



September 2008 Newsletter

Serving the destitute elderly in the  
developing world

***“Hope is the only good that is common to all people; those who have nothing else possess hope still” (Thales)***

What the world needs now is hope! Deep down most of us hunger after a guarantee that there are good reasons for waking up tomorrow morning ...that our presence and our efforts are not worthless...that our being here is actually making a change in the outcome of world history. Unfortunately, the foundations for hope on which too many of us stand are unable to endure a serious shaking. Frequently, we are overwhelmed by the magnitude of the demands confronting us and think that we have to do it alone. I'm sure, that not infrequently, we turn away from the television and it's seemingly endless flood of world conflict and dire poverty and sigh, "I don't have a clue how to solve these crises. I'd love to be able to help. I hope someone will figure it out and help those desperate people."

At Michael's House Inc, we invite you to join us in a united grassroots community of hope. Realizing the immensity of the problems in the world, we have identified a subset of the poorest of the poor whom we want to help, namely the destitute elderly who are ineligible for any other aid. We are ordinary people from all walks of life, philosophies, and cultures that in our short time together made miracles happen. At least, they are miracles to our beneficiaries. In this newsletter, we are proud to present some insight into the work that we undertake. We are on fire with hope that with the help of your continued support, we can continue to spread this hope and make miracles happen. There is an Ethiopian proverb that says, **“When spider webs unite they can tie up a lion.”**



Michael Craig

### **A HEARTFELT THANK YOU!**

We are very excited to report that we have a most generous benefactor who has offered to purchase a van for our community center in Ethiopia. Our new diesel van/ambulance, will hold 9 passengers and can be used to transport our elderly guests. It truly will be a blessing for them to no longer have to struggle to climb into the back of a jeep when going to the medical clinic. Amsalu Gelata, our trustee, who is originally from Ethiopia, is arranging the purchase and shipping in Amsterdam, Holland and Terfa Dinka, our manager in Ethiopia, is arranging the importation license and the rail transportation from the port in Djibouti to Ethiopia.



*When I stand before God at the end of my life, I hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, "I used everything you gave me." - Erma Louise Bombeck*

**Michael's House is a registered 501 (c) (3) public charity under the Internal Revenue Code; therefore, all contributions are tax deductible.**

## TANZANIA

Each month, Michael's House is honored to be able to make a financial contribution to the Medical Missionaries Doctors who specifically target the grandmothers in the surrounding areas. The grandmothers have experienced multiple sufferings as a result of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, grief, isolation, trauma, and the burden of caring for many grandchildren who are now orphans

Unfortunately, this is all within an environment characterized by extreme poverty, disease, and rising costs for everyday staples. These are needy women who are ineligible for any other aid and we affectionately refer to this as our "Grannies Project."

You can adopt a "granny" by your donation of \$10.00 per month or a one-time donation of \$120 for the year to help enrich the life of one of these wonderful women.



## THE \$30 MIRACLE



Mfin is a 64 year-old woman who, in her poverty and old age, has been struck with a double tragedy. She has lost her only son and his wife due to HIV/AIDS and as a result she became the custodian of her four orphan grandchildren. She rapidly became blind due to cataracts, which meant that she could not even see the precious children she cared for so lovingly. It's hard to comprehend the devastation of her being dependent on these little children. They had to take her hand and lead her through the bush to the well and to the toilet. They had to take turns going to school because someone had to be with their grandmother. Imagine her joy when after her first eye was operated on, and the cataract removed, she could again see her little grandchildren. Soon afterwards, her second eye was operated on and now she is fully sighted. We are told that there wasn't a dry eye in the clinic when she, crying with joy, kissed the faces of her grandchildren and the hands of the surgeon. This miracle cost \$30.

Each month, we pay for cataract operations for four (4) aged blind people. With your continued help, we intend to be able to restore sight to ten (10) aged people a month. Please help us reach our goal.



We would like to take the opportunity to welcome to our community the students of Good Counsel High School, Olney, MD. During the coming year, these students will complete their required community service by their involvement in many of our programs and projects. We look forward to their young perspectives, enthusiasm, and creativity. We are very excited by this new collaborative effort.

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We recently received a letter from Ben Ssenoga at Michael's House in Kampala, Uganda and some photos from our farms in Uganda showing both the livestock grazing and the crops. Upcoming plans include additional clearing for planting new crops, more fencing for grazing our animals, and construction of houses for the elderly who are homeless.

One of our trustees, who is an architect, is currently drawing the plans to build small houses in a village format on the farms outside of Kampala. They are almost ready for production. The residents will be the homeless elderly men and women who will have access to planting their own vegetables and rear small animals for meat and milk. While the farms are remote from the city of Kampala, the residents will be self-sufficient and have supervision. It is hoped that the residents will be able to exchange produce and supplies with one another and to provide for those who might eventually be incapable of contributing to the manual labor. The farms are in jungle areas and need constant work.

Currently, the produce from the farms is being distributed to the elderly in their homes. This includes beans, sweet potatoes, cassava and some mattock (banana). Recently the volunteers have started delivering eggs to provide more protein. With the severe increase in prices, the supplemental pensions we provide allow the elderly to buy sugar, salt, soap, maize, flour and personal needs for hygiene.

*“ Obstacles are things a persons sees when he takes his eyes off his goal “*  
E(Li) Joseph Cossman

### **MASAKA, UGANDA –Help for ostracized women**



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 damaged to the extent that they suffer from a fistula. Although the medical reasons are complex, it is sufficient to say that they are left 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. Each month we provide the finances for surgery to liberate women from this stigma. For \$90 US you can restore dignity to a woman.

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This is a copy of a letter sent by one of our benefactors to their circle of friends. What a wonderful and caring thought from these young busy parents. You too can do this!

Dear Friends,

*Michael's House is a cause that is near and dear to our family's heart We are happy to send information on Michael's House to you our friends to both raise awareness and to raise some much needed funds.*

*In this time of rising gas prices and the slowing housing market, it is too easy to forget how good we have it and how fortunate we are in our lives.*

*We are asking you to first send the enclosed information to two likeminded friends. We have enclosed copies of this letter in case you are too busy to write one. Second, we ask you to either go online to [www.Michaels-House.org](http://www.Michaels-House.org) or use the enclosed addressed and stamped envelope, we have provided, for you to make a donation. \$10 can purchase a small animal or \$120 can support a destitute elderly person for an entire year. Please give from your heart. We are all so lucky and there are so many in need.*

*As Mother Theresa said, "If you cannot feed 100 people then just feed one." Our goal for this chain letter is to raise \$2,000 for Michael's House in the next three weeks. Together, we can literally feed a village.*



### **PEOPLE WATCHING...MHT, Volunteer Michael's House, Springfield, VA.**

People watching can be lots of fun and very entertaining under the right circumstances: from a sidewalk café, on the beach, in a park or just waiting in line. However, in other places it can be very sad, not so entertaining and very disturbing.

If you sat in a café that was near those served by Michael's House, you would see destitute elderly who are trying to live in cardboard boxes, if their lucky to find one, eating garbage, and begging for pennies just to exist. Others do not see them in the world in which they live, so they are left to fend for themselves and most often die unnoticed. Most of them are elderly, hungry, sick, and in need of basic care. No one cares about them except those who serve Michael's House as benefactors and volunteers.

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

[www.michaels-house.org](http://www.michaels-house.org)

**98% of all donations go directly to our elderly poor**

**Recycle—Pass This Newsletter Forward**

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