



Nakekela Christian Community Centre Association

Greetings to you all from the staff of Nakekela!!! We had few weeks of respite from our labours over the Christmas holiday. During this time Nakekela closes down totally. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean there are no patients. In fact, we've noticed that most of the terribly sick people will return to their home villages from the cities over Christmas break. However, we have seen a great benefit in giving our staff some time off to renew their state of mind and spend some time with their families.

This year also marks a new beginning for management. Dorcas Mathibela officially became the manager and is working with Babette to take over all of the duties of the manager. In the meantime, Babette will be staying on to write proposals and assist Dorcas in learning all of the functions of the manager. Dori Schoeman has left the Home-Based Care team in the capable hands of Mirriam Rakwale and will take over the administrative assistant post left open by Dorcas.

Many staff members have also taken the opportunity for personal development by taking courses in various subjects at night or on the weekends. Nakekela has also sent staff members on training on how to react as a Christian to HIV/AIDS and also How to Run a Support Group. Dorcas also joined several other SALT (Strategic Alliance for Learning and Transformation) organizations in Pietermaritzburg for a week of training and encouragement as representative Nakekela.

What a start to the year! Our first day of work began Monday 7 January. All of the staff pitched in to help clean and ready the facility for the admission of new patients. Meanwhile, Mirriam and Dori discovered the list of patients waiting for admission and went out in the bakkie and began admissions of new patients.

Soon the front foyer filled up with family members of patients being admitted. There were even drop-ins from the community surrounding our facility with people hoping to have their family member admitted. Many stated how grateful they were that we are here and opening again. We are reminded how essential Nakekela is to the community and we are renewed in our fight against HIV/AIDS.



2013

STATISTICS TO DATE:

Admissions	30
Current Patients:	10
Discharge to Home:	6
Discharge to Hospital:	1
Deaths:	13



Back Row, left to right:
Baby, Patricia, Babette, Sarah, M., Abraham, Julia, Mirriam, Pinky, Sr. Emma, Mama Rita, Mama Masuku, Glory, Sr. Ncane, Jane, Dorah, Ellah, Thokozile, Dr. Sonja
Front Row left to right:
Jane, Dorcas, Madira, Thembisile, Maria, Martha, Sarah Z.
(Missing from Photo: Riana Hattingh, Constance Khanye, Belinder Mavuso, & Dori Schoeman)



Our Home Based Care team pose for a quick photo

Ellah’s Story

In 2006, Ellah was diagnosed with HIV. She was living with her husband of 3 years and had just given birth to her 3 month old baby. She was becoming weaker and weaker from diarrhea. She moved to her mother’s house because she couldn’t care for herself or her baby. She visited the clinic but only received pills to relieve the diarrhea. They did not help. She went to doctor after doctor trying to get relief from the illness. After 5 visits to special doctors, there was still no relief from the diarrhea. Finally, her younger sister suggested she should go to the clinic to test for HIV. She went to KwaMhlanga Hospital for the test.

After the test revealed that she was positive for HIV, they informed her to return in 3 weeks to check her CD4 count. (CD4 cells are a type of white blood cells that fight infection. The CD4 count measures the number of cells found in the sample of blood drawn and is used to measure the strength of the immune system.) By then Ellah was so weak she was unable to even walk. Her sister carried her to the clinic, where they found out her CD4 count was only 12. The average healthy person has a CD4 count of 700-1200. Since Ellah’s CD4 count was so low, they could not put her on Anti-Retroviral (ARV) medication. Instead, the nurses at the clinic gave her boosters with vitamins for two months to help get her health and strength up. Once she was on the ARV’s, she suffered from side effects and became ill once again with diarrhea and vomiting. The pills wouldn’t even be digested and she couldn’t keep any food in her body.

Her sister came to Nakekela to find out if there was a bed available. Sr. Emma visited her to find out what the problem was. The next week, Sr. Emma came back and admitted Ellah to Nakekela. To combat the diarrhea and vomiting she was given her ARV tablets crushed in a porridge. This helps coat the stomach and assists

in reducing the side effects of the drugs. Slowly, she was able to eat and take treatment well.

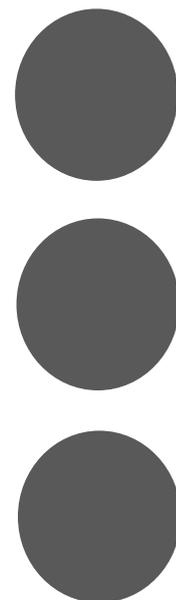
Upon admission Ellah could not walk or talk. She was too weak to do anything, but lay in a bed. Even sitting in a wheelchair required too much effort, so she missed out on the weekly Bible studies and craft sessions. The care givers kept coming in to check on her and take her vitals. Even the kitchen staff came in and chatted with her. Ellah remembers that Babette came in every day before she went to her office to see how she was doing. She believes that the love and care she was shown contributed to her recovery. Staff members recall with smiles Ellah’s determination to return to health. Every morning she would say to them that she was going to learn to walk again and then be able to care for her personal hygiene herself.

Once she started to feel better she requested to be able to start caring for herself. Going to the toilet and bathing herself gave her purpose and she knew that if she could do those things she would be able to go home and be strong again.

Dr. Sonja had written a letter to the local clinic asking that they test Ellah’s small child for HIV. Her mother brought the baby to the clinic and tested. We praise God that the baby is not positive for HIV.

On the day she was discharged, she was determined to walk home instead of getting a lift in the vehicle. Babette walked along with her. When she arrived home, her family was so happy to see her. They could not believe that she was healthy again. They phoned neighbours and other family members to come and see.

Every Thursday, Nakekela sent a vegetable package to help with food and make sure she was receiving the nutrition she required while taking the medication. Home Based Care workers also came to visit her at home and to make sure everything was going well and that



Ellah’s Story
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Dr. Sonja and Sr. Emma rejoicing over the donation of adult nappies



Sarah and Patricia discussing a passage of Scripture together

Mama Rita folding laundry



Julia hanging the sheets on the line to dry



Sr. Ncane sorting the medication for each patient's weekly pill box

Report from Doctor

By Sonja Miskin

Denial. It is a horrible word and it describes a horrible situation .The dictionary defines it like this: disbelief; refusal to acknowledge the truth; steadfast assertion that a truth is false. The Word of God describes it as unbelief, and our Lord Jesus was withering in His rebuke regarding those who chose to live in steadfast unbelief. In our work at Nakekela we deal a lot with this human condition. In our experience, people die because of denial. Faced with a diagnosis of HIV/AIDS, many patients will live in steadfast denial and deteriorate to the point of losing speech and body functions and eventual death unless someone steps into their lives to help. That is our purpose, and not because we have the power or ability to bring healing, but because our Sovereign Lord has placed us here for that very reason...so that God can use us to step into these lives and shatter the destructive denial and unbelief in many individuals to bring about not only physical healing but more importantly spiritual healing. We have been enormously blessed to see with our own eyes the repentance and recovery of many through the Lords wonderful grace. So we want to thank all who pray for us and support the project so that the salvation of bodies and souls of individuals can be made possible.

Report from Home Based Care

By Mirriam Rakwale

I have seen the mercy and favour of God since we started this year. We are busy teaching our patients about HIV and the importance of taking their medication. It is our duty to make sure that they are not defaulting. We also work together with our local clinics by updating them about the condition of our patients. The police chose one of our Home Based Care workers to go with them to different schools to teach the children about awareness about various issues in this community. I am happy because now we can reach the youth. Our big problem now is that most of our patients are still struggling of hunger. We are still trying to work with social workers to help us, because they also refer patients to us. One of our home based care workers keep the government social workers updated about patients who are struggling with hunger due to no money. We also started with support groups to encourage each other. I pray we will win this fight against poverty and HIV. I also pray that we will find enough funding to keep our team in operation.



Dorcas Mathibela addressing the staff for the first time as Manager



Ella's Story

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she was eating and taking her medication properly. When she had recovered her full strength, she began visit Nakekela and find out if she could get a job here. She wanted to help other people that were faced with the same situation as she. In 2012, she was hired as a replacement Home Based Care worker, initially to replace another care worker on leave, but then hired on full time. Her eagerness and zeal to help sick people urges others on to fight the battle against HIV/AIDS. She frequently phones the office about new critically ill people, and to see if there are open beds at Nakekela. She loves to educate the community about HIV and how to prevent it and to give hope to those who suffer from the devastating effects. Even though she suffered through incredible weakness and rejection from her husband, Ellah is still an optimistic person, passing on her enthusiasm to others and encouraging us to press on in our work. Since her initial blood test, Ellah's CD4 count has improved to 850 through her determination to take her treatment correctly and to eat a healthy diet and live a healthy lifestyle. She is very proud of her 6 years old child who will start Grade 1 this year.



Pontso with Letty Tjiane, one of our Christian counsellors from Mukhanyo Theological College

Learning to walk again after gaining initiative to live again.



Pontso, a young boy admitted at Nakekela in January, was staying with his grandmother and his sisters. When they realized that he was getting ill quite often, they stopped caring for him. His mother had passed away already. Rumours stated that she died from poisoning due to her positive HIV status. His grandfather then took him to live with him and his sons. However, there were no females in this household, so proper care for the young boy was lacking. The grandfather then contacted one of our Home Based Care workers that had visited last year to introduce themselves and asked for help. He had already taken Pontso to KwaMhlanga clinic to get tested and begin his treatment for HIV. However, Pontso was already weak and refused to take the medication. He had even stopped going to school because of his illness. Upon arrival at Nakekela the staff sat down with him to counsel him. Finally after many sessions he showed willingness to take his treatment voluntarily. He started be jaundiced and needed to stop his regular TB medicine and start treatment of Streptomycin, which is a stronger medication. After this change, he started to become healthier and shows a huge improvement in his outlook on life. He began smiling and talking again and even practices walking every day. He loves to join in with the various craft sessions that are held. One of the staff members promised him that if he practices his walking, they will get him a school bag so he can return to school. He is very eager to go back to school and see his friends once again.

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