

VILLAGE PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL



“partnering to help people help themselves”

August 20, 2010

TRANSFORMATION OF PAPOLI

Most of you are perhaps aware of the miraculous transformation that has taken place in the small village of Papoli Uganda over the past several years. Papoli was perhaps the poorest village in their district. The four square mile village had no safe drinking water resulting in constant health problems. Their small school was inadequate and barely functional. Many classes were held under mango trees. The only books available were for the teachers. There were few goats and cows and the village lacked adequate sources of protein. Now Papoli has eight strategically placed deep water wells virtually eliminating the widespread diarrhea and dysentery. They now have a modern preschool and primary school. In fact, Papoli has gone from a subprime school status to one of the best in the district. Now upon walking through the village you see many healthy goats, chickens and cows. Papoli is considered a model village of what can be accomplished with God’s guidance, a trusted local leader like Emmanuel Ofumbi and the love, concern and financial support of a small entity such as Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church, now partnering with Village Partners International (VPI). You can read all about this heartwarming story on the VPI website www.villagepartnersinternational.org.

MEDICAL CLINIC & SAFE HOUSE

Now, in line with VPI’s mission statement, we are expanding the quality of life beyond the borders of Papoli village. In VPI’s infancy the members envisioned providing healthcare not only to Papoli but also to all villagers in that poor, agrarian section of Uganda. The board and advisory council of VPI made the bold decision to establish a modern medical clinic that would provide affordable health care for children with HIV/AIDS, expectant mothers and general healthcare for everyone in the area. A ten acre parcel of

land not far from the Papoli school and church was totally donated to house the clinic. Thanks to a generous contribution from the Robert Cooley Foundation, the first phase of that clinic has now been completed. On May 5, 2010 the Robert H. Cooley Pediatric Clinic and safe house for children with AIDS became operational and ready to serve all of the villages in this area of Uganda where quality health care is terribly lacking at any price. It has been so very inspiring to see these beautiful buildings being completed and the loving care now taking place inside.

The opening of the clinic was a grand event in the greater Papoli area. Emmanuel Ofumbi wrote, “People came from far and near, kids, mothers carrying kids, the youth and all; we had prayers, traditional music and dancing, speech after another, leaders from the district local government, just name it, all were in Papoli. We prepared some food and feasted.”

Several weeks after the opening of the clinic we received word from Emmanuel that the number of children receiving care at the facility was already overflowing their available space. In fact, they now need to construct a thatched shelter for feeding the large number of children being cared for. Emmanuel states, “We are experiencing amazing changes in the lives of the kids receiving care. Caring for these kids is an experience that has touched all of our staff.” He stated that most of the children treated were weak and malnourished when they first arrived but with treatment and a healthy diet they began to gain weight almost immediately, had better looking skin and brighter looks on their faces. This also brightens the faces of the families and caregivers of these children and even the villages as a whole. Many mothers in the area were so moved by what was happening that they decided to help out by using the health clinic grounds to plant nourishing

greens and sweet potatoes to feed the children. A basic nutrition class will also be offered to the mothers.



Children being cared for at the safe house

This type of facility was desperately needed in this area and was established to provide care for children with AIDS at little or no charge. Therefore one of our primary goals is to find ways to sustain the operation of the safe house for years to come. The current cost to run the clinic for one year including staff salaries is about \$30,000. This will be accomplished through financial contributions and sustainability projects within the communities being served.



Robert H. Cooley Pediatric Clinic

SHIPPING CONTAINER

Thanks to Tanya Weaver with the American Foundation for Children with AIDS, a shipping container was purchased and filled with beds, mattresses, furniture, clothing and other supplies for the AIDS safe house. VPI was only responsible for the shipping costs. The arrival of the container in Papoli was a very exciting event for the community. It contained supplies that brought about a significant transformation within the safe house. Most of the children in these rural villages have never slept on a bed or even a mattress. Quite a few pillow cases were received in the shipment. However, since there are very few pillows in the villages, the women's tailoring class turned those pillow cases into dresses for the girls.



Shipping container being unloaded at the safe house

BRINGING POWER TO CLINIC

Looking west from the compound over banana trees and cassava fields you can see the main highway and one utility pole. That utility pole appears so close yet so far away from the clinic and the village of Papoli because it represents the end of the line for electricity. Another of our primary goals is to bring power from that pole to the clinic which is equipped with state of the art electrical and plumbing fixtures. Power to the clinic would allow it to operate in the evening for child care and other

functions. It would power the submersible pump that would supply running water to the sinks, showers and commodes. Can you imagine that – the first electricity and clean running water in the entire village of Papoli? Most of these children have never seen a commode or shower. What a joy it will be to actually use them. Bringing electricity in requires the purchase of a transformer and stringing electric lines from that final power pole to the clinic. Once the clinic has power, it would be a piece of cake to extend that power just down the road to the school, the church and the proposed school dormitories. What a fantastic achievement that would be. Can you imagine a computer in a school that, just a few years ago, had no student books and no classroom for many of the students? VPI is now working on raising the \$35,000.00 needed to accomplish this.

HANDS-ON ASSISTANCE

Village Partners is not simply an organization that provides funds for needy causes. It is a hands-on, face to face relationship organization that prefers to work hand in hand with a community that may be in dire need. VPI works with the villagers to improve their health and wellbeing to a point where they can then continue on their own in a much better life style than before. Our board member, Dennis Bradt and his wife Betsy recently spent three months living and working with the villagers of Papoli. Their goal was to personally get involved with the community, look for things that needed improvement and problems that may be slowing down or preventing VPI and Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church from effectively achieving their goals.

Dennis and Betsy formed a personal and lasting relationship with the primary and preschool teachers; helped instruct at all grade levels; introduced baseball and kickball to the students; began a ladies Bible study class that extended to another village; orchestrated the construction of library bookshelves with the help of students and staff and recommended the use of existing donated sewing machines for commercial use to help sustain the completed projects. They also personally visited villagers in all seven sub parishes of Papoli. Four other board members have also made personal visits to Papoli.

This is VPI - people helping people by getting personally involved. If you would like to learn more or make a contribution to Village Partners International, visit our website at www.villagepartnersinternational.org.