

Choose Life Home-Based Care Program, Sacred Heart Sisters, Moroto, Karamoja, Uganda

from Sister Jo Wright, October 2017

In 2007, HIV+ patients in Moroto were dying every week, sometimes as many as two or three in a single day. This situation urgently needed to be addressed. Sister Maria Eugenia RSCJ, called “Itae” by the Karamajong people, took on the challenge, although she feared she might never be able to change this pattern of death.

Yet, with education as her tool, Sr. Itae has succeeded in changing the situation dramatically.



Sister Itae began by teaching people the facts about HIV AIDS and the need for them to take Antiretroviral medication (ARVs) and to eat nutritionally.

ARVs are provided free, and sometimes there is the need to assist people with food.

Next, volunteers were organized, including some HIV+ people whose lives had now improved, to carry out weekly home visitations to those unwell with HIV/AIDS. The volunteers check on those sick in hospital or at home to ensure they are being cared for, have good food, and are taking their ARVs. If someone dies, volunteers make sure the family has the support they need for the burial and to ensure that orphaned children are cared for. Sr. Itae meets weekly with the volunteers; they come together to support one another and to seek solutions to problems they've encountered.



The volunteers discovered that children who had been orphaned because of their parents dying from HIV AIDS, and those whose parents were known to be



HIV+, struggled academically in school and often caused disciplinary problems. Clearly there was a need to provide guidance to these students and their teachers and to establish after-school tutoring for the students and even a holiday program for them. This was the genesis of the School for Life program.



Outing for students in School of Life Program

Recently, thanks to donations from individuals and an organization, the Sacred Heart Sisters built a center for the Choose Life Home-Based Care, which was officially opened and blessed by Bishop Henry Ssentongo.



The building is a hive of activity, with programs for students, women, and volunteers. Women affected by HIV/AIDs attend to sew clothes.



The women also work on crafts such as bead purses. These are sold to help generate a little income.

After school, children in the School of Life program come for tutoring.

In the holidays, other programs are scheduled for them.

