

## HIV/AIDS Canada-Swaziland Partnership

Update - December 2007



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What a difference a year can make when we combine our efforts; compassion and extend a helping hand! It truly does take a village to raise a child .....regardless of distance and culture.

Mancoba (left) and Nokwanda are two of the 39 children receiving educational sponsorships from donors in Greater Moncton and Saint John areas. In 2006, Mancoba was attending kindergarten because he had no fees to go to primary school. His father is living with AIDS. In 2007, he was in grade 3, thanks to the partnership's Educational Sponsorship project. Enrollment for the 2008 Swazi school year commences the 3rd week in January.



On December 1st, World AIDS Day, we paused to remember those who have lost their personal battles with HIV/AIDS. But we also remembered those who are living with HIV and the affects of this disease. A candle was lit to symbolize our commitment to continue our efforts to diminish the affects of HIV/AIDS on the villagers of Nkamazi, Swaziland.

**Educational Sponsorship** - The children of Nkamazi LOVE to go to school! Thanks to the donations of people in the Greater Moncton and Saint John areas, 39 children are able to attend school on a regular basis. Who are the generous donors sponsoring these children? They are: students, faculty and parents at Kennebecasis Park School; high school students & faculty at JM Armstrong High School; Silver Falls Messengers, Explorers and CGIT groups; individual men and women; business people; retirees; grandmothers; families.....the list is extensive. Some people provide ongoing sponsorship, others one-time donations. There is a very dedicated Women ' s Book Club in the Rothesay/Quispamsis area that has organized two annual fundraising events as their commitment to assist the partnership in meeting the financial goal of providing sponsorship to the 39 children. SIDA/AIDS Moncton volunteers, Manon Sirois-Boudreau & Lise Sirois, traveled to Nkamazi at their own expense and while there visited some of the sponsored children. They say a picture is worth a thousand words.....we ' ll let you judge for yourself.



Sponsored primary school students receive letters from Kennebecasis Park School.



Sponsored high school students



Addressing the issues of poverty will decrease Nkamazi villagers ' risk of contracting HIV and improve the quality of life of those infected with HIV. New Brunswickers ' generosity and support have enabled the work in the village to move forward - what a difference a year does make! Here is a brief summary of the community activities for 2007.

**Water Access** - Thanks to the efforts of volunteer, Manon Sirois-Boudreau, standpipes were installed at the homesteads of five Gogos ( grandmothers ). The women can boil the water to eliminate contaminants and use it for washing and cooking. They will no longer have to walk great distances to source water for their households.



**Community Garden** - The Vuca Sincombe Youth Association prepared the garden plot inclusive of an irrigation system and fencing. Through your donations, AIDS Saint John and SIDA/AIDS Moncton provided funds for the installation of fencing. Under the guidance and support of the elders in the community, crops have been harvested for distribution to those in need. There was also a surplus of vegetables that the youth were able to sell which generated income for the youth

involved in the project. These youth are also gaining agricultural skills that will help to sustain them in the future. This photo shows villagers coming to the garden to collect cabbages. In the background of this photo you can see that an area has been prepared for another planting of vegetables.



**Fabric for Africa** - Donated fabric and accessories in support of the income generating project to assist the Sizanani Support Group exceeded our expectations and resources to transport. A volunteer was able to take 50 pounds of the donated fabric to Nkamazi. But what were we to do with the remaining donations? Lara, a student from NBCC Moncton, and members of a local quilt guild coordinated a Fabric for Africa sale which was held at Central United Church ( Moncton NB ). The sale was a resounding success—\$800 was raised to purchase fabric,

notions and sewing machines in Swaziland. Surplus fabric was donated to Support to Single Parents ( Moncton NB ) in support of a similar project to help local women increase their skills and generate income for their families. Pictured above is volunteer, Manon, providing sewing instructions to the Sizanani Support Group. Prior to her departure from Nkamazi, Manon was able to find a woman in the area who agreed to provide ongoing instructions. Chief Gija recently sent news that the women are doing well with their sewing classes and continue to work on improving their skills.

**Blankets for Gogos** - A group of seven women, six of them also grandmothers, ( Sunny Brae Baptist Church, Moncton ) coordinated an information evening to garner support for the Gogos in Nkamazi. Winter in Nkamazi was approaching ( May 2007 ) and the group wanted to provide blankets to ward off the pending cold weather. Generous donors provided funds to purchase 27 heavy blankets and a month ' s supply of food staples for each of the Gogos. The very week that



the volunteers were able to deliver the blankets the temperature dropped to 2 degrees—the gift of blankets was truly welcomed. Manon and a member of the Sizanani Support Group are delivering a blanket to a Gogo and translating greetings from the women of Sunny Brae Baptist Church.

## Volunteers travel to Swaziland -



Joanne Marshall-Forgie and her husband, Terry, were in Manzini for 3 months. During that time, Joanne facilitated and assisted with the development of a strategic plan for The AIDS Information and Support Centre [TASC]. The development of a strategic plan & governing resources will enable *“TASC to continue to lead in the fight against HIV/AIDS. TASC will be innovative, both reactive to the changing HIV & AIDS environment and proactive in its approaches”* . Terry also did some volunteer work at a nearby facility for orphaned children.

Manon Sirois-Boudreau and Lise Sirois stayed for 2 weeks in the Village of Nkamazi working with the villagers to implement various projects. Lise, who is a nurse from Edmunston, volunteered at the community health clinic. When she wasn't at the clinic, Lise was doing home visits with Manon and the Sizanani Support Group. Manon conducted sewing lessons; purchased supplies for installation of standpipes; did home visits with the Sizanani Support Group; visited the sponsored children at school; assisted with the start up of a poultry project; and distributed blankets & food supplies to Gogo (grandmother) homesteads.



The dedication and support of these volunteers has made a huge impact in our ability to support our partners and friends in Swaziland with the various projects. The partnership extends a huge THANK YOU for their commitment and care to a population that has been devastated by HIV/AIDS.

## Moncton Grandmother knits for Nkamazi children -



Muriel Hurley and Debby Warren (SIDA/AIDS Moncton Inc.)  
December 23, 2005

I first met Muriel Hurley in December 2005 at the Kenneth E. Spencer Memorial Home. Mrs. Hurley had heard about the Canadian/Swazi partnership work through a volunteer at the home. She was surprised, like most people, to learn that it can get very cold in Swaziland. During our visit, she presented me with several hats and mittens to be distributed to the children in Nkamazi. In return for her generosity, I promised to bring Mrs. Hurley back a photo of the children who received her hats and mittens during my visit in June 2006. Muriel knit more hats and mittens for distribution in May 2007 as well.

Sadly, at the age of 94 on September 9, 2007, Mrs. Hurley passed away. Muriel 's legacy of caring and giving to the children of Nkamazi will be carried on by her granddaughter. When Julie Dingwell ( AIDS Saint John) and I depart for Swaziland in February 2008, we will once again have warm hats and mittens for the children.

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In the past, the updates have consisted of one page. However, so much has happened over the past year that we did well to contain it to 6 pages. A huge, heartfelt THANK YOU to all supporters of the various projects. Through your generosity, the people of Nkamazi have hope for a better tomorrow. We wish you a blessed Holiday Season and Best Wishes for 2008.

Yours in the fight against HIV/AIDS,

Deborah R. Warren, Executive Director  
SIDA/AIDS Moncton Inc.

Julie Dingwell, Executive Director  
AIDS Saint John