



May 2008 Newsletter

Serving the destitute elderly in the developing world

FROM MICHAEL'S HOUSE

As we write this newsletter, all of us are being faced with the startling reality of the depressed economy and the amazing increase in the price of food and oil. We realize it every time we go to the grocery store or stop at the gas station. Our money is just not buying what it did in the not too recent past.

A staggering change is unfolding in the world's food markets and especially in developing countries where we serve the destitute elderly. The World Bank points out "that global food prices have risen by 75% since 2000, while wheat prices have increased by 200%. The cost of other staples such as rice and soy beans have also hit record highs, while corn is at its most expensive in 12 years."

The increasing cost of grains is also pushing up the price of meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products. And, there is every probability prices will continue their unremitting rise, according to expert predictions by the UN and developed countries.

In Ethiopia alone, the cost of the food we buy to feed our elderly poor has gone up by 46% in the last year. Millions more of the world's most helpless people are facing starvation as food shortages emerge and crop prices spiral ever upwards.

The poor always suffer most and especially the destitute elderly. If prices keep rising, more and more of them will be powerless to afford the meager food they need to stay alive, and without our help they will become frantic. Let's not forget them in this extraordinary time.

Since our foundation in faith in 2003, with a mere \$30 you, our community, and benefactors have been astonishingly responsive to our needs. In this newsletter, you will see for yourself how our work through your contributions is growing and making miracles happen."

Thank You, Michael Craig, Founder

MASAKA, UGANDA –Help for ostracized women



It is not a surprise that the vast percentage of pregnant women in Africa receive little or no prenatal care. This is particularly so in remote areas. For generations, millions of women have suffered a preventable and overwhelming tragedy that has not only medical but terrible psychosocial repercussions. Through obstructed or prolonged labor they are devastatingly physically damaged to the extent that they suffer from fistula. Although the medical reasons are complex, for our purpose it is sufficient to say that they are left permanently incontinent of bowel and bladder. The psychosocial complications are devastating. They begin with social isolation due to offensive odor, and many women are abandoned, divorced, and ostracized. Since our work is with the elderly, we are now in a position to financially help some older women who have suffered with this stigma for a lifetime. We hope to be able to help Dr. Maura MMM and a team of doctors from Europe who volunteer to liberate at least some of these older women from a life of shame and pain to their rightful dignity. The average cost of the surgery is about \$80 -US.

A letter from Terfa Dinka, Manager (On site in Addis Ababa)



We take care of the destitute elderly in Ethiopia

Currently we are happy and blessed to offer a wide range of essential services to the poorest of the poor elderly. We are highly grateful and appreciate any financial support for these poor older people. Their needs are very immediate indeed. Among other things we provide;

Daily meals Monday to Friday at Michael's House which is our main house in Addis Ababa. We provide them personal hygiene education, routine health monitoring and urgent care. There are two bathrooms available at the center including showers and places to do laundry. There is handcrafts work room for a group of older women who have the capacity to do some cotton work, and one weaver who works with them on this project.

We provide cash money for some every month to buy some food for their breakfast and dinner, and also to pay for utilities or rent if they have them.

We have also some older persons in a target group who receive pensions every month. In the rural and remote Western and Southern parts of Ethiopia, we have about 40 older persons who are receiving monthly cash allowances.

At Ann's Shelter, which is close by Michael's House in Addis Ababa, we have a residential care program for about 35-40 older ostracized elderly. We brought them from sleeping on the street where there is no safety. We provide comfortable beds, mattresses, blankets towels, pajamas and daily breakfast.

We have 11 workers (volunteers) who are present every day to conduct all the services at Michael's House Community Center and at Ann's Shelter for the Aged. Currently we have a staff nurse available five days a week and a doctor once a week for all our elderly guests..

We have also home-based services for those who cannot come to Michael's House due to their health.

This is what's happening at Michael's House in Ethiopia with your help.

Sincerely, Terfa Dinka

KAMPALA, UGANDA

In Gganda, Uganda Michael's House distributes vegetables to the elderly. This season they have been able to provide maize, bananas, yams, cassava, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, and peanuts. Some of the rural elderly also receive pensions. During the recent extended rainy season they have also been able to provide bedding, clothes to replace those that were water damaged. The elderly live in the remote areas of Gomba, Bugunda and Mubende.



"Let us touch the dying, the poor, the lonely and the unwanted according to the graces we have received and let us not be ashamed or slow to do the humble work. "

Mother Teresa

ACT OF KINDNESS REAPS REWARD:



Dear Michael's House,

I needed to pass this story on to you.

Recently, I was looking around at the yard work I had to do to get rid of the weeds and ready for the spring flowers when I noticed that my neighbor's grass was over the tops of my shoes. He has always been a great neighbor, but travels so often that his lawn often lacks attention. He has tried on numerous occasions to hire a lawn service, but they never seem to last. In any case, I got out my lawnmower and cut his lawn. I left him a note to let him know and indicated I didn't want anything, but a donation to Michael's House would be appreciated. I was totally surprised when he came to my door that afternoon with a check for \$500 to help those so in need at Michael's House. WOW!! So, please accept the enclosed donation for Michael's House; you never know how great the reward can be for a small act of kindness.

Signed,

Anonymous Supporter of Michael's House



NEWS FROM UGANDA

Since our last newsletter, we are very happy to be able to share with you that we have been able to pay for cataract operations for ten elderly people. To bring sight to the blind is a wonderful corporal work of mercy. The operations, which are performed by teams of doctors who volunteer their services, cost approximately \$30 -US. We hope with your continued charity to be able to maintain our support of bringing sight to the blind. Cataract surgery not only restores the sight of these elderly people; it also allows them to become fully functioning members of their families, their communities and society as a whole.

On the farms, we are waiting for the rainy season when we can make bricks to repair buildings and construct additional huts.

AFRICAN PALMS GRANT

This winter, we received an initial grant from African Palms for \$5,000 to be used for medical care for our elderly. With these funds, we have purchased essential supplies for our on site clinic; and, we are able to pay salaries for a doctor and nurse for 6 months. The doctor visits the center in Addis Ababa 1 day a week and the nurse visits 5 days a week. This program is proving to be a great success; and, we are hopeful that the grant will continue to be renewed.



SHOES FOR THE ELDERLY

In September of 2006, we had a Labor Day shoe drive to gift our elderly with proper fitting shoes. This was a first for many of them who daily walk great distances barefoot over rough unimproved roads often littered with broken glass, sharp rocks and debris. We were able to accomplish this for the minimal amount of \$5 per person for 100 of our elderly.



They have enjoyed these shoes now for approximately 1 1/2 years. We are hoping to continue the tradition of supplying shoes to replace those that have lost their support and become worn.

PAJAMAS FOR THE ELDERLY AT ANN'S SHELTER

Recently, the women at Michael's House made good use of the sewing machines that were so generously donated last year. They made pajamas for the men at Ann's Shelter! Below you see them proudly modeling their new sleep attire. The men and women at Michael's House are also making good use of the loom and weaving cloth used to make scarves and other items to sell in the market as a means of contributing toward their own support. These activities not only help to generate income, but they empower our elderly with a renewed sense of purpose and dignity.

NEW HOME FOR ANN'S SHELTER

Ann's Shelter is thriving thanks to the continuous support of a generous benefactor. The shelter has now moved to a house that is all on one floor, located closer to Michael's House Community Center, and where breakfast will be served daily. We are all sincerely grateful for your kindness and generosity.



"If you find it in your heart to care for somebody else, you will have succeeded."

Maya Angelou



ONE DOLLAR CAN CHANGE A LIFE!

You don't have to be wealthy or break the bank to be part of a Giving Circle. Giving Circles are a simple and powerful concept. A Giving Circle is formed when people come together and pool their money on a monthly basis to help our destitute elderly. The group can be any size and can be made up of friends, family or workmates. They decide together which of our many projects to give their money to, e.g., adopt a grandparent, pay for a pension, a cataract or fistula surgery or give to the general food fund. Giving Circles also appeal to people who want to be involved in our projects but who are on a limited budget. Each month, members of the Giving Circle may contribute as little as \$1 each to help someone less fortunate. Now everyone can be a philanthropist! For more information call, Michael Craig at 301-549-3122

WHAT CAN MY MONEY DO???

For so little, you can do so much---\$10 for one monthly pension or \$120 to support an elderly person for an entire year; \$80 Cataract Surgery to restore sight and \$35 Fistula Surgery to restore one woman's health and dignity; \$5 to buy a pair of shoes; \$20 for craft supplies that will be converted to goods to sell in the market place; \$10 to \$175 to buy animals, \$20 to \$30 for eyeglasses (Agape Fund), \$100 (or any amount) for the vehicle fund to replace our 35-year old jeep; or whatever your budget allows for the general food fund.

Our progress has been outstanding and your continued support is invaluable. There are many ways to help and you can be assured that every donation no matter what amount makes a huge difference in the quality of the daily lives of our destitute elderly! Thank you.

**Please make checks out to: Michael's House Inc. 15779 Columbia Pike,
PO Box 250,
Burtonsville, MD 20866 USA**

www.michaels-house.org

98% of all donations go directly to our elderly poor

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