

STEPPING STONES INTERNATIONAL UPDATES July - September 2007

HIGHLIGHTS

This quarter was extremely and exciting with the highlights ranging from new staff undergoing training, getting above ground at the new site, to the circus, ballet, camps, horseback riding exams and sponsorship from the Grand Palm Hotel to facilitate a visit from.....**Steve Hamilton**, former drug and alcohol addict, internationally acclaimed motivational speaker and author of "I Want My Life Back."

SSI arranged for Mr. Hamilton to speak about his experiences with drugs and alcohol, with two schools, Linchwe Junior Secondary School and Molefi Secondary School in Mochudi, as well as with Stepping Stones International staff, participants, and teachers from partner schools. During his three day visit he reached over 1300 students and adults.

The overall experience was summarized from a letter written to Steve Hamilton by a student at Linchwe II JSS, "*With all the respect I would like to thank you for coming to Linchwe II JSS to give us advice on the danger of smoking you have experienced in your life. It really helped me a lot because before you came to this school I was willing to smoke because I had no friends. I thought that I would make friends by smoking. You have saved my life and I have noticed that friends can influence you to do bad things, but when the trouble comes you will be alone*".



Steve Hamilton Presentation at
Molefi Senior Secondary School



Steve Hamilton at SSI center talking with caregivers and
School Guidance Counselors

Establishment of the Organisation/Program

- Employee contracts were signed July 1, 2007
- Staff were trained in first aid and Lifeline training comprising of counseling and personal growth (6 weeks, 3 X a week)
- The buildings at the new site reached above ground with walls!
- Standard Chartered Bank Account in Botswana was established for SSI with fees waived for the project
- The staff established and started to implement a regular schedule of activities including life skills, study skills, sports, job skills, volunteer and expression activities

Activities at the Center

- SSI activities focused on Life Skills program with a lot of activities on family, friends, Who am I?, likes, dislikes and values
- At the end of July ten participants took their horseback riding exams and every participant passed
- Four of our participants took part in the Silent Shout (TV youth talk show) on Botswana Television, relating life as an orphan and the hope they have to succeed
- Two camps (5 days each) were conducted at Mokolodi Game Reserve in Gaborone by Southern African Psychosocial Support Initiative (SAPSSI) on grief and loss, team building, communication skills and recreational activities. Ten youth participated the first week and 20 in the second week.
- Reviewed and revised tools for Guardian/Child workshops and compiled list of potential caregivers to attend the training
- SSI youth visited the performers in the Russian Ballet hosted at the Grand Palm Hotel.
- Sarah Hayek, volunteer from the U.S. spent six weeks, starting mid September at SSI teaching the participants about marketing and generating ideas for income generating projects
- Set up the preliminary system for the job skills program with our first visitor being Mr. Sebina from the Mochudi Police Station. Other job skills activities involved conducting interviews, learning about body language and handshaking!

Fundraising

- SSI received confirmation of the success of the Democracy and Governance Proposal funded by the U.S. Embassy.
- Associated Fund Administrator Botswana PTY Ltd. (AFA) agreed to sponsor SSI staff with 100% health insurance (standard package) for one year
- YCare (Sponsored walks in the desert) raised and donated funds to SSI
- Standard Chartered agreed to fund the job skills program
- Submitted proposal to WUSC for peer education and advocacy
- Submitted proposal to the Stephen Lewis Foundation and a representative from the Foundation visited the center, a Board Member and staff
- Rotary Botswana submitted proposal to FNB for consultant fees for the building, equipment and a vehicle
- Submitted proposal to the Round Table Botswana

- Rotary Club Botswana assisted in purchasing 434 books for the center's library from Books for Africa (.60cents) per

Government and Community Activities

- Ditshwanelo (local NGO working on Children's rights) and UNICEF invited SSI to choose six participants from the program and participating schools to attend a workshop on Violence against Children. One of our participants was chosen to represent the group in Lusaka, Zambia to advocate for children's rights globally.
- Members of the Community Outreach Club at Ithuteng Junior Secondary School and SSI partnered to provide the club's participants with the opportunity to give back to their community by facilitating creative, educational activities
- SSI wants to develop a coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Government in Kgatleng District, of those serving adolescents and OVC, and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) and Home Based Care Societies. Introductory meetings were held to inform each other of the different services provided by each NGO to have a clearer understanding of where referrals can be made and how organizations can better work together.
- SSI attended meetings of the Kgatleng District Multi-Sectoral AIDS Committee (DMSAC) working collaboratively with government and non-governmental partners from various sectors to address various HIV/AIDS related issues including prevention, care and support for PLWHAs and OVC.

Needs Assessment in Kgatleng District with orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) and non-OVC

- Data was entered for both the adolescent and caregiver surveys
- Focus group discussion report was completed
- Preliminary analysis of the data was conducted
- Note: delays occurred due to delays in data collection at the schools and the data analyst, who is volunteering his time, was not available to start immediately

Next Quarter's Activities

- Fundraise: Send out NPI and Kelloggs proposals and network to source funding for salaries
- Develop Circles of Support Community initiative
- Start counseling program
- Set up library system
- End of the year assessments
- Attend end of year site meetings
- Camp for 5 youth sponsored by Kings Camp
- Identify donors for the food program
- Continue outreach visits to the families
- Identify volunteer cooks
- Set up platform with Mascom or Orange cell phone providers to work on raising money for SS
- Prepare for interviews to add 13 more youth to the program
- Identify and interview facilitators for the Guardian/Child communication workshops and Democracy and Governance projects
- End of the year celebration with caregivers, youth and community!