

Mission - Africa 2009

Helping Hands



"I don't only believe in miracles, I depend on them every day."

Major Dr. Dawn Howse

The Salvation Army
St. John's Temple Corps



Location

Tshelanyemba Hospital is located near the Botswana and South African Borders, 160 Kilometres south of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city. It has a staff of 75 and serves 43,000 people in an area of approximately a 40 Kilometres radius from the hospital.

Tshelanyemba is in a remote and harsh area. Its people are among some of the poorest and impoverished in Zimbabwe. The average rainfall is about one third of the Zimbabwe average. The land is officially categorized as arid. Income and nutrition levels are very low.

Services at Tshelanyemba

Tshelanyemba Hospital plays a major role in the community in which it is located. Its 103 beds include TB/AIDS, maternity, medical/surgical and paediatric wards. The hospital provides services at the primary and secondary levels of care. It has dental, rehabilitation, laboratory, and Xray units. An 18 month Primary Care Nurse training began in 2003, with 20 new students enrolled every six months. There are approximately 700 deliveries a year

The hospital has an outreach network of 39 locations and the outreach team provides child and maternal health care services, including family planning. This service is important in view of the long distances to the nearest static health facilities in the area. Recently this program has been in jeopardy due to shortage of fuel, and lately high price of fuel. It has restarted after a seven month break.

Advice on Family Planning, and sale of methods are provided to all patient groups. All modern FP methods are available at the hospital. For example, hormonal implant has proven a popular method. Cost of the methods has been reported as a barrier for continued use of modern Family Planning.

Voluntary counselling and testing for HIV has been offered on various clinical grounds since 1990. Rapid HIV testing is carried out at the hospital. A high uptake rate has been reported among, for example, patients with tuberculosis. There are three trained counsellors. PMTCT (Prevention of Mother to Child Trans-mission) was introduced in August 2003, and two staff members have been trained in this service. Counselling on HIV/AIDS is extended to patients and their relatives in the out-patient department, in-patients, and pregnant women who stay in the waiting mothers' shelter.

There is an active network of 400 volunteer home-based care givers in the hospital catchment area. There is also a refresher course that is attended by all care givers once in two years.



Major Dr. Dawn Howse

After two years as a physician in Woody Point, NL and five years as a private practitioner in Corner Brook, Major Dr. Dawn Howse (MUN, 1978) trained as a Salvation Army officer in St. John's, and studied Tropical Medicine in Liverpool, England. She served The Salvation Army in Zimbabwe for the past 20 years.

Between 1988 and 1992 Dr. Howse worked in the northern area of the country at Howard Hospital. From 1992 she became the sole medical doctor for Tshelanyemba Hospital. Her work there has had more than its share of challenges in recent years as the spread of HIV/AIDS, TB and malnutrition has increased dramatically and the costs of effective medicines has become prohibitive in a country with the world's highest inflation rate of over 2 million per cent per year. Fuel and basic food supplies are often either in short supply or locally unavailable. World Vision has provided a meal of beans and barley at the end of each school day to the elementary grades. Quite often this is the only meal some of these children have for the day.

Despite all this, Dr. Howse has continued to educate and work, using any and all possible means of support.

In 2003 Dr. Howse was named recipient of the Outstanding Volunteer Service Award by the Alumni Association of Memorial University of Newfoundland. She has returned to Newfoundland at the end of 2008, to continue working as a doctor, to serve the Salvation Army, and to continue to support Tshelanyemba Hospital, by offering to relieve the two doctors appointed in her place.



"If I could leave behind a legacy for this community it would be reducing the transmission of HIV to mothers and infants, by reaching as many people as possible with counselling and a positive message of how a healthy lifestyle can help alleviate the disease and prevent its progression."

Major Dr. Dawn Howse

The Mission

The Mission for May 2009 is to construct a building consisting of two family unit apartments for local care-givers and nurses working at the Tshelanyemba Hospital. In addition, a new phone system will be installed for the Hospital and area.

This will be the third project in recent years that St. John's Temple has undertaken for the people of Tshelanyemba. In 2007 a voluntary team built a similar building and earlier this year a 40 foot container of hospital and school supplies was collected and shipped to the hospital.

The financial support of businesses, organizations and individuals is necessary to make this project a success. We need your help to raise \$60,000 of our budget of approximately \$100,000 .

The people of Tshelanyemba need our support and are most appreciative of the help they have received to date.

For More Information
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Donations may be made to:

Zimbabwe Project
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