

Hello Friends!

July 2007

Another cold but sunny day in the Eastern Cape.

[The Treatment Action Campaign](#) - an NGO campaigning for human rights for people living with HIV, from the Chris Hani District, visited Barkly East about a fortnight ago in order to assist our local TAC group (aligned with Thusananga) with community mobilisation in order to educate people against stigmatising those with HIV. The training sessions included many stakeholders from the community and covered a wide range of subjects, including treating opportunistic infections, sexually transmitted infections, prevention of mother to child transmission of the virus, and pushing for people to come forward, especially carers of HIV+ children, to come forward for ARV treatment. The TAC also celebrated Maggie Thethelwa's Birthday with a surprise cake & party for her. I won't tell you how many candles were on it (Maggie is co-founder of Thusananga and the Barkly East TAC branch and all round superwoman)

Khaya Lokukhanya was in cricket mode yesterday when a young local man, Kevin Orpen, who is at school at Selbourne College, (and a hot shot at most sports) volunteered to spend a day teaching the youngsters there some of the finer points of cricket rules. As a relative new-comer to the game, I am amazed to find a new set of rules appearing with every match.

Fielding positions were discussed & drawn out in GREAT detail. The rest of the day was spent playing cricket (and the odd bit of soccer). Kev is planning to teach the children at KL how to make their own wickets. Joe has made some for them in the past but because of their enthusiasm for cricket, the wickets seem to have a pretty short life span! Joe & Kev are going to work out a way of making the wickets without using wood turning equipment. Alternatively...Joe may teach Kev & the kids how to turn wood if I ask him nicely! Amy, my step-daughter was also busy this week helping the younger children reply to all their new pen pals. Thank you especially to Zolani for all his help on both days.

On a more serious note, we are busy testing more people for HIV & STI's than ever. The TAC trip seemed to have had the desired effect...this week we have had many "well" people coming to clinic for testing.

The Sibanye HIV+ Support Group are very busy making HIV/AIDS awareness beaded badges for Dr Steve Chapman's "[Open House](#)" Clinic in Madrid, Spain. Open House is a unique clinic that has recently been opened by Dr Chapman in order to provide drop in facilities for gay men, to allow prompt diagnosis & treatment of STI's. HIV is diagnosed at the clinic (now possible within a few days of infection using sophisticated new techniques) and clients then referred on for specialist care if HIV+. Open House has already raised many many EUROS for our projects and we thank them with all our heart and wish Dr "Esteve" all the best with his amazing project. The badges will be hand-delivered to Dr Chapman while on a visit in August to London! It has been a slow process here as our best bead worker is away, confined to a specialist TB hospital with Multi Drug Resistant (MDR) TB (a growing problem here in SA). Many of our new clients are learning to bead from scratch, but with Maggie to guide them, they will have no problems....

Cheers,
Take care,
Clare xxxxx