

tell Simon that his tuition payments for this year (US\$1500) would be completely covered, although we still had to search for a benefactor to cover next year and beyond. When I gave the good news to Simon, he was so overcome that he started crying; then he leapt for joy, gave me a big hug, and reiterated his life's dedication to help other orphans like himself.

Helping Simon to become a social worker: **What could be more Jewish than that?** Stories like Simon's rarely make the newspaper headlines about life in Africa, but I can tell you dozens of stories like his.<sup>4</sup> And this is just the beginning. To make a differ-

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<sup>4</sup>Support comes through the Orphans' Emergency Fund of the American Jewish World Service. Last year, over 600 orphans were assisted through this Fund, although not all to the same degree as Simon.

ence in the AIDS pandemic, your help is needed.

Just follow the wisdom of these two African proverbs:

If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping in a closed room with a mosquito

When spider webs unite, they can catch a lion.

## REFERENCES

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# A JEWISH RESPONSE TO THE AIDS PANDEMIC

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The JDC and the American Jewish World Service have joined forces to help address the AIDS pandemic currently sweeping through South Africa, threatening that country's fledgling democracy. Our two organizations have formed a partnership with Ikamva Labantu, a grassroots organization headed by Helen Lieberman, a prominent member of the Cape Town Jewish community. Her welfare activities began during the apartheid era when she defied South Africa's strict racial laws by crossing the geographical divide between the affluent white community and the black Africans living in extreme poverty and squalor in the shanty towns of the Western Cape.

Our three-way partnership has established the "Face the Future" project, which recognizes that community-based responses to AIDS can be initiated by mobilizing the energy of township residents themselves.

A community center has been established in

the township of Guguletu, Cape Town, providing both outreach and center-based advisory services for afflicted families. Programs include preventive health education for young black teens, who are the most vulnerable sector of the population. Local leaders and church groups have been encouraged to reach out to families reluctant to face the stigma that black South Africans have attached to the disease. Referral arrangements have been established with local hospitals and clinics. Field workers have been hired to serve the township's many unofficial orphanages. A sorely needed database is being established to provide research entities with informational trends to allow for adequate planning of future services.

The project is being supported by several local foundations, many of them led by members of the Jewish community, and by U.S.-based donors. Tours to the project site have been provided for overseas visitors.