

## David breaks the silence on HIV/AIDS

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**“Having HIV is not a death sentence”**, This was disclosed by Mr. David Luke, a US volunteer with VOLSET Uganda, whose aim is to go public about his HIV status and promoting advocacy for marginalized HIV/AIDS positive children and adults.

### Below find his personal experience

Hi, I am David Luke:



David Luke

The day I found out about my **HIV+ status** was the day before Princess Dianna died in an automobile crash in 1997. It was late on that Friday afternoon of Labor Day weekend. I had made plans to go to

New Orleans, LA and party. I was stunned, but yet not surprised, to find out that I had the virus. I continued with my plans, thinking that it would be my last chance to “live it up.” Little did I know that almost 14 years later I would still be alive and doing GOD’s work in Uganda, Africa.

The following is *my* personal strategy for living positively with HIV. This formula works for me, *however*, there is no guarantee that it will work for all. I have lived by this program since not long after finding out my HIV+ status in late 1997.

I believe that my survival thus far has been attributed to a combination of **Mind, Body, and Spirit**, yet they are the same, all rolled into one.

#### 1. Mind

The human mind is a very strong force to be reckoned with. I have realized this more and more the longer I live with HIV. I am constantly trying to educate myself on new medical research and strategies. I strive to learn about new treatments and wellness programs that I can benefit from. I believe that being educated about *my* disease only makes me mentally stronger and “more fit” to fight it. I call it *my* disease because I *have* to claim it. It’s mine, although I share it with many worldwide. Denial does no good for anyone.

I also believe that in helping others who also share the same dilemma makes a big difference in coping with HIV. It helps me to realize that I am not the only one who is dealing with this life-changing event. Getting involved in “making a difference” in the world forces me to realize that I am helping not only others, but also myself in the process. It educates me in the many ways that others cope. I can learn from them.

#### 2. Body

“Taking better care of my body” has also taken on a whole new meaning. For many years after finding out my positive status, I continued to abuse my body with alcohol, illegal drugs, and tobacco. I still wonder if it was a form of “self-denial”. . . . a way of refusing to accept the fact that I could not live as *normally* as everyone else.

I now strive to stick to a healthier diet. It is sometimes hard to avoid junk food in this fast paced world in which we live, but it can be accomplished with the right planning. I also try to get as much exercise as possible. “A body at rest tends to remain at rest, while a body in motion tends to stay in motion.”

Most importantly, I strictly adhere to my medicine regimen. After all, that’s why we have doctors. They spend many years being trained and educated to help keep us alive! My doctor is definitely pleased at my adherence level. I feel that we should be thankful that we have access to our medications when there are so many others less fortunate . . . those who can’t get their meds and are dying because of the lack thereof.

#### 3. SPIRIT

Whether we like it or want to admit it, we *are* viewed as the “modern-day lepers.” We have to face stigma on a daily basis. Educating others about our disease is the best way possible to end this non-deserved stigma. We have to approach this duty in a very loving and non judgmental way and strive *not* to be like the ones who are judging us.

I have found so much peace and love through GOD, our loving “Heavenly Father.” HE has shown his existence to me in so many loving and astounding ways that I have no choice but to follow HIM on a daily basis. Prayer, fellowship with other believers, and listening to HIS small, yet undeniable voice gets me through each day with an astounding peace of mind. Since truly finding HIM in 2007, I have never been happier or more at peace with myself, who I am, and who HE chose to make me.

#### Everyone

should have some source of spiritual outlet. Just being surrounded by like-minded believers works wonders in relieving stress, anxiety, and worry. After all, it *is* a proven fact that living “stress free” is one of the determining factors in how we can survive and live a much longer, stronger, and more productive life with HIV.

**GOD BLESS and GOOD LUCK!**  
*You are in my prayers!*  
David

# School Receives Permanent Block

By Naomi Namakula— PTA Chairperson

With support from Friends of Deen—Canada, Future Diplomats Education centre has acquired a



school block which will house 3 classes of 30 children each, a staff-room and Head-teachers office.

The block is named after Merion Doreen Selwood, the first international volunteer to work with Volset Foundation in year 2004 (for 4 months). Full of wisdom, dedicated and committed, Selwood made sure she made a difference in this rural community through various services.

- She worked with local women on self-support activities.
- She initiated children's sponsorship program where by year 2008 over eighty children had received direct sponsors.
- She Introduced ICT knowledge to the organization
- She encouraged networking spirit with other related CBOs in Kampala and Jinja.
- Recruited and encouraged volunteers to come to VOLSET, and to date over 100 volunteers have worked with Volset as a result of Selwood's efforts.

She returned to Uganda and paid a short visit to Volset Foundation in year 2009



. She was pleased to have seen the tremendous development in the organization and she promised to return and work longer with the same organization.

**However,** on return to Canada her health became poor. Sadly, she passed away on November 1, 2010. The family friend and partner of Selwood made sure her



dream was realized by sponsoring construction memorial *Block* in respect of her efforts and ambition in making a difference in VOLSET and Ntenjeru community.

On 21 April 2011, VOLSET Foundation held a memorial service day in respect of Merion Doreen



Selwood, where over 300 adults and 200 children attended. Among the people who addressed the gathering, included the

head-parent, the head-teacher of Future Diplomats Education Centre, Director of Jim Education Centre, Local leader of Ntenjeru community, and international volunteers. The day's program included

memorial songs, school and church choirs, Evening video shows, and many others.



# General report For Volset Foundation for Year 2010 *By Lydia Nansukusa*

## ORGANIZATION:

Volset was founded in 1997 and the organization became a public charity in 1998. The primary purpose of the NGO is HIV/AIDS prevention, support orphans to attain education opportunity, and to fund access to care of PLWHA and also building capacity to empower community for a better standard of living.

## MISSION:

The organization was started with its main mission of Alleviating Human Suffering caused by HIV/AIDS, disease, and poverty in rural and less served communities particularly communities which are hard to reach like the Islands on Lake Victoria

## OBJECTIVES:

- To give opportunity to needy and orphaned children to acquire holistic education and the basic necessities of life
- To create awareness on basic HIV/AIDS prevention, testing, and HIV/AIDS-prevention services in isolated, rural islands and less served communities.
- Capacity building in the community to eradicate the vicious circle of poverty.

### **PROGRAM FOCUS:**

- Advocacy and assistance to orphaned and needy children
- HIV prevention Services
- Community capacity building and empowerment
- National and International volunteers' network/involvement.

## SPONSORSHIP OF ORPHANS AND NEEDY CHILDREN

VOLSET is sponsoring orphaned and needy children at all levels of education. At the moment, VOLSET sponsors 64 children of which two are at University in their last year of academics three joining University in the financial year 2011, 6 are in vocational schools, 18 in secondary school and then the rest still in primary schools. VOLSET is progressing with this programme through the support obtained from different sponsors and international volunteers' contribution

## 4.2. HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

HIV/AIDS prevention is also one of the main focuses for VOLSET, awareness and prevention and testing programs are carried out through different ways like seminars, workshops and the voluntary testing of HIV in the communities of Mukono Districts. The main emphasis has been mainly the Islands and the landing sites of Lake Victoria since these are the areas that are hard to reach for one reason or another and the health services are scarce or totally not there. Through this programme, several people have been able to know their HIV status and advice has been given to live positively depending on the results. Seminars have been organized to demonstrate to communities on the use and disposal of condoms, principle of being faithful to their partners and the importance of voluntary counseling and testing. Home care visits have been carried out basically for people living with HIV/AIDS.

## VHT TRAINING

By the end of 2010, VOLSET had trained 401 VHT through the support from OMNI-MED. This programme aims at enabling these people by providing them with necessary information on health related issues such that they help the health providers to sensitize the community on how to improve their health through good remedial home health practices and also to identify cases that need interventions and report them to the health workers. This program was designed by the government of Uganda with a purpose of improving and managing the health of the community at household level through the use of enabling local people to educate, sensitize and create awareness in their communities.

## **CONSTRUCTION OF THE OFFICE**

Due to high expenditure on rent, VOLSET realized that it was better to acquire their own premises and have offices there in order to minimize on these high costs. Through the contribution of both local and international volunteers VOLSET achieved this.

## **CHALLENGES**

- Drop-out of the sponsors
- Need for a conducive study environment for some of the needy children
- Need for new sponsors for children
- Death of Deen Selwood has been a big blow to VOLSET staff and members including children who have seen blessings due to her efforts.
- Inadequate labour force due to un-fore-seen circumstances

## FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR 2010

	PARTICULARS	INCOME	EXPENDITURE
1	Balance brought forward	15,321,616	
2	Children Sponsorship	75,759,486	
3	Volunteers donations (GVN/Real Uganda)	11,661,050	
4	Omni-Med (VHT) training	43,867,300	
5	Volunteers donations in cash	1,260,000	
6	Interests from the bank	11,570	
7	Omni-Med volunteers donations	7,542,072	
8	Future Diplomats donation ( <i>Rose Charities</i> )	10,771,106	
11			
12	Children sponsorship & care		63,078,300
13	HIV/AIDS Home Care, VCT & Outreaches		2,740,000
14	Volunteers welfare		7,925,000
15	Communication (mobile internet & time credit)		173,600
16	VHT trainings		43,267,300
17	Stationery and computer maintenance		360,000
18	Food for staff		1,200,000
19	Electricity installation and bills		2,680,000
20	Construction of Deen Memorial Block		10,590,000
21	Bank charges		512,086
22	Cash at hand By December 31, 2010		33,667,199
23	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>166,194,200</b>	<b>166,194,200</b>

## **BOARD of DIRECTORS (BoD)**

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

*Ms Lydia Nansukusa*

### **Directors:**

- 1. Mr. Festus Bazira** - **(Founder)**
- 2. Mr. David Ochieng** - **Public relations**
- 3. Mrs Joy Nakabuye Kizito** - **Secretary**
- 4. Hassan Nyanzi** - **Children's Welfare/Finance**
- 5. Miss Molly namagambe** - **Volunteers Coordinator**
- 6. Mr. Josephus G. Musisi** - **HIV/AIDS Prevention I/C**
- 7. Safina Namagembe** - **Youth Affairs**
- 8. Mrs Mary Bazira** - **Nurse**
- 9. Mr. Samuel Tuhairwe** - **Advisor**

## FUNDING

The following are highly appreciated for the continued support to VOLSET

- ROSE CHARITIES and FRIENDS OF DEEN
- Drs. KATHY & STACEY
- KELLEY & JEFF SMITH
- Drs ANNA / THOMAS RUPP & FRIENDS
- SHAFER FRIENDS (new)
- THE REAL UGANDA
- Ms ALEX MORTON
- VHT PROGRAM
- AMY BELLINGER
- SELF-SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS
- CELYNE (UK)
- KARA RIEMA
- GLEN FAMILY
- SANDI DE PLATER
- COST SHARING BY LOCAL COMMUNITY

*P/s List to be continued in the next ISSUE*

*CONTACT US*

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