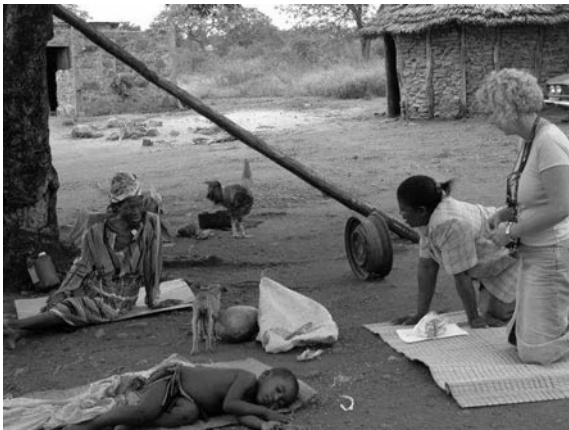




Journeys

News from Cabrini Mission Corps
Fall 2005 • Volume 13, No. 3

HEALTHCARE OUTREACH IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC



Bobby Farris is a nurse at St. Philip's Clinic in Swaziland, Southern Africa. She visits a Swazi family in their homestead as part of the mission's healthcare outreach.

As Director of Healthcare Outreach, my week began as usual:

Monday—5:00 am: shower, breakfast, review the day's schedule and set off by 7:00 am to the homesteads for CD4 blood draws, a monitoring blood test for HIV+ patients. Thandiwe, a Swazi nurse, and I succeeded in finding everyone home that morning. However, one patient, Tobhathana, a 26-year-old woman with AIDS, needed to be taken to Good Shepherd Hospital, about 70 kilometers from the mission. We had planned to go there that afternoon to deliver the blood we had drawn, so we took her with

us. When we arrived at the hospital, we learned it was a holiday. This meant they would not accept any of the blood we had drawn, and the cost for Tobhathana to be seen and admitted was doubled. So much for things ever

Continued on page 4

LIFELINE TO A FUTURE

Janet Faubert ministers at St Philip's Mission school and youth hostel in Swaziland, Southern Africa. Khululiwe, pictured at right, is one of the 126 children who live and learn at St. Philip's.

At this time of year, educational assessments are an important part of St. Philip's mission work. This means visiting each homestead that has asked for financial assistance to send a child to school. Through an educational assistance grant, the mission provided 120 students financial aid to attend 13 different schools in the Lumbombo region of the *lowveld* last year. Currently, more than 100 children are registered for assessments. Let me take you out on a typical day of educational assessments.



The Director of Education for Cabrini Ministries, Mr. Pius Mamba, and I set out into the bush at 6:30 am. We often travel deep into the bush before we can even begin to locate the homestead or someone who can direct us.

Continued on page 6



A MINISTRY OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS



SARAH SCHLEIS, STEPHANIE BIRK AND EVA PINZÓN,

pictured in the photo from left to right, were welcomed as new Cabrini Mission Corps missionaries during a celebration of the liturgy on August 20th at St. Cabrini Residence in Philadelphia, PA. This event capped a two-week orientation program, which included workshops on Mother Cabrini, the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSCs), Catholic Social Teaching, Liturgy and Eucharist, Tools for Mission, Market and Mission and Prayer. We are privileged to share Stephanie's, Eva's and Sarah's faith journeys and invite your support for all of us in the year to come.

Sarah Schleis is ministering at Annunciation School in Denver and the Mother Cabrini Shrine in Golden, CO.

My name is Sarah Schleis. I was raised on a beef farm near Denmark, WI, 15 miles from Green Bay. I earned my degree in elementary education from a small Catholic college. After teaching for a year, I moved to Virginia and got a master's degree in speech/language pathology George Washington University in Washington, DC.

While working in the public schools of Virginia, my health deteriorated and after three years of treatments with no relief, I quit my job and moved back to Wisconsin. I finally started on a path of healing through homeopathy.

I want to share my story of how God can help us heal. Now God is leading me down a new path and I am excited to see what he has in store for me at the Mother Cabrini Shrine and Annunciation School in Colorado.

Stephanie Birk is serving at St. Elizabeth School in New York City for the rest of this year and be missioned to Baguio City, Philippines in early 2006.

Hello, I'm Stephanie Birk. I was born in Northlake, Illinois, just outside Chicago, and grew up in Crystal Lake, a northwest suburb. I grew up a tomboy and loved the outdoors, bugs, and sports. I still do! But above all, I define my life in relationship with others, and firmly believe love is what life is all about.

To share that love, I've been involved in mission trips to Native American reservations in South Dakota and Minnesota, as well as low-income communities in New Orleans and Toronto, Canada. I served as a spirituality and service program director and counselor to the students in a residence hall at St. Norbert College.

I look forward to working as a missionary and giving back to the world out of the love God has given to me.

Eva Pinzón is doing youth ministry and pastoral care at St. Teresa Church.

Hi! I'm Eva Pinzón. I was born in Guatemala. I graduate from high school in Villa Nueva as a teacher in the Normal School of Home Teacher's Education in 1996 and then went to San Carlos of Guatemala University to study International Relations as well as Portuguese, English and Italian.

I have always been a social activist, concerned about policies and human rights especially for the indigenous. I've wanted to be a missionary since childhood. I prayed for this for a long time and one day Christ brought the Cabrini Sisters into my life.

I wasn't sure about coming to the U.S. because it meant leaving my family and starting a new life. I'm homesick sometimes. God is my strength and comfort; he understands my sadness right now and I want to serve him where there are those who need me. I'm here for God.

To read Sarah, Stephanie and Eva's complete autobiographies, visit www.cabrini-missioncorps.org.

FRANCISCAN SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND GIVES GRANT FOR AIDS EDUCATION

By Madeline Bialecki

I am writing this article while traveling to visit our missionaries Bobby Farris and Janet Faubert in Swaziland, Southern Africa. Visiting our missionaries—overseas or domestically— is perhaps my favorite part of my work. I appreciate the opportunity to spend time with them and listen to their stories. I learn about their ministries, community living, and prayer, and I learn how God is touching them. I always come away from these visits feeling deeply honored to have a part in the missionary activity of the church.

This fall, our missionaries in Swaziland will be conducting an AIDS education program for Swazi grandmothers caring for their grandchildren who

have been orphaned by AIDS. This project is sponsored by a grant from the Franciscan Social Justice Fund of the Glen Riddle, PA, Franciscan Sisters. The AIDS pandemic is devastating Swaziland, and AIDS education can make the difference between life and death.

By partnering with CMC, the Franciscan Sisters are joining in our missionary activity in Swaziland. You, too, can participate in our missionary activity—overseas or domestically—through your financial support. As you read the stories in this newsletter, I invite you to join with me in supporting this great missionary activity.



As many did in Mother Cabrini's own time, generous friends are still supporting her mission to bring the love of Christ to the world. Our deep gratitude goes out to all those who have contributed to CMC and kept us in their prayers since our last newsletter on June 10, 2005.

Madeline Adezio
Fr. Leo Anctil
Anonymous
Florence Aviccolli
Jenny Bauer (CMC 1992-1994)
Mary Bularzik
Anne Calcagno
Michael and Patricia Carr
Sara Cascio in memory of Joey Trapani
Antonietta Castaldo in honor of the
Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart
of Jesus
Sr. Mary Beatrice Chisholm in support of
Janet Faubert
Thomas Curtin
Kathleen DeLawrence
John Dermody
Michael Dillard
Robert Egan
Josie Faia
Frank and Adele Fala
Art and Ginny Ficco

Jean Findlay
Anthony Forlenza in memory of his wife,
Mary Forlenza
Rocco Giammichele
Wess Gunchick
Jack Hilton
Mary Hoffman
Cathy and Paul Johnson
Jeanne Kent in memory of Duane Kent
Carl Lekan
Br. Fred Lewis
Larry and Phyllis Lucas
Victor Maestri
Barbara and Steve Marino
Richard Masi
George Matthews in memory of his wife,
Ellen Matthews, and son, George W.
Matthews
Joseph Medveczky
Arthur Mendoza
John and Carol Meridionale

Michael and Joanne Montie in memory
of Frank and Gertrude Erdlen
Gretchen Mortimer
Kathleen O'Brien
John Petrillo
Patricia Powell
Tish Principato in gratitude to Francesca
Cabrini
Peter Romano
Yvonne Rosenblatt
Ron Schuetz
Joseph Simmons
Edward Spahr
David and Charlotte Stabile
Michael Tomko
Dr. Stephen and Beverly Unger in
support of Bobby Farris
Rose Urban
Dr. Tony and Lorraine Verde
Roger Waha
John Wrublik

HEALTHCARE OUTREACH IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

Continued from page 1

being routine. Back at the mission, we learned the pump that brings water from the river to our homes was broken.

Tuesday—Up by 3:30 am to leave by 5:00 am to gather 14 patients for transport to the hospital for their monthly supply of AIDS anti-retro-viral medication. We found one of our tires flat, so we got a late start. Outside Siteki, where the hospital is, we were met with another frequent obstacle – vehicle inspections conducted by the local police to generate revenue. They gave us a warning to have our signal light glass replaced.

At the hospital, one of our patients realized he had forgotten his records. Patients here must carry all their medical records with them, because no patient medical charts are retained by hospitals, doctors or clinics. On our way back to the mission for his records, the police inspectors charged us 20 *rands* (about \$3.50) and said we could not return without having our signal light repaired. At the mission, we swapped vehicles, got the records and once again made the hour-long trip to the hospital.

I proceeded to the ward where Tobhatana had been admitted the day before; she had passed away during the night. I was also told that Vuyisile, a 17-year-old woman with HIV and tuberculosis (TB) we had admitted to the hospital the week before, had died over the weekend. To have known these two young women and watch them succumb to this ravaging disease was devastating. Upon returning to the mission, we went to Tobhatana's homestead to tell her family of her death.



Missioner Bobby Farris gives food supplements to a woman she meets along the road.

Wednesday—On the road by 5:00 am again to transport patients to the hospital for TB treatment. Along the way, we met some of Tobhatana's family, who told us they had no money to return her body to the hospital nor purchase a coffin. I assured them we would help and they gave me a piece of twine for the dimensions of the coffin.

Thursday—Usually a day spent planning the next week's schedule of visits and hospital trips. We were still without water. I visited the mission's woodworking shop to procure a coffin. Mr. Dube was most gracious in making a coffin to be ready by Friday afternoon. His fee was reasonable by American standards—550 *rands*

(\$100) for immediate service. Most Swazis in the *lowveld* don't make that much money in a month.

Friday—In the Healthcare Outreach office seeing patients and being available for the RHM's (Rural Health Motivators) who assist us with patient care out in the bush. The coffin was ready by 5:00 pm, so we loaded it into the back of our truck.

Saturday—Thandiwe and I arrived at Tobhatana's homestead by 7:00 am. Five of her aunts and an uncle traveled with us to the hospital. They carried a reed stick and a sheet from her bed. Thandiwe explained they use the stick to talk to Tobhatana and tell her everything that is happening as she travels back to her homestead and her funeral service is held. We paid the necessary fees for her body and drove to the hospital morgue for her corpse.

The family members were given latex gloves and

shown into the morgue. The family removed her personal belongings, placed her body in the coffin and we began our return to the bush. Her family sang and talked to Tobhatana the whole way home. Her homestead had been draped with a canopy and protective fencing for the ceremony. As several men carried the coffin to the door of her hut, the women all began to wail and grieve. As the coffin was placed outside the door everyone knelt and prayed. We followed the procession into the hut, knelt on grass mats and continued to sing and pray as those outside continued wailing. After a respectful pause, Thandiwe and I expressed our sympathy to the family and excused ourselves from the hut.

Sunday—Mass is celebrated bilingually, in Siswati and English, by Fr. Peter in our parish church. The music is a capella and quite uplifting, something I definitely needed after this most challenging week. I was extra thankful today as the pump was repaired and we again had running water.

We hear repeatedly the HIV/AIDS statistics – 42.2% of the adult population in Swaziland is infected with HIV/AIDS, 78 people die each day in a nation with a population of less than 1 million. Life expectancy here in Swaziland is now 30 years and there are more than 70,000 orphaned children. It is daunting to experience these statistics first hand – watching whole generations decimated. Unfortunately, modern medicine and AIDS education compete with poverty, rural isolation, traditional healers, cultural mores, and a society which until very recently would not, nor legally could, acknowledge that HIV/AIDS even existed. A ray of hope I’ve seen since my arrival in February is a greater awareness and acceptance of the reality of this pandemic as more and more people here in the *lowveld* agree to testing and treatment.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

October

- 3 Mary Malone
- 4 Helen (Caterina) Swavely
Consuelo Grant
- 7 Rebecca Tenorio
- 9 Amy Devereux
- 12 Terry Hin
Edward Kent
- 14 Allan Anderson
- 21 Ann Plyler
- 23 Sonia Santamaria Fraile
- 28 Madeline Bialecki
- 31 Sheila Bertoletti
Janet Faubert

November

- 5 Brenda (Robl) Stermer
- 15 Gladys Reyes de Paiz
- 22 Colette Fields
- 23 Melissa (Yezbak) Kovacs

December

- 1 Sean Parker
- 2 Caroline Young
- 8 Lisa Weiss
- 19 Kim Anderson
Stephanie Birk
- 25 Julie Maldonado
Brenda (Ruth) Soya
Mona Tillman
- 30 Ellen Battersby

January

- 8 Lisa Linn de Barona
- 14 Susan (Gertie) Zontine
Peg Barrett
- 20 Christa Orfitelli
- 22 Jeanne Coykendall
- 28 Luann Johnson
- 29 Gina Shepard

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

- Oct. 11 Alison (Arnold) and Don Ryan
- 12 Anne and Jim Byrne
- 22 Susan (Gertie) and Matthew Zontine
- Dec. 18 Helen (Catarina) and David Swavely
- Jan. 16 Gladys Reyes and Otto Daniel Paiz

LIFELINE TO A FUTURE

Continued from page 1

At this early hour, we have a good chance of finding some adults who can help us. Many times we have to approach on foot since these homesteads are well off any kind of navigable path.

“*Ekhaya, ekhaya, ekhaya!* (We are coming to your home”), calls out Pius as we enter the homestead, with its chickens, pigs, goats, cows, or dogs, and small children huddled around. Then an adult emerges from a hut and greets us graciously. From nowhere, a small wooden bench or a tin can or a reed mat spread on the ground appears and we are welcomed to sit awhile.

After explaining what we have come for, the assessment process begins. We ask questions like “What are your possessions?” most often answered, “Nothing.” “What have you inherited?” “Three chickens were left for me at my deceased father’s homestead,” or once again, “Nothing.”

We find as one assessment goes on that there are five children, three seeking placement in the mission’s hostel and two staying at the homestead needing education assistance. The two children staying home must remain there since both their parents are dead and a very elderly, feeble *gogo* (grandmother) needs them to help her live out her last days. She is not able to walk and crawls out of the hut to talk with us. The children’s mother died in November 2004 and their father in January 2005, leaving the children alone and caring for themselves until their *gogo* moved in to care for them.

As with hostel placement, most of the children we assess are orphans or vulnerable children. These children have seen and lived with death most of their lives. They usually have only the food provided by the World Food Program. I must say, it makes my heart jump to see 50 kilogram bags of rice and corn meal stamped “Provided to WFP by the USA.” Due to AIDS and years of drought,



Janet Faubert visits with three children who live at the St. Philip’s youth hostel.

the scene at homesteads is very disturbing. With little hope for a better tomorrow, daily life is most difficult and this nation loses its lifeline to a future.

The children in the mission’s hostel are most often double-orphaned, losing both parents to tuberculosis, AIDS or opportunistic diseases. For the 126 children in the hostel, each with their own experiences of death, poverty and malnutrition, education has become the single most important tool for their future. Presently, children from 4 to 17 years of age attend school from the crèche (pre-school) to Form 4 (grade 11). The dedicated Swazi staff gives them all the encouragement possible to pursue education for their future. The cost of one year’s schooling may range from 400 *Emalangani* to 1500 *Emalangani* (\$70 to \$250).

In the evenings, most of the children study in small groups or do homework. Having taught math and science, I delight in spending time with them as they practice division of fractions or attempt

NEWS FROM FORMER MISSIONERS

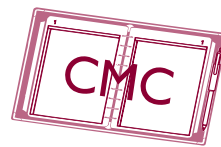
problems in physics. They want to do well in school because they realize this is a way to a future, despite the losses and hardships that have wrapped their lives in a shroud. In this sacred space of learning, they can share their personal stories. Their lives change as they begin to know that someone really cares for them and so desires to give them a future.

Visiting the homesteads or spending time with children at the hostel, I never wonder what I am doing in Swaziland. When sitting on a grass mat on the ground outside the hut or holding a sleeping child who has played hard during the afternoon at the hostel or helping a student understand the expansion coefficient of metals, I can only thank God that I have lived long enough to know this! Knowing also that Frances Cabrini enabled this to happen in my life is a force that connects all to the revelation of His life among us. Eyes and ears are not sufficient to travel the road of life with the children of the lowveld of Swaziland. The heart is essential for the journey in this pandemic time. May the Heart of Jesus lead us to the source of all strength flowing from His Life and Love among us, as seen in the face of a child.

Sheila Bertoletti is at the University of Illinois in Chicago studying for her master's degree in mathematics. In 2002-03, Sheila taught at Mary Help of Christians School in New York City. Best of luck!

Dana (Kainer), John and Addie Nowak welcomed Emma Jean to their family on August 16th. Dana taught at Mary Help of Christians School in 1999-2000. Welcome, Emma Jean! May you and your family have every happiness!

Melissa (Lukowiak) Page sends her greetings and prayers to all the Cabrinis in New Orleans, where she served in 1998-99 at Cabrini High School and St. Peter Claver Parish. Melissa, her husband, Andrew, and their 11-month-old daughter, Katie, live in Hopelawn, NJ, where Melissa has been teaching 2nd grade. So good to hear from you!



Office Calendar

October

- 13-16 USCMA Conference
- 16 Mission Sunday
- 20-23 Missioner Retreat

November

- 10-13 CNVS Conference
- 24-25 Thanksgiving Holiday (office closed)

December

- 12 Greater Philadelphia Area Directors Meeting
- 24-31 Christmas Holiday (office closed)

January

- 1 New Year's Day (office closed)
- 2 CMC office re-opens



Visit our website:

www.cabrini-missioncorps.org

Cabrini Mission Corps is an organization that offers women and men the opportunity to respond to the church's universal call to holiness by serving others. In the spirit of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, missionaries strive to be in solidarity with the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to bring the love and mercy of Jesus into every situation in which they minister, and in doing so, promote Gospel values.

Help Bring the Love of Christ to the World

Become a Partner in Mission – CMC has three easy ways for you to make a donation:

1 Donate online! Please visit us at *www.cabrini-missioncorps.org* to make an easy and secure donation using your credit card.

2 Through eScrip, businesses where you live and shop donate a percentage of your purchases. Visit *www.escrip.com* for complete details.

3 Mail a donation using the form below.

Enclosed is my donation of \$25 \$50 \$100 Other _____ to Cabrini Mission Corps.

My donation is in support of (missioner name): _____

My donation is In honor of In memory of: _____

Mailing address of honoree/family of deceased: _____

Prayers requested for: _____

I would like my donation to be used for: U.S. Missions Overseas Missions Where Most Needed

Please make your check payable to Cabrini Mission Corps and send with this slip to:
Cabrini Mission Corps, 610 King of Prussia Rd., Radnor, PA 19087

Return Service Requested

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE SACRED
HEART OF SCRANTON, PA



CABRINI MISSION CORPS
610 King of Prussia Road
Radnor, PA 19087-3689
e-mail: cmcorps@aol.com

