please feel free to contact us at hth@hthglobal.org for more information.

STAND WITH US 2008 members

Alicia Loucks
Amy Glick
Anne Vaughn Spilsbury
Beverly Loucks
Beverly Nadel
Bryan Cimorelli
Carol Palmer
Casey Whitsett
Catherine & Norbert Chenard
Christiane Geisler
Cindy Dickson
Danielle Jaeggi Murphy
David Goodwin
Donald & Louise Krumm
Donald Weeks
Elia Cubillas-Saldana
Elizabeth Ferguson
Eloise & Duncan Schechter
Emily Tibbetts
Emma Davenport
Erin Tomlinson
Ethan Eldon
Fatou Dieye
Florian Becker
Gavin Oxman
George Tomlinson

Georgetown Faculty-English as a
Foreign Language
Ginger Loucks
Helen Jacobs
Ismail Kassam
Jacqueline Ackerly
Jacqueline Lang
Jana Shih
Jeffrey Hammarlund
Jennifer Schechter
Jessica Whitsett
Joanne Roll
Jolie Dennis
Joseph Maslowsky
Josephine McCarthy
Joyce Loucks
Kaitlin Hublitz
Kelly Biscuso
Kevin & Debi Fiori Sr.
Lauren Dockweiler
Lisa Thompson
Leslie Schechter
Linda Cashdan
Lindsey Lockman
Louise Hublitz
Mark Allenbach
Mark Kennell
Marybeth Krumm
Matthew C Osborn
Melissa Azevedo

Mickey Chapman
Olanrewaju Williams
Olga Helena Joos
Paige Lapen
Patricia Antonucci
Paul Thomson
Peter Ziegler
Rachael Gerber
Robert Eisner
Robert Gerhardt
Robin Loucks
Ryan Gregory
Ryan McCannell
Sarah Schneider
Sarah Vingoe
Smita Saran
Stacey Maslowsky
Stephanie Weber
Steve & Wendy Chapman
Susan Fiori Hafford
Susan Gillig
Susan Miller
Thomas Cooke
Thomas Fiori
Travis Rave
Virginia Lezhnev
Wanda Phillips
Wendy Dickson
William Barron