



July 21, 2008

Mr. Richard Stearns
President, World Vision
PO Box 9716
Federal Way, WA 89063

Dear Mr. Stearns,

It is our pleasure to report to World Vision how God has blessed and multiplied the 2007 Courageous Leadership Award monies so graciously provided to Rockland Community Church last year. This is our report to you on how the award monies were used, but it is more than a report. It is the latest chapter of an ongoing love story of how God is blessing Christians in Colorado by giving us a chance to serve our brothers and sisters in Arusha, Tanzania.

As the World Vision award letter specified, we were asked to use the funds "for the Project in the manner described in the Application". Our application identified four potential areas we felt would be worthy recipients of such an award. As has been our practice from the beginning, we rely heavily on our friends in Tanzania to direct our outreach efforts. We dialoged with them over a period of six months, asking them to "think outside the box", since this award money was an unexpected blessing to them and to us. Two projects emerged as not only worthy, but vitally necessary if we were to make any real impact in the battle against HIV/AIDS in the Arusha area. Eventually, we decided to divide our award money between the two. Each has a story of its own.

Arusha Lutheran Medical Center: Selian Hospital has been the centerpiece of AIDS diagnosis and treatment for the Arusha, Tanzania region. Operating with aging buildings and dated medical equipment, Selian has labored to meet growing patient loads. A new facility was badly needed, and is, in fact, under construction. Arusha Lutheran Medical Center will open later this year with 70 beds. In February, Rockland received an urgent appeal from the hospital's director, Dr Mark Jacobson. Increasing construction costs and a falling US dollar threatened completion of the project at a crucial stage. One of the needs was for funding to complete a new lab to expand the level of testing capability.

After much prayer and deliberation, our award committee felt their search for a worthy project and the concurrent need for funding of the AIDS lab were more than a coincidence. A new AIDS lab would be a valuable weapon for those serving on the front lines of this struggle. When the announcement was made that \$20,000 of Courageous Leadership Award money would be given to the Arusha Medical Center, Rockland members were encouraged to respond with additional support if they felt so led. In just a few weeks, an additional \$20,000 was given. Lastly, Rockland's Outreach Ministry Team allocated another \$10,000 to the project for a combined total of \$50,000.

Dr Jacobson, *"The Laboratory is where we'll be doing all the support for the HIV/AIDS work within our clinic and our treatment clinic here at Selian and Arusha Lutheran Medical Center. The hope is that we'll be able to*

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use much of the contribution from Rockland to have sufficient laboratory equipment to do the backup support testing that we need to do for our many patients. Our AIDS control program ... is caring for about 5,000 people with HIV and AIDS in the clinic, among whom about half are on treatment. We have about 2,500 people on antiretroviral therapy"

Those who have never set foot inside an East African medical clinic cannot begin to imagine what a blessing a well-equipped lab is for the doctors and other medical providers attempting to turn the tide in the HIV/AIDS battle.

Milky Cows: Valerie Bell describes looking into the eyes of a little girl, Faith, whom she met "three pounds too late". Those of us who have walked through World Vision Experience: AIDS learned ARV medications are without value absent proper nutrition. But what if we could arrive 3 pounds early, rather than late? What if we could provide a source of nutrition as well as income to purchase food and other necessities for families in the Arusha region?

When challenged to "think big", Pastor Abel Godson of Ngaramtoni Parish suggested a "Milky Cows Project" similar to the Heifer International program. After much research, our partners decided that they could create and manage their own project with seed money from their part of the CLA award. Initially, plans were to use \$20,000 of CLA money to supply families with milk cows and milk goats. Rockland's Outreach Ministry Team added \$10,000 to increase the number of families assisted by this program. A milk cow or goat not only provides precious milk, but with proper care and breeding, can also be an ongoing source of income to the family through the sale of milk, calves and kids. Since some families are not able to accommodate cows or goats where they live, the program was expanded to include chickens. Each recipient of chickens received 5 hens plus 1 rooster. Additional donations designated for the Milky Cows program have since been received from Rockland members, and more are expected.

Ngaramtoni Parish established a board to oversee the program and appointed a director. The committee determined who would receive an animal. Recipients were to be those who were infected by or affected by AIDS. Many went to the guardians of children from the AIDS Orphans Children's Center. Those children are all impacted by AIDS in some way.

When notified of the approval of the proposed program, Pastor Abel responded:

"Please note that (I) read your letter three times without believing my eyes. Is it true that we are going to start Milky Cows Project? Is it true that those who in many ways suffered with AIDS epidemic and terrible economic hardship are going to be released from suffering in Jesus' name! Congratulation(s) for being God's instrument in reaching those in need. May GOD continue to bless his work through your hands and generosity to his real needy ones in our community. "

All recipients received intensive training on how to care for the animals. This training included how and what to feed, how and when to breed, how to milk, and how to construct shelters for the animals. Volunteers also provide ongoing veterinary services. Ngaramtoni parish is paying for veterinary expenses, inoculations, and breeding expenses. Breeding by artificial insemination will begin around the end of the year. Then they will produce calves and begin producing milk, with the first female calf going back into the program. Many of the goats have already produced kids and are already producing milk. Clearly, this is an ongoing program that will benefit more and more people.

Just prior to purchase of the animals, the local price dropped, dramatically increasing the number of families that could be assisted. To date, a total of 143 families have received animals. Again...more than just a coincidence – a sign of God's blessing of this project.

As one Rockland member noted, *"God has matched the CLA Award by more than doubling the number of animals purchased through market conditions and negotiating on the part of the committee in Arusha. Praises, praises, praises!"*

Finally, the last group to be assisted by the Courageous Leadership Award: the members of Rockland Community Church. No, we didn't keep any of the money for ourselves...instead; we gained something far more valuable than dollars.

We have the joy of planning, and praying, for these two projects, and then seeing the smiles on the faces of our brothers and sisters in Tanzania when it all comes together. We can walk through the AIDS lab and imagine the thousands who will benefit from the new equipment. Rockland representatives have already visited some of the proud families who now house a milky cow, milky goat or chickens and were also present when the last group of animals was distributed in June. Ngaramtoni Church, Rockland's mission team and the recipients of the animals were able to celebrate God's blessings together. We have the hope of no more children "three pounds too late".

The two projects fit together in a way only God could have orchestrated. Medical assistance for those fighting this dread disease, and a source of income to purchase the food required for current treatments to be effective.

As noted when we received our award, Rockland is not a big church. But our members have consistently dug deep in their pockets to support our work in Tanzania. Each year we wonder if there will be funding to build more classrooms, or purchase more desks...and each year God moves people to give generously. The projects described above were funded on top of Rockland's ongoing work in Arusha. This year, our mission team completed additional classrooms at the Ebenezer Girls Secondary School, a project that is now in its third year of providing young girls the opportunity to receive an education. These building projects are funded entirely by donations from Rockland members.

The Courageous Leadership Award has more than accomplished its goal at Rockland Community Church. We have made new connections and friends at World Vision and Willow Creek. A growing number of our members have personally visited Tanzania and experienced the joy of serving others.

Thank you for creating this award, and for honoring Rockland. We trust our use of the award funds meets your approval, and look forward to our future working relationship with World Vision.

Sincerely,

Courageous Leadership Award Committee
Rockland Community Church
17 S Mt Vernon Country Club Road
Golden, CO 80401

PS: Please note that a DVD containing a video report on the Courageous Leadership Award and a CD of photos will accompany the mailed copy of this letter.

cc: Lisa Hartman
Willow Creek Association
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Barrington, IL 60011-3188