

Mama Makeka House of Hope Newsletter

From the Executive Director's Desk

One of the things I remember about my childhood is how there was always room for one more person in our home. My mother always made sure that no one came to visit our home and went back hungry no matter how much or little food we had.

Her life was always about people –some just wanted to talk, others needed a place to sleep or food to eat. I always remember her making herself available and always making people feel welcome.

Today, Mama Makeka House of Hope, established in her honor, is also about people helping people. In this edition we want to share with you, our friends and supporters, the faces and voices behind our ministry. I am very thankful to them all for incarnating my mother's spirit, sharing their gifts, and giving a sense of hope to many in our world who feel hopeless.

As we read their stories, let's remember the words of the poet Seamus Heaney when he wrote that *"history says don't hope on this side of the grave. But then, once in a lifetime the longed for tidal wave of justice can rise up, and hope and history rhyme."*

Pakisa Tshimika

The Faces and Voices of Mama Makeka House of Hope

Dalton Reimer

Board Chair of Mama Makeka House of Hope

My consciousness of Congo goes back to childhood. Congo was one of those places to which missionaries went, including Tillie "Mama" Wall, a member of my extended family. But it wasn't until I taught at Fresno Pacific College, now University, that I came to know actual Congolese, among them Pakisa Tshimika. Our paths have intersected over the years, and again more recently through Mama Makeka House of Hope.

MMH Hope is a journey of hope. It is a response to a cry from the heart of Africa, resulting from years of oppression and pain climaxed in recent years by internal conflict and war leading to untold suffering and millions of people dying. Though yet small, MMH Hope is a significant response in the midst of a world whose eyes are largely turned elsewhere. How could I not become involved?



Gail Newel

Board Member

Thirteen years ago, I committed to serve a mission term in then Zaire with Mennonite Brethren Missions and Services. I was to help in the development of a midwifery training program in Kikwit. In preparation for this project, I left my private practice of OB-GYN and returned to school at UC Berkeley to get my Masters in Public Health. During those months of preparation, two events made my plans impossible. First, civil war broke out in Zaire and no visas were being granted for visitors. Second, after fifteen years of infertility I was very unexpectedly blessed with not just one baby but two in two years.



Over the years, the calling to serve women in need has remained strong. Mama Makeka House of Hope offers me the opportunity to do that both here and in Africa. Here in Fresno, I am able to contribute by donating space in our downtown building, serving on the board of directors, and by contributing financially. My enthusiasm for this work is shared with my patients and employees through storytelling, opportunities to volunteer, the chance to donate financially, and projects like jeans donations for backpacks. I have a storyboard posted in my waiting room with photos of MMH Hope projects, and the opportunity to buy "Pray Congo" bracelets. In January, I hope to join the group traveling to Zimbabwe and Congo. *Thirteen years later, there is still "room for one more".*

Melissa Graybill — Fresno, California



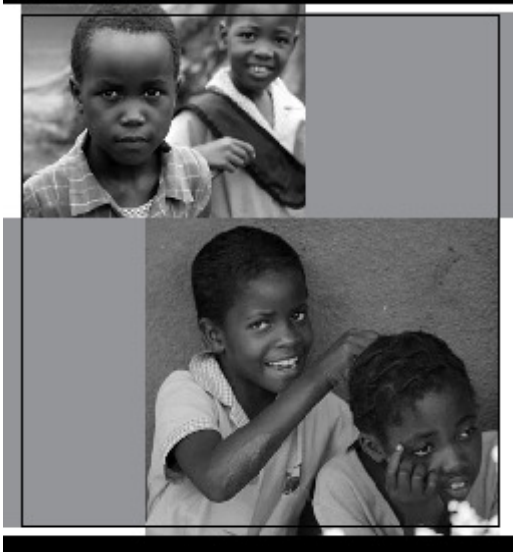
My journey towards Mama Makeka House of Hope began when I was in the fourth grade, one year before Pakisa was in his now famous accident as a junior in college. That year, a young woman from Switzerland came to live with our family for six months as part of Mennonite Central Committee's international work exchange program. This young woman was the first of many internationals who came and stayed with our family for varying amounts of time over the years. My father, a professor at Fresno Pacific College and sponsor of the international club for several years, brought students home for gatherings and meals. My mother always had a clean house, hot food, and a welcoming smile. These people, members of the global village, opened my eyes to a much larger world than my ten minute walk to school or my five minute drive to church could ever give me.

The gifts of hospitality and service were evident in many ways in my parents' and grandparents' lives. They were not limited to special occasions or a certain kind of people. Participating in the vision of MMH Hope is a call to global servanthood and hospitality. It is a call to share our resources as well as our suffering as part of the global community. Robert Coles, child psychiatrist famous for his interviews with Ruby Bridges during the Civil Rights Movement, and Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, were both people who chose to move beyond themselves, their own suffering and disappointments, to serve others in difficult times and

situations. They saw the value of each individual story.

MMH Hope is the story of individuals, working collaboratively, who believe in service, global hospitality, and the sharing of gifts and resources, as well as pain and heartache. MMH Hope has become a part of my own story and, as the vision continues to grow, it will become part of the legacy I leave to my own children as well as to our children around the world.

One Child at a Time PROJECT



One Child at a Time is a Mama Makeka House of Hope project that provides safe housing for identified HIV/AIDS orphans in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Our goal is to build 5 such houses per year for the next five years. Each house costs between \$1,500 to \$2,500. We invite you to join us in building a secure future for our children.

Tecla Mugambo — Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

Dalton and Beverly Reimer first made contact with Tecla when they were visiting Victoria Falls following the Mennonite World Conference in Bulawayo. Tecla owns the hotel in which they stayed. Beverly engaged her in conversation and discovered that Tecla, a successful businesswoman and a well-respected person in the Victoria Falls community, has chosen to become involved in her community assisting children and women affected by HIV/AIDS without the help of outside funding or technical expertise.



Approximately five years ago, Tecla made contact with the principal of the elementary schools asking to be informed of children in need. Through the years, she has touched many lives. She feeds and clothes children, providing foster homes for those without shelter, and intervening with the foster families when things get rough. Tecla believes that children affected by HIV/AIDS must be placed in actual homes instead of warehousing them in large orphanages. According to her, it takes love modeled by the family structure, to raise a healthy child. By placing children in homes, cultural heritage can also be passed on from one generation to the next through family rituals.

Because of this initial contact, Tecla is now a partner of MMH Hope. Through this partnership, five houses are currently being built in Vic Falls to provide housing and a future for Tecla's children.

Julia Reimer — Fresno, California

I've been interested in the connections between theater and social action ever since I started teaching theater. So when



MMH Hope partnered with McLane High School students to conduct a study, in spring 2006, of people's perceptions of violence in their communities, and mentioned doing Readers Theater as a way to continue to working on the problem, my ears perked up. I thought, maybe this is it. Maybe this is the place where my skills can meet these young people's excitement to help create theater that matters.

The Youth Theater Project (YTP) is a way to work at issues of identity, conflict, and violence in our communities and homes. In our weekly sessions, we play theater games, tell stories, improvise, read, discuss, and write material that can be used in performances that we generate collaboratively. Our goal is not only to guide our youth through these explorations, but to use performance as a means for engaging the community about life experiences that really matter.

Upcoming Events

October

5 October—13 November

Pakisa and Dalton travel to Zimbabwe, Congo, and Kenya

2 October—6 October

MMH Hope Display at Building a Culture of Peace Week at Fresno Pacific University

November

Pakisa speaks at College Hour at FPU

December

7 December

African Market Christmas Fundraiser Featuring Photo Display of the Journey to Congo and Youth Theater

Rebecca Allen — Fresno, California

In April of 2004, I graduated from Simpson College in Redding, CA. During my 4 years there, I experienced a taste of missions, and the powerful ways God is moving in our world.



My first year at Simpson, I became involved with street ministry and in working with underprivileged kids. I

became connected with San Francisco Neighborhood Church and spent breaks and summer vacations involved in the church's inner-city outreach and youth programs. I was hit hard by many of the children whose lives had been altered by the devastating affects of drugs, violence, neglect, HIV, and AIDS. My senior year, I was blessed with the opportunity to spend six weeks in the country of Malawi ministering to orphans and prisoners. It was in Malawi where my passion to serve the underprivileged spread to a worldwide vision.

After graduating from Simpson I moved home to Fresno, where for the last two years I have worked as a Group Home Manager for youth with severe behavioral issues. I have loved being part of these teenagers' lives and helping them through the challenges they face, but since returning from Africa in August of 2004, God has placed heavily on my heart the desire to return. Every day I have prayed that God would show me His will, and place me with the right organization that shares the same passion for God and His people. After meeting with Pakisa for the first time several months ago, I knew that Mama Makeka House of Hope was that organization.

I am very excited about spending the next year in Zimbabwe and Congo, coming alongside Tecla and Mama Jackie in their ministries. It is my hope that we may encourage each other, learn from each other, and grow in faith together as we face the challenges and joys of sharing with people the love and hope found only in Christ.

The Congolese population finally voting and defining their own destiny which will give them the chance to work on a brighter future for their children.



Mama Makeka House of HOPE

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.

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*Where There is Always Room
for One More*

See our website: www.mmhhope.org



Members of College Community Church, MB transform used jeans into sturdy backpacks.

Nancy Becker— Fresno, California

All through my working life in Denver , Colorado, there was no time to pursue the love of sewing and quilt making that my mother had instilled in me as a child. When retirement from work became possible, here was my chance to sew again. But how?

When Dennis and I moved to Fresno, I presented a quilt at our church's annual celebration of the arts and expressed a desire to make children's quilts to give away.

Who should come up afterwards but Linda Tshimika with a suggestion to make quilts for the Queen Elizabeth Children's Home in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. That started me on my first quilt for Mama Makeka House of Hope. Within a year, that one quilt mushroomed into 40 made by several ladies from our church.

Each year, Pakisa comes up with new ideas, and the pictures and stories of the children with their quilts inspire me to keep on sewing as long as I can. There isn't anything more fun in the world!

