

ELCSA Central Diocese Diakonia AIDS Ministry Update on Programs from January through August 2005

Dear Partner Circuits and Synods,

We thank you for your continued support of Diakonia AIDS Ministry (DAM). Without your contributions, the activities of the ministry would not be possible. We are pleased to inform you on the progress of Diakonia AIDS Ministry for the year thus far. Highlighted below are the major events which transpired throughout the year.

Support Group

DAM continues to hold support groups for people living with HIV/AIDS. Our Soweto support groups have approximately 130 members and meet every Tuesday and Thursday. We are pleased to inform you that Kagiso parishes in the Western Circuit have also begun to organize a support group. The care and support that is offered through DAM support groups include spiritual, physical, and emotional counseling. Noting that there is a high rate of unemployment and poverty where DAM provides services, income-generating projects for the members of the support group were started in order to address the socio-economic situations that members are facing. Such projects include gardening, beadwork, knitting, shoe making, and sewing.

Staffing Additions

Diakonia AIDS Ministry would like to thank the Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA, for grant support of our full-time administrator position. This year we have also added twelve part-time staff members - a kindergarten teacher, a home-based care coordinator, and ten home-based caregivers. We also have two volunteers from partner churches, one from the ELCA Division for Global Mission, and one from Berlinermissionswerk.

Grassroots Organizing Workshops

This project was supported by the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa - LUCSA. It was implemented in all circuits of the Central Diocese. Five-day workshops were held in each of the four circuits earlier this year. The purpose of the workshops was to train lay members from Lutheran Church congregations on how to organize HIV/AIDS programs at the congregational and community level. After each workshop, circuit committees were formed where they did not already exist. Participants from the Western Circuit have now organized Thusanang Health Project as a DAM outreach program in Kagiso. They are presently engaged in a door-to-door campaign encouraging

individuals to go for voluntary counseling and testing. Potchefstroom Parish also formally launched their HIV/AIDS program on July 3, 2005.

HIV/AIDS Educational Training

This project was supported by the Gauteng Department of Health. It was implemented in three levels. Level 1 was a Diocesan training of facilitators. It was implemented from January 31 to February 11, 2005. Each circuit of the diocese was represented. Eighteen people were trained over a two-week period.

Level 2 - Four workshops were implemented successfully in each circuit from February 28 to March 4, 2005. Over 40 people completed the workshop.

Level 3 - This training was held in March and April. The total number of people trained was 175.

Following the implementation of the three levels, the project was evaluated. The evaluation indicated that the project was successful, and four events for all the circuits were programmed:

Event 1 was a Candle Light Memorial Service in the Eastern Circuit in May

Event 2 was a Youth Camp in the Pretoria Circuit in June

Event 3 was an Awareness Campaign in the Soweto Circuit in August

Event 4 will be a Rally in the Western Circuit in October

Orphan Program

We presently have approximately 65 orphans in our registry. DAM hosted a party for the orphans during the winter school holidays in June. At this event, we also gave each child a blanket and a winter coat and each family received a food hamper. Our next event will be a food gardening workshop in September. We also are planning field trips, a Christmas party, and to distribute clothing and back-to-school hampers. Another potential plan is to assist orphans with scholarships to study at tertiary educational institutions.

Home Based Care

DAM is pleased to announce that our home-based care program in Soweto Circuit began on July 4, 2005. We have employed ten caregivers who assist 60+ clients suffering from HIV/AIDS, TB, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and arthritis. Funding for this program is from Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa for supplies and logistical expenses and from ELCA Stand with Africa for caregiver stipends. We hope to extend home-based care services to all circuits in the near future.

Child-Minding Service

With assistance from our German partners, DAM began a child-minding service for children of support group members on July 6, 2005. To this end, DAM hired a part-time qualified crèche teacher who offers her services every Tuesday and Thursday during support group meetings. We have approximately 20 children registered for the crèche and attendance varies from week to week. We are also grateful that local congregations have donated some toys and playground equipment.

Vote of Thanks

Once again Diakonia AIDS Ministry would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our sponsors overseas and within South Africa. Our ministry is growing each and every day and without your assistance, none of this would have been possible.

Yours Faithfully,

Rev. Z.S. Senosi, Mr. Diane Magagane, Mrs. Kidi Tshukudu, Mrs. Maureen Motswene, Ms. Becky Johnson, and Mr. Nico Theil