

# PATH Today

A Newsletter for Friends and Supporters

Spring 2007

## Magnet theater

### Setting the stage for transformation

In the Nyanza Province in southwest Kenya, communities grapple with extreme poverty and high rates of HIV. It's difficult for families to get health information: they can't afford doctor visits, many children don't attend school, and there is little access to television. What's the best way to reach them with critical information about stopping the spread of HIV?

One of PATH's answers is "magnet theater"—colorful, lively performances featuring local volunteers acting out common social dilemmas. Actors call on audience members to ask questions and offer solutions for the characters. Even in the most remote regions, the plays provide much-needed community entertainment and dialogue for the large assembled crowds. And throughout the performance, accurate HIV information is offered from fellow Kenyans in the local language.

### Welcome to the frontline

In a small village located on the shores of Lake Victoria, people gather in the town square. This is the frontline in the battle against AIDS. The area is wrapped on three sides by a storage building, a few wooden benches, and rough-hewn shops selling a few items. The only vehicles around are worn bicycles with fringed seats large enough to carry an extra passenger on the back.



Wendy Stone

Magnet theater provides much-needed entertainment and accurate information about HIV and AIDS.

With puffs of red dirt rising around their bare feet, small children squealing with laughter careen from behind a building, curious about the visitors—a magnet theater troupe—and wait for the adults to arrive. Beautiful faces, precious lives. It's hard to believe that most of these children have lost one or both parents to AIDS.

### Bringing real life center stage

There are smiles on the faces of people who've come to watch as the theater group swings into action—dancing, singing, clapping, swaying, and acting out a real-life dilemma. In this performance, the story involves a mother and father who are getting ready to marry off their young daughter to an older, wealthy man.

Should they do it? Should the young bride insist on HIV testing? What if the prospective husband refuses the test?

Continued inside

## PATH celebrates 30 years!

For 30 years we've been working to improve lives around the world. Your support has been essential. Thank you!



This year, PATH celebrates 30 years of innovation in global health. In 1977, we began our first project: helping manufacturers in China set up facilities for making high-quality condoms. Those factories gave millions of Chinese couples more control over the size of their families—and were our first step toward improving the lives of women everywhere through better birth control, disease prevention, and gender equity.



Ten years later, PATH joined the global fight against AIDS—and we now support prevention efforts in more than 25 countries. We also launched a program that brings basic vaccines to children across Indonesia. Twenty years after our start, we licensed the Uniject™ injection device to BD, creating a model for public-private partnerships that bring cutting-edge solutions to places with few resources. And vaccine vial monitors were found on every vial of oral polio vaccine distributed by UNICEF, helping enable the successful global efforts to eradicate polio.

Solutions to global health problems don't happen overnight, yet strides are made every day, thanks in no small part to individual supporters like you. Thank you for walking with us. Together, we are making it possible—a world where innovation ensures that health is within reach for everyone.

A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, likely belonging to Christopher J. Elias.

Christopher J. Elias, MD, MPH  
President

Continued from front page

The action stops, and the actors ask audience members what they think. Several people step forward to shout out suggestions. Everyone cranes their heads forward for a better look and to listen to what their neighbors and friends have to say. For many the story hits all too close to home. You don't have to understand one word of the language to see that lives are changed—maybe even saved.

### The power of performance

Magnet theater has proved a powerful medium for examining the links between behavior and health. Each performance is anticipated and widely discussed by the community, making subjects such as HIV and sex—once taboo—regular topics of conversation, encouraging healthy behaviors in individuals but also laying the groundwork for slight shifts in attitudes and for new social norms to take hold.



Frank Huster

PATH pioneered magnet theater in Africa, and now the tool is being replicated in other countries to generate dialogue on issues such as immunization.

The approach has been so successful that we're adapting it to other countries and topics. In Vietnam, we've been using magnet theater to increase families' understanding of the importance of timely childhood vaccination. Soon we hope to engage communities on the topic of infant and childhood nutrition.

Interacting with the powerful performances ultimately helps people decide what's best for their own lives. Creative, effective, and appropriate to the local culture—magnet theater is bringing health within reach for people who need it most. ●

## The latest on a new pneumonia vaccine

In the last issue, we told you about our search for a new pneumonia vaccine that would protect children throughout the world. Now we're happy to announce that we finalized a second major partnership to speed up vaccine development. PATH and Children's Hospital Boston are collaborating to find a safe, inactivated, whole-cell

vaccine against the pneumococcal bacteria. In addition to providing broad protection, the vaccine would be especially suited to the developing world because it would require no refrigeration and could be given through the nose (avoiding the need for injection). ●



David Jacobs

## PATH receives Charity Navigator top rating—again!

For the third year, Charity Navigator, America's largest independent evaluator of nonprofits, awarded PATH its highest possible rating. PATH's four-star rating underscores our efforts to uphold the highest standards for financial stewardship and management. Only 12 percent of the charities rated received consecutive four-star ratings. Read more on our website: [www.path.org/charity\\_navigator.php](http://www.path.org/charity_navigator.php).



## You are invited: 2007 Breakfast for Global Health

Each year PATH hosts the Breakfast for Global Health—an opportunity for you to take a closer look at how your contributions are making a difference. This event benefits PATH's Catalyst Fund, our primary source of "innovation capital," the flexible funds that you provide, allowing us to create cutting-edge solutions and leverage the financial and intellectual resources of collaborators around the world.

This year we'll once again transform the parking garage of our Seattle headquarters into a global stage, where health experts and individuals touched by our work will come together. After breakfast and a short program, you are invited to visit our product development shop, where engineers and designers roll up their sleeves to create health technologies specifically designed for low-resources settings.

The help of generous underwriting by sponsors—including our premiere sponsor, Hanover Investments LLC—makes it possible to send 100 percent of the funds raised directly to the Catalyst Fund. Event support also comes from McKinstry; Wells

Fargo; Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc.; Bank of America; Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center; Corbis; Heller Ehrman LLP; Symetra Financial; TEMPTIME Corporation; and Nintendo of America, Inc.

The event happens on Tuesday, May 22, from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. (doors open at 7:00 a.m.) at PATH's

Seattle headquarters. Seating is limited, so reserve your place now. For more information, contact [breakfast\\_rsvp@path.org](mailto:breakfast_rsvp@path.org) or 206.788.2463. ●

*"PATH's work is a tremendous investment in bringing about positive changes in the world."*

— Lee D. Hwang, executive director,  
Hanover Investments



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*is to improve  
the health of people  
around the world by  
advancing technologies,  
strengthening systems,  
and encouraging  
healthy behaviors.*



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## Social entrepreneurship and solutions for global health

Whether it's a dollar or an idea, every contribution makes a difference, especially in the world of global health. Among PATH's most valued partners are the individuals and organizations who use innovative ideas to create social change: *social entrepreneurs*. On February 8, 2007, we hosted an event for just such visionaries—our “Global Health: the Bottom Line” breakfast, meant to start conversations and inspire new partnerships among local businesses, community leaders, and nonprofit organizations like PATH.

Representatives from PATH, the University of Washington School of Business, the Lemelson Foundation, TEMPTIME Corporation, and VillageReach shared cutting-edge strategies: grants for new technologies,

programs that encourage students to connect business with global thinking, and business models that empower governments to extend the reach of public health. Like PATH, these organizations are helping find solutions to alleviate poor health and put health within reach for those who need it most.

The event also highlighted the tenth anniversary of the vaccine vial monitor and one of PATH's most successful collaborations. The result of a 17-year partnership with manufacturer TEMPTIME, the vaccine vial monitor is the distant relative of a device used by the food industry to label perishables. Today's version flags vaccines that have been exposed to too much heat, telling health workers whether the vaccine is safe and effective.

The Bottom Line Breakfast demonstrated how social entrepreneurship changes the lens



TEMPTIME CEO Nick Puro (center), with PATH founder Gordon Perkin and vice president Jacqueline Sherris at the Bottom Line Breakfast.

through which we see the world, bringing new solutions and new potential to light. Those who attended found common ground in partnership, community, and persistence—the heart of social entrepreneurship. Stay tuned for information about the next Bottom Line business event taking place this fall. ●

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