

## **Diakonia AIDS Ministry Coordinator and Volunteer's Report January to July, 2004**

*Following is a report of activities at the HIV/AIDS Clinic in our companion synod, the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA). One of the ways the synod is supporting this work is by funding an office administrator for the Diakonia AIDS Ministry (DAM) that oversees activities at the HIV/AIDS Clinic.*

**Support Group** - Our support group has grown to over 70 HIV-positive individuals. Because of this, we recently split the group into two with half the group meeting on Tuesdays and the other half on Thursdays.

**Sewing Training** - In partnership with the Department of Labour, Diakonia AIDS Ministry (DAM) will shortly begin a year-long sewing training course for 12 support group members. DAM purchased the equipment for this course and the trainers will be provided by the Department of Labour.

**Education** - DAM is continuing with its mission of HIV/AIDS prevention and basic education. Education workshops have been conducted in all four circuits this year and DAM hopes to also utilize youth peer educators who have been trained through ELCSA Development Services.

**Training** - Two members of the support group completed a 59-day course in home-based care earlier this year. Eight additional support group members have also recently begun this course. DAM has also applied for funding to conduct four week long training workshops to train congregational resource persons at the circuit level.

**Food and Hygiene Parcels** - DAM continues to give approximately 100 food parcels per month to support group members and AIDS orphans. In addition, DAM recently began giving hygiene parcels from Johnson and Johnson to support group members.

**Circuit Committees** - DAM is in the process of organizing circuit committees in each of the four circuits of the Diocese. A pastor from each circuit has been designated to serve as the DAM coordinator in each circuit. Representatives from each parish will serve on the circuit committees and parish and congregational committees will be formed from there.

**Launch Event** - DAM is planning the consecration and launch of our main centre in Soweto on December 4, 2004. It is hoped that the event will be attended by overseas partner churches, South African government officials, local partner organizations, and support group members.

**Income-Generating Activities** - Support group members have been making beadwork, cushions, curtains, crocheting projects, and working in the garden. These items are for sale to the community and visitors to the Diocese Centre. Seventy-five percent of the profit goes directly to the individuals who make it and twenty-five percent goes to DAM to purchase more materials and ensure that the project is sustainable.

**Obituaries** - Six members of the support group died in 2004. A memorial service is held for each member who passes away at the DAM centre and support group members are also encouraged to attend the funerals.

**Partnership with Thamsanqa Medical Research Unit and Soweto Hospice** - In partnership with these organizations DAM will begin operating a Voluntary Counseling and Testing Centre at the Diocese Compound in Soweto. DAM is also currently in conversation with Baragwanath Hospital to serve as a satellite centre for the South African government's anti-retroviral treatment plan. DAM also hopes to begin a home-based care program in the near future and is in the process of organizing stipends and supply kits for the trained caregivers.

**Orphans** - Because of the number of support group members who have passed away and left behind children, orphan care, and support is the next crisis that DAM faces. Currently, the only support given to these orphans is monthly food parcels. Orphan care and support will become an additional priority for DAM in the coming year.