

February 23, 2008

Dear Friends of the Indiana-Kenya Partnership,

On behalf of our Kenyan partners, Joe Mamlin sends along a heartfelt thank you to all of you who acted swiftly and generously to donate to the Kenya Recovery Fund. As you know, an estimated 300,000 Kenyans have been displaced by the recent post-election violence, and many of our patients, colleagues and friends were left homeless and destitute. Your donations helped ease their pain and start them on the process of rebuilding their lives.

Joe writes today from Eldoret, "Dr. Kimaiyo has been a keen steward of these funds and I doubt if any gift in the history of Kenya has gone so directly to the heart of need---and did so immediately devoid of delay and needless paper work. Without these donations, we did not have a dime to do the very thing conscience demanded. Thousands have been touched by these gifts and each recipient would overcome their pain of the moment to embrace each of those who gave.

"Our task is not over. We all pray this week will bring peace. But whatever happens, no one can take away the peace in my heart today for having been able to bridge the hands that gave with the hands of those in such need."

So far, the Fund has provided support to 401 patient families (with 1,978 dependents), 121 staff families, and support for some of the dozens of the refugees who were forced to come to the IU House compound for safety. A detailed report from AMPATH's director of social work Cleophas Wanyonyi includes several moving stories of persons who you have helped:

***Narrow escape***

*Mary Omusula is 45 years who has been working as a casual laborer. She is an AMPATH client and married to a 48 year old peasant farmer. Their gross monthly income is \$25-30. This hardly meets their basic needs given that they have 5 children aged between 12 to 20 years. Most of the school aged children have dropped out of school for lack of school fees. This family shares a one room timber house they call home. They have an extra make shift room partitioned using a bed sheet. The older boys seek accommodation in the neighborhood.*

*During the election skirmishes, Mary and 3 of their children sought refuge in one of the churches in Kiambaa (worst hit by violence) while the husband stayed home with the elder son to provide security for their home. One of the children had gone visiting their grandmother in their rural home. Hell broke loose when gangs struck; burning houses in the neighborhood. The men of the family scampered to relatively safer areas all around camouflaging themselves as part of the demonstrators. The church haven turned tragic as attackers struck setting it on fire. Thirty plus people burned to death. It was a miracle that Mary and her 3 children escaped from the inferno alive!*

*She was unscathed but one of her daughters suffered mild burns. The AMPATH social worker came across them in the IDP (internally displaced persons) camp too traumatized to speak! As the social worker got her and the children into trauma counseling, she provided support for this family with 2 blankets, soap, and \$50 for basic support and the costs of medical care for the girl. It was a gift well received. The repeat words, "thank you" tell it all. She sees a ray of hope in her otherwise dismal life. It is wonderful that someone did care.*

### **Two Tears!**

*Alice breaks down and sobs! She has just been ushered into the AMPATH social worker's office. She can't believe that all that she had spent her life building had gone up in flames...*

*Alice was diagnosed HIV+ in 2001 after she had been admitted to the hospital with persistent cough and fever. On learning of her status her husband ran away from her and left her the burden of fending for their 3 children. Through the support of AMPATH social workers she had a roof on her head (the program put up a house for her) and had helped recruit her in the AMKATWENDE project where she had grown passion fruits and Soya beans. She had started enjoying the fruit of her labor by delivering her produce to the AMPATH restaurant, Cool Stream.*

*However, the post election violence began a nasty turn on her life. Her cherished home was destroyed by arsonists who also destroyed the crop in her small farm. All that she depended on for income was destroyed completely. Alice and her children found refuge at a camp for the displaced persons in the Eldoret Show Ground. She met a social worker at the camp who got her on food; gave her blankets for herself and her children and \$20 to help purchase a mattress for her 4 year old girl who until then was spending the night on the wet floor in their new home---a tent!. As she bundles up her gift pack at the end of the interview with the social worker, her eyes well up again, this time they are sobs of relief and gratitude for the support! At least somebody cared!*

### **The Burden of Care**

*The post election violence had an adverse impact on many AMPATH workers! Many had a change in lifestyle as they assumed new roles as caregivers! Isaac, a data manager in AMPATH data centre, played host to 11 persons in his 2 bed-room house. His parents had their house torched after the violence broke out. His brothers and their spouses also had their houses torched in various parts of Eldoret: Isaac's home was a refuge for them all. He had to use up all his savings for the month to feed the increased dependants as he met the cost of relocating some of his relatives to safety. He looked confused even as he worked religiously. Recovery fund support came in handy to provide relief for Isaac and his family.*

The tragic recent events in Kenya have only emphasized the importance of AMPATH's work, and how critical your support of that work continues to be. On behalf of Mary, Alice, Isaac and the thousands of others who you have helped, thank you very much.

