

Grounds for Hope: Looking Up!

The 18 women at **Grounds for Hope** have all received several fistula repair surgeries - sometimes six or eight - but have not yet healed. Grounds for Hope was started and funded by the Upper Room community in 2006, providing a safe place for these women to live and work, whereas they would otherwise experience deep rejection and extreme poverty, given their condition.

Since we opened the center a year and a half ago, the women have received training on a variety of income generating skills. In particular, they have learned sewing skills and now make



newborn outfits, brassieres, which are distributed to rural areas as an incentive for mothers to deliver in a health clinic.

This ensures that the infants are born in a safe place, while providing a livelihood for the women at Grounds for Hope. They have made over 2700 outfits, and have generated an income over \$2700 as a result of this.



In March, they were trained in making special **sweet bread** which they sell at HEAL Africa's office and conference center; the Jubilee Center (funded by Christ Presbyterian Church). The goal is to eventually sell the bread at other stores around Goma in order to increase production, as well as gain a higher profit from these activities. Additional income help the women provide more completely for the needs of their families, as well as being able to prepare for and pay their children's school fees.

HEAL Africa Hospital Receives over 100 Victims of Plane Crash

On the afternoon of April 15, a passenger airliner crashed in the middle of the busiest market area in Goma, killing close to 100 people. Birere is a bustling quarter close to the border of Rwanda and right below the runway of the Goma airport. The pot-holed road is always packed and difficult to drive through as one must navigate through all the buses, pedestrians, and people pushing crates with hundreds of pounds of goods past small storefronts and vendors. If it rains the area is filled with muddied potholes and puddles. Behind these markets are the poorest neighborhoods in Goma.

The plane failed to take off and started its ascent in the market, setting everything on fire. Victims were immediately rushed to the HEAL Africa hospital, only 5 minutes away from the crash site. The hospital received over 80 injured patients and 13 already deceased. The doctors and nurses worked through the night to care for all the patients and performed several emergency burn operations. The staff did an excellent job responding to the crisis and was congratulated by the president of the national Parliament. The supply of medical materials is severely depleted due to the excess of patients and the extended care they require. Donations are welcome to replace the medical stock.



Photo by Kitra Cahna/Fabrica

Children's HIV Clinic Easter Offering



Upper Room's generous Easter offering this year raised over \$22,000! The money is donated to the Children's AIDS program at

HEAL Africa where 500 HIV positive children are monitored and of whom 300 are taking Anti-Retrovirals.

Flour Mills: \$6,000 will be used to purchase 4 flour mills for a widow cooperative group named AMAVESA. These mills will be used by the

women to produce *masoso*, a nutritional porridge made up of maize, sorgum, soy and wheat. AMAVESA will sell the *masoso* to HEAL Africa and other hospitals in town that have HIV clinics.

Food: This porridge is purchased from AMAVESA as supplemental food for the families of 300 children with HIV/AIDs, which is essential for ensuring the sick children are actually receiving the essential nutrition they need. Impoverished families find it challenging to use the special food for only one child, so these provisions benefit the whole family.

Mosquito Nets: 500 children who are a part of HEAL Africa's HIV/AIDs program will receive mosquito nets to take home to help avoid the spreading of the preventable disease, malaria.

Two Upper Room Groups Visit in March

We had the privilege of receiving 3 Upper Room visitors to *install a computer server* in the Jubilee Center. They were very successful and their labor has helped the efficiency of systems and internet. The Heal Africa staff constantly utilize this room and in the year it has been operating, it already seems difficult to remember what work used to be like without access to information.

We also received a group of 6 more members, who helped with a "Conversational English Week" for the doctors, nurses, counselors as well as many university students and business men. The Goma community was very happy to practice their *English* and interact with Americans. The classes were full of interesting conversation about world politics, Barak Obama, marriage, and culture. Some in the group also helped at the HEAL Africa school, which offers education for children waiting at hospital. The kids were ecstatic to have visiting teachers.

Two nurses also made their mark through volunteering every day at the hospital, as well as offering special seminars to further instruct the HEAL Africa nurses in good patient care, resuscitation and other essential nursing skills.



The group visited the site of the volcanic eruption of 2002 that devastated Goma, saw the agricultural programs at Mawe Hai, had clothing made at Healing Arts by women at the hospital, visited the widows at Grounds for Hope, walked through markets and lived with a layer of volcanic dirt every day!