



Empowering the People of Africa to Survive the HIV/AIDS Pandemic



Ken and Paula Geer

August 2 – August 13



A Walk in Kenya to Remember

By Ken Geer

After 20 years of anticipation, we just completed our first visit to Africa. When I first met my future wife, Paula, I learned God had planted in her heart to one day go to Africa. During the 18 years of our marriage, we have consistently looked toward Africa, knowing one day it would be time to visit. Several attempts to make it happen on our own fizzled, and we learned to trust God's timing.

This year at the HEART 2010 benefit dinner in Auburn, California, Paula and I entered the raffle for the "Safari to Kenya for Two,"

where two would stay at the HEART compound and travel on safari. With expectation and wonder, we watched Isaac Mzee select and read our winning ticket number. It was a stunning moment. We could tangibly see and feel the call of God finally crossing into "present" moment of reality. Our lives had reached an appointed time: We were going to Nairobi, Kenya!

For five months we planned, prepared, and waited. It was our first time to travel so far. Although we were weary when we arrived at the HEART compound on August 2nd at 2A.M., we were also excited. What was going to happen?

We joined the HEART interns on a visit to Jehovah Jirah Orphanage to do a Freedom for Girls teaching. The interns with my wife Paula provided the girls with training about their monthly cycle, HIV/AIDS, and abstinence until marriage while I spoke to the boys. The goal of the Freedom for Girls project is to enable them to stay in school and have the freedom to achieve their dreams. It was touching to see the excitement these girls displayed at receiving panties and sanitary towels. Because of the generous donations and partnerships, a year's supply of sanitary towels for each girl is only \$5 US Dollars. It is hard to imagine that the price of a Starbucks coffee can be used to change the life of a young girl.

We had several opportunities to visit HEART's Women's Equality Empowerment Projects (WEEP). The courage of these women as they told us their stories was so powerful. They described being brought back from the edge of death to the point where they are celebrating in their achievements! In fact, twelve of the WEEP women will be graduating from the project, signifying they have a self-sustaining business plan and the ability to take care of their families without assistance. What's more, they are now leaders in their neighborhood, encouraging other HIV positive women to live better lives. As we sat listening to these women, we felt the peace of God in the new lives they were living. They treated us to a home cooked meal, and we ate and laughed with them. We became friends.

We are still learning much from our visit to Kenya. The Kenyan emphasis on relationships, hospitality, and their indomitable spirit spoke to us deeply. It is changing the way we approach challenges back here at home in Auburn, California. As we talk to others about our trip, we are finding that our hearts may never get back here completely. It is only a matter of time before we see Kenya again.

PO Box 63414 Muthaiga, Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa | PO Box 631964, Highland Ranch, CO 80163-1964

www.africaheart.com