

OUR WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

BACKGROUND

ON THE CROSSROADS/CHARITY PARTNERSHIP

Crossroads in Cincinnati, Ohio, began its partnership with Charity and Faith Mission Church in Mamelodi, South Africa, several years ago when the leaders of both churches, Brian Tome and Titus Sithole, met at a conference in Chicago. As Brian and Titus grew to know each other, they found that the missions of their churches were similar. Specifically, both churches strongly believed that they must be a blessing to their communities by helping to solve the real issues their people faced.

Mamelodi is a township community of one million people where between 30%-40% of the population is HIV positive. Titus built an AIDS crisis center on his church property that provides free testing and counseling for hundreds of people both inside and outside of the church. He also established a large home-based care team to provide vital services to AIDS patients throughout Mamelodi.

In 2003, Titus had a vision to take this work to the next level by building a full-service AIDS hospice that would both: A) serve as a base for in-home care of AIDS patients, and B) provide a place where people in the final stages of AIDS could be taken from private homes that were often abusive and be placed in a caring environment.

Concurrently, Crossroads was beginning a building campaign to increase the size of its facility in Cincinnati. Brian and Titus agreed that a portion of the funding raised in the campaign would be dedicated to make Titus' hospice vision a reality.

Funding for what is now known as Bophelong Community Hospice was secured in May 2004, and the facility officially opened in April 2006. "Bophelong" means "life" in the local Sotho language and is now the name for Charity & Faith's community organization.

PARTNERSHIP VISION

Both churches believe that the AIDS hospice in Mamelodi was only the beginning of a long-term partnership. Crossroads employs full-time staff, supported by a strong volunteer team, to lead the partnership in the U.S. Charity & Faith has also developed a team of leaders in Mamelodi dedicated to the partnership.

The ideological foundation of the partnership is the belief that each church best understands the needs of its own community, and the role of the partner church is to support that vision. Further, both churches believe in the power of connecting people from both sides of the ocean. It is through developing relationships that lives are changed and needs are met.

CONNECTING PEOPLE

In the past three years, a project called "GO Mamelodi" brought over 1,000 Americans to meet and serve alongside members of Charity and Faith Mission Church. As a result of these trips:

- Hundreds of Americans and South Africans formed strong, lasting relationships, with many still communicating via e-mail.
- Hundreds of Americans spent an evening in the homes of the people of Mamelodi. This is groundbreaking as very few Americans have ever set foot in Mamelodi, and many middle and upper class South Africans refuse to even visit the townships, such as Mamelodi, in their own country.
- Hundreds of backyard gardens were planted in Mamelodi's squatter villages providing much-needed vegetables to those who are dying of malnutrition.
- Dozens of homes were constructed using both South African block construction and American wood construction.
- Thousands of Mamelodi kids attended programs with music and games designed just for them, a first in the township.
- Nearly 900 suitcases packed full of children's classroom supplies were delivered, and teachers from Crossroads partnered with teachers at Charity's school to discuss best practices in education, classroom management and administration.
- Dozens of South Africans participated in job-seeker, entrepreneurship and music classes.
- Because of the extraordinary presence of hundreds of Americans in the township, important public officials, including the South African Minister of Social Development, the Mayor of the City of Pretoria, the Deputy Speaker of the South African Parliament, and the U.S. Ambassador to South Africa visited Charity & Faith and committed to help Charity & Faith in its efforts.

CONTINUED ON BACK

CONNECTING PEOPLE (CONTINUED)

- Both Crossroads and Charity & Faith leaders were interviewed on several national TV and radio programs.
- After the first trip, Titus received a call from the South African Vice President saying, "I've seen your church and those Americans all over the news, and I want to learn more about what you're doing, and how your model can be expanded nationwide."
- After the second trip, the Minister of Social Development was so impressed with what was accomplished, and with the hope that Charity & Faith is bringing to the people of Mamelodi, that he instructed his staff to move their local offices to rented space in the second floor of the hospice building, thus providing additional support services to the poor of Mamelodi, and helping to offset a portion of the hospice's operating costs.

On the U.S. side, a two-year old project called HOST Mamelodi has brought over 100 South Africans to the United States to work alongside Crossroads. The Mamelodians stay in the homes of Crossroads' people, lead worship and prayer services, serve on some of Crossroads' volunteer projects, and get a chance to enjoy what Cincinnati has to offer.

Further, each year Crossroads sends multiple small teams of volunteers to serve alongside Charity & Faith. These trips, called SWAT trips, are composed of medical, IT, business and education professionals who spend a week to ten days serving in Mamelodi using their specialized skills.

SPECIFIC INITIATIVES

Over the past four years, Crossroads and Charity & Faith have jointly undertaken a large number of initiatives to help the people of Mamelodi. These include:

- Running tent-based health clinics where U.S. doctors see hundreds of patients from the poorest areas of South Africa.
- Building and outfitting a computer lab at the school to facilitate webcam-enabled tutoring between the two countries.
- Creating a 6,000 book children's library at the school
- Establishing a non-profit business called Beaded Hope (www.beadedhope.com) that connects a community of South African women affected by HIV who create beaded jewelry to a receptive market in Cincinnati. This provides much needed income for these women.

- Supporting Charity & Faith's HIV / AIDS efforts with financial and intellectual resources. This has led to a partnership between Hospice of Cincinnati and Bophelong Hospice. Further, in August 2009, Charity / Bophelong won the Courageous Leadership award from Willow Creek Church in Chicago, honoring excellence in the global fight against HIV / AIDS. Check out the award video here: www.courageousleadershipaward.com.
- Shipping multiple containers to South Africa with hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical, education, business and construction supplies.
- Shipping over 200,000 lbs of food, collected through Crossroads' annual Thanksgiving Food Drive, for distribution by Charity & Faith to those who are starving.
- Supporting Charity & Faith's and Bophelong's funding needs with a team of professional grant writers.
- Facilitating teacher education for Bophelong school teachers.

DEEPER ENGAGEMENT— 2009 AND BEYOND

In 2009, Crossroads started Engage Mamelodi, a new initiative where four Crossroads' people moved to South Africa for up to three years to establish a permanent health clinic and to take our partnership deeper. Specifically, this initiative will revolve around providing much-needed eye and dental care to the people of Mamelodi, while also making possible up to 20 trips a year where medical professionals of all specialties can serve. In Spring 2010, Crossroads has once again committed to sending up to 400 people to Mamelodi for GO Mamelodi. Additionally, Charity & Faith hopes to bring a large group to Cincinnati for HOST Mamelodi 2010.

Both Crossroads and Charity continue to look for ways to work together and help each other serve our respective communities. Both churches are 100% committed to the partnership and believe this model of relationship and service can change the world through widespread replication with other churches and organizations in the U.S. and Africa.