

October 2008

Dear Soho Gym Members

Thank you so much for supporting Aids Ark (AA) – this is hugely appreciated. Without question, your generosity has saved lives! Soho Gym Members donated £2,247.40 in 2007 and £2,804.36 in 2008. Funding to each AA Member costs £215 per annum.

Currently AA fund the supply of life saving ARV drugs for 90 individuals with HIV/AIDS - 18 in Burma and the remainder in 4 different parts of India. 11 of the 90 are children. 75 additional people remain alive and healthy due to our intervention and have now found places on alternative funding programmes – only 5 of this number have sadly died.

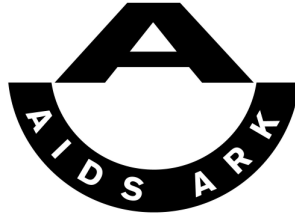
Late 2007 we visited Lesotho where we previously worked. Much has changed in the country since then and ARV's are now available to all in need. AA are given much credit for having funded the first ARV treatment programme in the country and assisting in expediting such a fantastic achievement. However there remains a critical shortage of doctors, nurses and medical centres. At the specific request of their Minister of Health (the Doctor with whom we initially worked) AA are currently considering funding the training of "expert patient therapists" to help resolve this problem. We are currently looking for new opportunities to extend support in other African countries where ARV's remain unobtainable.

In India, Government Funded ARV programmes are becoming more available but there remain many to whom this opportunity is still not possible or is considered by the Doctors with whom we work to be of an inadequate standard. Adequate nutrition is an essential component of HIV/ AIDS treatment and due to the recent huge increases in world food prices we have recently offered additional food funding assistance to all our AA Indian members at \$15ppm. We are also supporting a small pilot group of HIV+ ladies (many of whom are AIDS widows and/or AA members) in Andhra Pradesh who have come together for mutual support and to learn income generating skills; this in a country where HIV/AIDS stigma excludes them from mainstream society

December 2008 we are visiting Nepal in the hope of extending our programme; we will also visit Burma with this same purpose. Needless to say the Burmese Military Dictatorship is not much interested in providing ARV's to their own people. There are no official statistics relating to HIV/AIDS infection rates. Current estimates are that 360,000 people are HIV+; of these 80,000 are in immediate need of ARV's; of this total only 9,000 are able (via international NGO's) to access these drugs.

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The Clinton HIV AIDS Initiative have recently negotiated a large discount on the cost of ARV drugs. These prices seem (wrongly in our view) to be only available to a specific buyers club - largely Governments and large NGO's. We are making every effort to access these prices so that your funds can assist a greater number of people.

On such trips we meet many of our existing AA Members and their families. Almost without exception all are enjoying remarkably improved health. ARV drugs really work. Aids Ark funding has without question saved the lives of these individuals who are again healthy, positive, happy, productive and again able to look forward to enjoying a full term of good live. Their gratitude to Aids Ark and yourselves is overwhelming. This is a wonderful achievement which your contribution has made possible!

Please go to below this web address where you will be able to see images relating to recent Aids Ark adventures.

<http://photocast.mac.com/jaysoho/iPhoto/aids-ark-issue/index.rss>

Our most heartfelt thanks for your invaluable ongoing support. Your contribution has saved the lives of individuals who are actually know to us!

Derek Frost, Trustee, Aids Ark

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