

# Christian Response to HIV/AIDS

Fall 2009

## FIRST GRANT



### FIRST LIGHT

Children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS have largely been ignored in the global AIDS response, especially in poor countries.

Yet, their needs are urgent and immense. When the needs are acute they threaten a child's survival; when they are chronic they cause lifetime physical and psychological scarring which robs a child's potential. Children experience emotional trauma when their parents die. Many are then cared for by elderly grandparents or older siblings and descend into poverty. They become malnourished. They are forced to drop out of school. They feel afraid and isolated, face the pain of social stigma, and are subject to abuse, neglect, and exploitation. They are at increased risk for HIV infection and other illness and die at an early age.

### Dawn of hope through first grant

To care for these children, *LifeRise* AIDS Resources is giving a series of grants to indigenous evangelical Christian ministries. These grants cause the first light of new hope to dawn for hurting children. We have recently awarded our first grant to a grass roots ministry in Ethiopia called Remember the Poorest Community (RPC). This grant for \$5,000 over one year will provide care for 45 children aged 5 to 18 years.

RPC was founded in 1999 when 10 evangelical churches joined together in the town of Nazareth to reach out in holistic ministry to the poorest members of their community. RPC is affiliated with the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia. Since the ministry started, they have cared for over 4,500 needy children.

### Care to be provided

RPC will use grant funds to provide lifesaving spiritual care and health and social services for the

children. Most importantly, they will give the children opportunity to hear about Christ and commit their lives to Him, as well as attend church so they will grow in their faith. Children who don't already have a Bible will receive one. Each of the children will benefit from emotional support and counseling, as well as after-school tutoring. Every child will receive a set of casual clothing and a pair of shoes, a school uniform, and school supplies. In addition, school fees for 10 children will be covered. All of the children will receive an annual health check-up and preventive medicines. Treatment will be provided for those who become sick.

### Drop-in center

Some of the services for the children will be provided at a neighborhood "drop-in center." This is a "safe place," a supportive environment, where children may come to feel a sense of belonging and receive care from adults who are trained as staff. There are classrooms for learning, and a playground, as well as toilets and showers.

### Grant application and monitoring

The grant was awarded to RPC after they filled out a comprehensive application, which required them to provide among other information: documentation of their status as a legitimate charity; 2 years of financial data; goals, activities, outcomes and costs for the project; and, résumés

for key project personnel. I reviewed RPC's application several times and requested additional information. When the process was complete, RPC and *LifeRise* signed an agreement detailing all the terms and conditions of the grant.

Now that the grant has been initiated, *LifeRise* is monitoring it. In order to receive quarterly disbursements, RPC must demonstrate progress in meeting their objectives and accountability for funds.



Ethiopian Children

## KENYA

postponed

## GRANT

In my Fall 2008 newsletter, I shared how *LifeRise* was looking forward to giving our first grant for orphan care to a project in Kenya. It turned out, we gave the first grant to a project in Ethiopia (see article on page 1).

### Why grant postponed

I fully expected that the organization in Kenya would receive a grant. However, the application process is demanding. After several rounds of revisions, although I was satisfied with the way they wanted to use grant funds to care for

children, their ability to track their finances needed some refinement.

### Help may be on the way

I have gone over all the financial information this ministry submitted for their grant application with an accountant who

has a heart for missions. I've asked him to travel to Kenya as a volunteer to help them set up a reliable financial system. Also, his wife is a nurse who can address the children's health needs. If this couple is able to go, I have indicated that the Kenya project may reapply for a grant once they have at least 2 years' accurate financial data to report.

### LifeRise stewardship

I share this story with you for 3 reasons. First, to give you some follow-up. Second, to assure you of our careful screening process. We take stewardship of your donations quite seriously. Third, to illustrate how we are trying to build the competence and credibility of grass roots organizations. Please pray for the Kenyan ministry to improve their program so they can ultimately receive a grant from *LifeRise* and transform the lives of hurting children through the gospel.

Our first grantee, RPC, will provide a pair of shoes for each of 45 children (see page 1). RPC shares the following touching story from a child who received shoes through another grant. "I was so happy and excited when we were given new pairs of shoes. . . .It was the first time for me to get a new pair of shoes. That night I slept with the new shoes beside me under the blanket and I was dreaming about wearing them to school the next day. I couldn't wait for the day to dawn and be able to put them on and walk to school . . ." *What a difference we can make for these children!*



**peri•pa•tet•ic** \per-ə-pə-'tet-ik\ *adj* : relating to journeyings hither and thither

In addition to moving forward with *LifeRise* grants (see page 1), I am itinerating as a missionary this year and next. This means I'm making phone calls, sending emails, visiting churches, dropping off information packets, scheduling appointments with pastors, sharing in services and other gatherings, and meeting with church boards and missions committees.

It is a blessing to share my ministry in this way. I feel privileged to be an advocate for those *infected* and *affected* by HIV/AIDS as some of the most lost and hurting people in the world. I present the needs of HIV/AIDS and the Christian

response. I talk about the grace of Jesus which brings salvation, compassion, healing, restoration and hope to those suffering because of this deadly disease.

Through these efforts, I seek to increase much-needed monthly support for *LifeRise*. All contributions have significant impact and are greatly appreciated. We are praying for 100 churches or individuals to give \$100 a month as sustaining partners.

Pastors, I would be grateful for the opportunity to come to your church to share the ministry of *LifeRise* in a service — please contact me. Presentations can be tailored to your individual needs.



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**HIV/AIDS MINISTRY NEWS**