



I-CARE

The International Counseling, Advocacy, Research, & Education Project

Summer 2009 Report

June 16, 2009

We've just returned from African and England after an extended and productive trip. I'll have to confess feeling a little jaded before we left for our project. Like always there are so many details to take care of when you head a project. Navigating the bureaucracy here and in Botswana is no easy task. However, when we got to Gaborone, I was very pleased to see the good work that our colleague Amy Nitza has done during her Fulbright there. I of course keep up through email and telephone calls but seeing the work in action is rejuvenating.

Amy has been attached to the HIV/AIDS Centre and has taught a course in the Counseling Department. Her work at the HIV/AIDS Centre will surely pay big dividends. I will say more about the opportunity that exists there in the next news letter. I was scheduled to give a public lecture but it had to be postponed because of the end of their school year. However, I have been invited to give a major address next year.

While in Botswana, we journeyed to a town called Mochudi where we had a chance to meet 15 blind adolescent young women who had been undergoing a counseling sequence for a semester. Some of the young counselors that Amy has been training have done excellent work. You may know that disadvantaged young women are extremely vulnerable to male predators. This occurred at a residential school (there are many of this kind in Botswana because of the remoteness of the villages). In addition to the problems of adolescent girls in a male dominated society, this set of girls had been virtually ignored from mainstream society. This was further complicated with the girls blindness doubling the handicaps they faced.

It was heartening to hear how these girls had found a voice through the group counseling they had received. They did some testimonials to tell us how much they learned and were now able to be more able to turn down unwanted sexual advances and to stand up for each other. Sadly some of them are already HIV positive. After their testimony, they sang a series of song lead by a young lady with a marvelous voice. It was a joyful thing to see and hear. We are going to follow up with a series of other counseling sessions lead by people we have trained in Botswana. We have trained many counselors in Botswana but nothing has given me more satisfaction that seeing the fruits of recent training.

There is much more to say, but I will hold off until I have recovered a little more from the jet lag and the effects of a gall bladder attack on Saturday. Luckily the attack came after we had arrived in Bloomington. I will finish by saying that our research is going well, the training is going well and the prospects are good indeed, but I will save a more detailed description of why I can say that for later.

Your support of I-CARE is greatly appreciated.
Cordially,

Rex Stockton

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