



**HEART OF THE VILLAGE, INC. AND SALUS AU.D. STUDENTS
ESTABLISH AUDIOLOGICAL SERVICES
TO HIV+ CHILDREN IN KENYA**

Press Release ~ February, 2009:

Tomi T. Browne, Au.D., founder of the not-for-profit organization *HEARt of the Village, Inc.* (<http://www.heartofthevillage.org>), visited the Nairobi and Kitui Districts of Kenya for two weeks in February, launching *HEARt of the Village, Inc.*'s program, "*HEARt for Nyumbani.*" Nyumbani, which means "home" in Swahili, includes three internationally renowned programs that provide care for victims of the AIDS epidemic. The three programs include *Nyumbani Children's Home* for HIV+ orphans, the *Lea Toto* medical outreach program which serves six slum communities, and *Nyumbani Village*, a rural community that blends orphaned children and grandparents into families. These three programs are supported by the *HEARt for Nyumbani* Project.

Browne was accompanied by Dr. Yell Inverso and doctoral students, Kim Basilio, Laura DeJulia, Dana Luzon and Busisiwe Merritt from Salus University.

This trip launched the first phase of a program to provide audiology services and establish sustainable audiology care to 3500 HIV+ children. The number of children *HEARt* will be serving is about the same as the total number of HIV+ children *in the entire United States.* The audiology students who participated in this project describe their 2 weeks as an "educational and personal experience of a lifetime."



Generous donations of audiometers, tympanometers, supplies, equipment, and professional services enabled the group to begin an ongoing program to provide ear and audiological care to this very needy population.



As of this past year, all the children in the Nyumbani programs who need medication are receiving life saving anti-retroviral drugs and have the potential to live long healthy lives. In the past, ear and hearing care had not been a top priority as the battles against more life threatening conditions raged. Times have changed and the next logical step is to help Nyumbani establish important ear and hearing care.

The results collected over this most recent visit clearly support the need for continued audiological services. Of the 319 patients seen, the group identified dozens of cases of serious ear pathology that left untreated, could lead to serious illness or worse. Also identified were 28 tympanic membrane perforations, 50+ cases of otitis media, and several cases of obstructed ear canals -- with wax, bugs and beads. Children who had been deafened from meningitis as well as 45 children with significant hearing loss, some who may benefit from amplification and special educational programs, were also identified.

Next steps include returning in June to sponsor a 2-day seminar on otoscopy for primary care providers serving the Nyumbani clinics and to give them new, high quality otoscopes. The team



will also be providing follow up services on the cases that have been opened, and continuing the process of evaluating each child who needs audiological care. Teams of volunteer audiologists and audiology students will visit the Kenyan clinics three times a year as part the process to establish a permanent facility.



Those interested in working with the project in the future either directly or indirectly can contact:

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