

SIM

Greetings from Kenya

Serving In Mission

Lara Ayres:
Ministering to those
with HIV&AIDS in
the slums of Nairobi.



Wow – I can't believe its time for my second prayer letter already, time really is flying! I've had a very busy month, really getting stuck in to my work in Kibera. I've been especially excited about the home-based care project which is really starting to get off the ground. We have been visiting many women who are HIV+ and have been able to show them God's love in action. It can be really hard work sometimes, and some of the situations we come across are just heartbreaking. For example, there is one lady called Florence who we are visiting regularly; she has AIDS and is very unwell at moment with TB. Her children have all died from AIDS and she is the only guardian of her three grandchildren, who are all under the age of 12. She is too weak to even get out of bed, and the children don't

understand why Grandma can't give them food – they are also scared that Grandma looks a lot like their parents did before they died. We are going in daily to help this family as best we can; we fetch water, wash-up, cook for them and just spend time with the children, and with Florence. I have spent a long time just holding her hand – because of the stigma and discrimination that people living with HIV&AIDS encounter, touch is something that she has not experienced in a long time, so it means so much to her. I don't think that Florence has long left to live, and who knows what will happen to her Grandchildren then. Hopefully there will be a relative willing to take care of them, but if not it is likely they will have to live on the streets – the orphanages here in Kenya are stretched to their limits with children left behind from a generation dying of AIDS, innocent victims of this destructive disease.

The Youth Bible Study group has begun, and after a few initial teething problems seems to be going well! We are splitting them into groups of boys and girls as we have found that they are more open this way. Barbara and I lead the girls along with Damaris, a Kenyan lady we work with – and two of the Kenyan guys lead the boys. It is working well, and so far we have tackled subjects such as self-worth and relationships. It can sometimes be difficult to get them to talk openly, especially when you mention the 's' word (sex)! But it is so important that these young people are educated about relationships and good sexual morality if we are going to break the hold that HIV&AIDS has on Kenya. But we have been having fun too - we have been teaching them new games, and they especially enjoyed the game where you stand in a circle and join hands with someone opposite you, then try and untangle yourselves.

As you can see from the picture, we weren't very successful, but had a lot of fun trying!





I have also been getting involved with the Women's Bible Study and Children's Bible Club. There are about 50 Mamas who attend the Bible Study, and Barbara and I take it in turns to lead. It is a great time when women can get together to learn about God, and also to meet together in fellowship. There have been a couple of support groups developed from this session; one for single women and widows, and we are just starting one for people with HIV&AIDS. The Mamas are the centre of a Kenyan home, and they often encourage their children and grandchildren to come along to the centre too, so it is a very important ministry to be involved in. The Children's Bible Club is great fun – they enjoy singing and dancing together, and learn a bible story too. The children are just so enthusiastic, and they love it when we take the time to play with them and pay them attention -they really are a blessing. They do not have expensive toys to play with, but make their own from wire, old wheels, plastic, rubbish – anything they can lay their hands on really, but they always seem to have fun anyway. A lesson that we in the West could do with learning!

I have also been very busy with Bev (HIV&AIDS) co-ordinator). At the beginning of the month we went to Mombasa to visit some projects there. We had a fantastic time visiting schools for orphans and vulnerable children, we were welcomed warmly by the staff and the children and were met with singing and dancing on more than one occasion. Some of the children were actually HIV+ and were quite unwell with rashes on their bodies. This was quite hard to see, but it was amazing the ways that the other children responded to them – including them in all of their games and not discriminating against them at all – something the adults of Kenya could really learn from. While we were there we learnt a lot from the leaders about



how to set up a project and how to sustain it. This came in very useful when we visited Embu in Eastern Kenya last week – we went to visit a pastor there in regards to partnering with the church there to set up a HIV&AIDS project. It was a very positive experience, and the pastor seemed to acknowledge the need for educating the community about the issues surrounding HIV&AIDS, in order for a project to make a real impact on the people of Embu. Its still early days yet, but Bev seems quite hopeful – watch this space! So as you can tell, I have managed to get out of Nairobi this month and visit other areas of Kenya, it really is a beautiful country – God certainly knew what he was doing when he created it!



Prayer Points

1. Pray that God will continue to work through us in the home-based care project, giving us opportunities to get close to families and share his love. Pray especially for Florence and her grandchildren at this time.
2. Pray that the Youth Bible Studies will continue to go well, and that the young people will open up more during discussions. That God will really use these times to shape and mould this generation.
3. Pray that the Women's Bible Study will continue to flourish, and that the support groups being started will be a real encouragement to all that attend.
4. Pray for the children – that they can come to know God's love through us.
5. Pray for the possible project in Embu, that God will guide Bev and Pastor James as they continue to discuss the possibilities.
6. Pray for my continued safety, and that God continues to work in me and through me.

Many thanks for your continued support.
Keep in touch!
With love,

Lara xxx

PS – You can contact me via e-mail:
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If you would like to financially support me in my ministry then you can send a cheque to:

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And make sure you send a cover letter designating it to my account!

- Thank you all so much for your support, because of the money you have so kindly donated I have been able to implement a new filing system for the home-based care project, find new and relevant material for the Youth Bible Study, use new craft materials for the children and we are currently in the process of fully equipping the street boys football team!! Thank you again!!

