

From the Executive Director's Desk

"God is here" was the way my friend, Sandy Brown, ended his reflection each day as we traveled in Congo in January 2006. Yes, indeed, God was and still is among His people. I was reminded once again about how God is present in the midst of pain, suffering, and in situations that seem humanly impossible. Thanks to the generosity of many, we were able to purchase and deliver 21 sewing machines and supplies to two girls' schools in Kikwit and Kajiji. We also delivered more than 1,800 lbs of so much needed medicine and supplies to the Kajiji hospital. We thank God for all the support we continue to receive from friends that makes all this possible.

This issue of Mama Makeka House of Hope's Newsletter will focus on the work being done by three McLane High School students on community perceptions of violence in South Fresno, the housing project for HIV/AIDS affected children in Vic Falls, and the formal relationship between Northpark Community Church and Mama Makeka House of Hope.

— Pakisa Tshimika

Students Choose to Make a Difference

"We don't do surveys."

"Well, if it's for school, ok."

"I'm sorry, I'm watching the Academy Awards."

"It's nice to see young people doing something productive for a change instead of just watching TV."

These were just a few of the reactions McLane High School juniors and seniors received when surveying residents in south Fresno regarding their perceptions of violence in the community. Veronica Garcia, Angela Gomez, and Amanda Rocha, seniors working on a senior project partnering McLane's medical academy and Mama Makeka House of Hope, have invested over twenty-five hours of community service to making violence prevention

a community health priority. In addition to researching statistics on violence within Fresno County, they have enlisted the help of magnet juniors in the sur-



veying process building a network of students who will continue working on this project as they become seniors in 2006-07. Currently, students have gathered over 100 surveys in the 93702 zip code. By the end of this research process, students hope to have gathered 300-500 surveys in four south Fresno zip codes.

As students record community perceptions, they are focusing on three kinds of violence: self-directed (suicidal/self-abuse), interpersonal (family/partner, community), and collective (social, political, economic) as well as the nature of violence (physical, sexual, physiological, deprivation/neglect). Once the data has been collected, it will be analyzed and evaluated informing next step implementation strategies.

The seniors are enthusiastic about their role in changing the environment in which they live and in looking for solutions beyond force to make a difference. Students will present their findings in a formal presentation on Tuesday, May 9, 7 pm at the Mama Makeka offices. Representatives from Mama Makeka and McLane High School, as well as Fresno Pacific's Center for Peacemaking will attend.

—Melissa Graybill

Quote for the Month

When you discover in yourself something that is a gift from God, you have to claim it and not let it be taken away from you. Sometimes people who do not know your heart will altogether miss the importance of something that is part of your deepest self, precious in your eyes as well as God's. They might not know you well enough to be able to respond to your genuine needs. It is then that you have to speak your heart and follow your own deepest calling.

There is a part of you that too easily gives in to other's influence. As soon as someone questions your motives, you start doubting yourself. You end up agreeing with others before you have consulted your own heart. Thus you grow passive and simply assume that the other knows better.

Here you have to be very attentive to your inner self. "Coming home" and "being given back yourself" are expressions that indicate that you have a solid inner base from which you can speak and act – without apologies – humbly but convincingly. - Henri Nouwen

Children of La Berceuse in Kinshasa



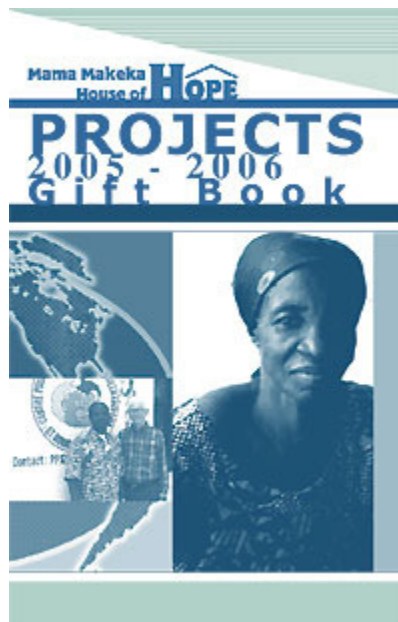
“When we hear a cry for help on the stairs, we can either turn our television louder or we can help.” Desmond Tutu

MMH Hope Gift Booklet Now Available

Become a friend of MMH Hope and support one of our projects through a contribution to MMH Hope as a gift to those who are special to you on their special occasions, such as an anniversary, birthday, Christmas, Easter, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Memorial Day. Cards representing each project are available for those occasions. Contributing is very simple:

1. Review the items in the booklet and select the appropriate gift(s) for each person(s).
2. Fill out the order on page 7 of the booklet.
3. Write a check for the total contribution and send it to MMH Hope, 4921 E. Townsend, Fresno, CA 93727.

We will then send you one card and one envelope per item ordered. Each card will correspond with the project you chose to support and will feature a photo and information on the project you selected as well as a space for your own personalized greeting. You will also receive a tax deductible receipt for your total contribution.



Where there is always room for one more.

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Developing Partnership with Northpark Community Church

For three weeks I traveled to Congo and Zimbabwe accompanied by Dave Raufman from the pastoral staff (below) and Sandy Brown (top right) both members of the Northpark Community Church in Fresno. The goal of our traveling together was to explore the possi-



bility of a partnership between Northpark Community Church and Mama Makeka House of Hope. During our time in Congo, Dave and Sandy had the chance to visit the medical work in Kinshasa and Kajiji that I had been involved with while still residing in Congo, the state of primary and secondary schools in Kajiji, women's activities, and orphan ministry in Kinshasa. The majority of time was spent listening to everyday stories of people who came to visit or local politician we went to see.

My guests were also introduced to the work Mama Makeka House of Hope is involved with in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, mainly the ministry in which we are assisting Tecla Mugambo by providing housing for children and women affected by HIV/AIDS. We vis-

ited the first two room house built for one of the young people affected by the death of both parents. The house built for him will make it possible for him to have a place where he can care for his younger siblings. We anticipate building five such houses

per year for the next five years.

The result of this journey together has now resulted in a formal relationship between Northpark

Community Church and Mama Makeka House of Hope. According to a document signed by both parties, "The goal of this cooperation and partnership is to develop a covenant relationship between Mama Makeka House of Hope and Northpark Community Church that allows both organizations to best minister in the area of social ministries in Africa in general and in Congo and Zimbabwe in particular."

Northpark Community Church has agreed to participate in recruiting individuals from its congregation interested in direct participation in short term ministries in Congo and Zimbabwe, to participate in capacity building for Mama Makeka House of Hope, promote and market

potential ministry options within the congregation and beyond, participate in follow up, monitoring and evaluation of activities undertaken through this relationship.

Mama Makeka House of Hope, on the other hand, has agreed to assure administrative coordination of ministries undertaken through this relationship, coordinate orientation of North American volunteers in Fresno prior to departure and in country of service, coordinate logistical support in Africa, coordinate in-country technical support, monitoring follow-up and evaluation of the project, work with local partners in assuring internal auditing of ministries, and assist Northpark Community Church in exploring other ministries in Africa that fit well with the gifts of its members.

The first team for short term ministry is expected to travel to Kajiji in January 2007. It will most likely include physicians, nurses, and primary and secondary school educators.

— Pakisa Tshimika



"I am in the front room of our apartment, the windows are open. They always are. (We are in Africa, and that hot thing that you heard about this continent is true.) The sounds are so amazing. Birds I have never heard before, sounds I will forever remember. The only light is the glow from the laptop screen. It is so peaceful. Sara, how I wish you were here to see this, to hear this, to FEEL this. GOD is here, yes, I know HE is everywhere, but HE IS HERE!!! I eagerly anticipate who we will encounter today and what their story is. I like to know people's stories."

—Sandy Brown, January 2006



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*Where There is Always Room
for One More*

See our website:
www.mmhhope.org

Mama Makeka House of Hope (MMH Hope) is a charitable Non-Governmental Organization incorporated in the State of California under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code in memory of Mama Makeka Rebecca Tshimika.

MISSION

The mission of MMH Hope is to promote, advocate, and support Health, Education, and Community Organizing/ Empowerment Initiatives among the underserved populations of Africa, the Caribbean and Central San Joaquin Valley, California.

VISION AND SCOPE

Mama Makeka House of Hope is committed to the advancement of existing services and assisting in the development of new initiatives.

GOVERNANCE

Mama Makeka House of Hope is governed by a Board of Directors that has the power to manage the property, programs, affairs and business of the Organization, and any other functions which are permitted by the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws of the Organization.

One Child at a Time: Housing for AIDS Orphans in Victoria Falls

I was visiting a dying mother in Victoria Falls in 2005 when I asked what her main concern was after she died. "My children," was her answer.

Then I visited women who were taking care of children whose parents had died of AIDS.

There are two things I found

these women to have in common: 1) they had limited resources and 2) they lived in the squatter part of the city. Yet these women were willing to take in children who had lost a great deal, especially their mothers. They wanted to provide a safe haven for the children.

The One Child at a Time project will provide safe housing for each one of the identified children being taken care of by these families.



The local government leaders have agreed to provide stands (land) free of charge. These arrangements were made possible because these women had the heart to envision a house built in the name of the child.

In ongoing support of this project, MMH Hope recently received a gift of \$7,000 from a widow from Visalia who gave in memory of her husband to build the first four houses. Her gift has unleashed other gifts within the Fresno community. In support of this project, two single women will be traveling to Vic Falls in October for up to four months to assist Tecla with logistics related to building these next four houses. Our goal is to build five three-room houses per year over the next five years. Each house costs \$1500. We invite you to join us in building a secure future for our children.