Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance (GAIA) delivers HIV-related and basic health services to rural villages and health facilities in Africa.
Malawian Woman (Elizabeth’s Song)  
- for William Rankin

In 2005, AIDS killed 86,592 Malawians, 21,118 of them children.  
A small country, the average per capita income is $170.  
Not enough to feed a mother, even if she had ARV’s* to keep herself well.

A small country, the average per capita income is $170.  
When the money runs out, you sell the only thing left. Even if she had ARV’s to keep herself well, there are three little ones at home already infected.

When the money runs out, you sell the only thing left: the body that was never yours to begin with. Three little ones at home are already infected, an HIV bequest from the father who ran away.

The body that was never yours, Elizabeth, is singing its broken song all over Africa. An HIV bequest from the fathers that run away, leaving grandmothers to till the fields.

The broken song of Africa rises from the bodies of the dead. Finds the grandmothers left tilling the fields who stop what they’re doing and listen.

The bodies of the dead rise and sing when there isn’t enough to feed a mother. Who will stop what they’re doing and listen? In 2005, AIDS killed 86,592 Malawians, 21,118 of them children.

*Anti-retrovirals (Anti-HIV) drugs

Michelle Bitting
Last year we staffed, equipped, and deployed two mobile medical clinics to very remote areas of Southern Malawi. As soon as the vehicles were in the field they were swamped with people seeking help. Not surprisingly, HIV and malaria were the paramount health problems.

Also in 2008 we doubled the number of villages in which we deliver intensive and comprehensive HIV and related healthcare services through village women. The women participating in micro-loans have tripled, now numbering 950.

Health prevention messages were conveyed to over 20,000 rural Malawians last year, and over 5,000 orphans received help. HIV-positive children were transported to pediatric HIV treatment centers, and numerous children and adults were tested and treated for HIV.

It is now the rainy season in Malawi with rampant malaria, hunger that won’t be sated until the harvest, and in the words of a South African physician friend, astounding poverty.

We take to heart the financial malaise in our own country and are ever grateful for your gifts. We remember, too, that for our dear and faithful friends in Malawi there is no safety net.

The poor challenge our hopes of equality for all. We are privileged to serve them until we all may truly be one.

GAIA currently supports over 5,000 orphans in Malawi.

2008 was an extraordinary year for GAIA, due to the generous support of our donors.

Thank You.
ELIZABETH TAYLOR HIV/AIDS FOUNDATION SUPPORTS MOBILE CLINICS IN SOUTHERN MALAWI

In October 2008 GAIA, with the generous funding of the Elizabeth Taylor HIV/AIDS Foundation, launched its Mobile Health Clinic program in rural areas of the southern Mulanje District, an area severely impacted by HIV/AIDS. Mulanje is located 65 km southeast of Blantyre-Limbe and borders Mozambique. The resulting cross border traffic and commerce, as elsewhere in Africa, fuels the AIDS epidemic because of commercial sex practiced in the trading centers. Nearly half of Mulanje’s population is under 15, and most are poor subsistence farmers.

In Mulanje, there is only one health clinic, which serves more than 37,000 people. The acute shortage of district health personnel as well as medications and supplies means that many people cannot obtain the most basic care, let alone HIV testing and treatment.

With funds from the Elizabeth Taylor HIV/AIDS Foundation, two four-wheel drive vehicles were purchased and outfitted with an examination couch, supplies, and storage for medical and laboratory supplies. Each vehicle is staffed with a Clinical Officer (similar to a Physician’s Assistant in the U.S.), a registered nurse, a nurse aide, and a driver.

The Mobile Health Clinics treat an average of 100 patients each day. In addition to providing HIV testing (including testing of pregnant women to prevent mother-to-child transmission during pregnancy), the clinic staff treat a variety of other illnesses, including malaria. In November, for example, more than 1,000 people were evaluated who were showing clinical symptoms of malaria. Treating malaria is especially important when people are co-infected with HIV, because having malaria can strengthen the virus. Education about malaria prevention is also provided.

In the first full month of operation, 23% of those tested for HIV were found positive (including many pregnant women), demonstrating the acute need for this service. All of the HIV-positive pregnant women were given anti-retroviral drugs to help ensure that their babies have the best possible chance of being born free of the disease.
During the program’s launch, which was attended by more than 500 villagers, chiefs and district health personnel, one community member stated that “Mobile Health Clinics will eradicate the problem of walking long distances to access medical services in our area.” A chief added, “May the all mighty God Bless wherever the funds are coming from.” GAIA is very grateful to the Elizabeth Taylor HIV/AIDS Foundation for bringing help and hope to many through this project.

The mobile clinics treat an average of 100 patients per day. The clinics provide HIV-testing and treatment, as well as care for other illnesses such as malaria.

The clinics provide HIV-positive pregnant women with anti-retroviral drugs to ensure their babies have the best possible chance of being born free of the disease.
Close to the Zambian border, a dirt road leads to the village of Ludzi, where St. Joseph’s Community Hospital struggles to provide care for over 26,000 people. GAIA is helping St. Joseph’s to build a new and updated maternity center and improve the quality of healthcare in this impoverished region.

Currently, the maternal death rate in Malawi is third highest in the world. The Malawi Health Ministry believes that the large number of women delivering in villages with only the assistance of Traditional Birth Attendants (midwives) has contributed greatly to this problem. Recently, the Catholic
Diocese and the Malawi Health Ministry signed an agreement providing free-of-charge access to the St. Joseph’s Center for maternal and neonatal services for local women. The expectation is that many more women will access the facility and maternal and infant mortality will be greatly reduced in the area.

St. Joseph’s hospital is run by an order of Malawian nuns, and its service area includes 6,000 women of child-bearing age. The hospital presently delivers 2,000 babies a year. Over 15% of these are considered “complicated births”, requiring cesarean sections, blood transfusions, and other procedures that the hospital has so far been unable to provide.

Trustee Agnes Grohs and GAIA President and Founder William Rankin broke ground for the new center last July in a ceremony attended by local chiefs, healthcare professionals, religious leaders, and government officials. Agnes and many friends in southern California provided support and raised funds for the GAIA Hospitals and Clinics program, which supports both St. Joseph’s and the creation of a safe birthing facility at Nkhata Bay.

With the building of two new birthing centers, young mothers and their infants will have access to quality healthcare and a better chance at survival.

Precious Chalera, GAIA Nursing Scholar

GAIA is helping St. Joseph’s to build the new maternity center providing care for over 6,000 women of child-bearing age.

FIRST CLASS OF NURSING SCHOLARS GRADUATE

GAIA’s Nursing Scholarship Fund passed an important milestone this year as the first group of 8 students graduated in October from the Malawi College of Health Sciences with their three-year diplomas in nursing. The diploma allows them to sit for government registration exams. GAIA is eagerly awaiting the results. Another group of 22 students graduated from the Kamuzu College of Nursing 4-year program in December and were awarded a bachelor’s degree in nursing. They also will sit for the registration exams, and the additional year of training in their bachelor’s program has prepared them for leadership responsibilities in the health care system. 68 students continue their studies, and 30 new Nursing Scholars will matriculate in 2009.

In exchange for the scholarship assistance, Nursing Scholars commit to serve in the country’s clinics and hospitals for 3 or 4 years after graduation, depending on the length of the program they attended. One student said, “GAIA has changed many things for the better in my life. I now have a free mind which is ready to concentrate on my studies without wasting time to worry about financial problems.”

GAIA is proud to help build healthcare capacity in Malawi.
A family celebrates the launch of one of twenty new GAIA village projects.
In January 2008, GAIA began preparations to replicate its highly successful GAIA Villages intervention in 20 new villages located in Malawi’s rural Mulanje District, a remote and impoverished area with a high prevalence of food insecurity, poverty and HIV/AIDS. This expansion increased the number of villagers served from 11,000 to 37,000 villagers.

Five new coordinators were hired and trained, all of whom have backgrounds in nursing or community organization and development. The community identified 3,353 orphans and 403 home-based care patients and health talks and workshops were scheduled. The intervention was officially launched in June with hundreds of villagers and 40 chiefs and representatives from the local government and health ministry in attendance. The strong representation of village chiefs at the event was evidence of widespread community support for the intervention.

The GAIA Villages intervention is simple. In each village four to five women (called Community Caregivers) are trained in HIV and AIDS prevention and care strategies. Each woman receives a monthly stipend of $40, and works under the supervision of a GAIA Coordinator with a background in nursing or community development. The training and modest stipend the Caregivers receive empowers them socially and economically to become agents of change in their communities.

Community Caregivers provide an array of life-saving services to those in need including:
- giving health talks to villagers that provide basic information about HIV and related issues;
- registering orphans and provide them with food, clothing, blankets, and school supplies;
- arranging for payment of school fees for orphans attending high school;
- making daily home visits to people with HIV-related diseases bringing food, simple medications, blankets, companionship, comfort and care as well as assisting with household chores;
- encouraging villagers to be tested for HIV and when necessary providing travel stipends and sometimes accompanying the sick to test centers, including GAIA mobile clinics;
- referring people who test positive for HIV to clinics where free anti-retroviral therapy is provided, and encouraging those on treatment to adhere to the regimen.

With a focus on long-term sustainability and community buy-in, GAIA Villages develops community income generating activities (IGAs) during years two and three of the GAIA Villages intervention. IGAs include pig raising, irrigation gardens that grow produce for sale, and dairy cooperatives. Through the IGAs villagers, particularly village women and youth, learn valuable skills that are being lost as more adults succumb to HIV/AIDS. IGAs enable rural communities to sustain HIV prevention and care activities after the GAIA Villages intervention ends, and ensures that orphans and home-based care patients will be cared for by their communities using the funds IGAs help raise.

The GAIA Villages has now served 77 villages in Malawi’s southern region. With support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in 2003 GAIA started the intervention in 37 villages located in Malawi’s Blantyre and Zomba districts. In the original 37 villages, the Community Caregivers have sustained their work through income generating activities. Another 20 villages in this region are in the third year of the intervention, and are honing their income generating skills as the intervention comes to an end in their villages.
The Yankho club displays their wares. In 2008, 725 village women received small business loans.
MICRO-ENTERPRISE PROJECTS EMPOWER 950 WOMEN

In 2008, 725 new GAIA Women Entrepreneurs received small-business loans of $70 each to create and operate enterprises like banana cultivation, piggeries, firewood collection and sale, and bakeries. They join the original 225 women who piloted the project in 2006.

Our Women Entrepreneurs live in Malawi’s southern Thyolo District, which has a high incidence of HIV, leaving many households headed by children, single mothers or grandparents. The 22 villages where GAIA’s Microfinance program operates are located far from the nearest town and can only be reached by dirt roads that become impassable by vehicle during the rainy season. As our Malawian Project Officer said, “GAIA starts where the others [service providers] stop.”

In 2008, GAIA hired a project director who oversees the identification, screening, and training of the new Entrepreneurs, who formed 29 loan clubs. The groups of 15-25 women are self-selecting; each woman must be approved unanimously by the other members. The members serve as collateral for one another’s loans and all are collectively responsible for repayment of the loans.

Before disbursement of the loans, the women attend training sessions on how to apply for and re-pay loans, interest payments, and savings. They form executive, loan monitoring, disciplinary, finance, and marketing committees within each club. They meet bi-weekly to share lessons learned, monitor loan repayment, and receive information about HIV prevention.

The Entrepreneurs benefit in several ways. Vulnerability to HIV transmission is reduced. As one woman noted, “If you don’t have a business, you have to be friendly with men so they can pay for you.”

With the loans and micro-enterprise activities, these women are better able to meet the needs of their families. “We have enough food and I am able to take care of the children and pay for the school fees,” says another woman.

GAIA Partners with National Institutes of Health on Malawi HIV/AIDS Research Project

In the summer of 2008, data collection was completed on a research study funded by the National Institutes of Health and headed by Principal Investigator, Dr. Sally Rankin of the University of California San Francisco. GAIA served as a subcontractor for the project, providing the research team with access to religious groups that GAIA has worked with in the past.

Ellen Schell, GAIA’s International Programs Director, served as co-Principal Investigator for the project.

The study examined the response of Malawi’s Christian and Muslim Groups to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Data has been collected from leadership at the central (national) level, local level (congregational pastors and imams), and from congregational members. The first published paper from the study, authored by Sally Rankin, Teri Lindgren, Susan Kools, and Ellen Schell is entitled “The Condom Divide: Disenfranchisement of Malawi Women by Church and State” and appeared in the September/October issue of The Journal of Obstetric, Gynecological and Neonatal Nursing, volume 37, issue 5, p. 596-606.
A GAIA Malawi team member interviews a research subject. NIH Grant ROI HD050147
CARING FOR ORPHANS FROM BIRTH

As a direct result of the AIDS epidemic over 550,000 children have been orphaned leaving them without a support system or a safety net. GAIA often begins caring for HIV-affected children at birth, as recent reports from the field attest:

“Two weeks ago a twenty year old mother here in the north died a week after delivery. She was HIV-positive. The baby is with the grandmother as the deceased was not married. The current need is to provide milk…”

“We are now providing milk to one baby whose mother is unable to feed her because of HIV. To keep this child alive and HIV-negative, we will spend approximately $68 per month for the next 8 months. We have just weaned another baby who was on the same [regimen.] The deaf grandfather and the elderly grandmother look after her. We thank God that these children can be alive because of your prayers and funds.”

In 2008, GAIA supported over 5,000 AIDS orphans in Malawi. Helping these children begins with doing everything possible to reduce the chances of being infected with HIV in-utero or through breast feeding. Preventing HIV transmission requires confirming the mother’s HIV status by testing. If the mother is HIV-positive, we provide her and her infant with anti-retroviral (anti-HIV) medications, and we work with her to avoid transmitting the virus through breast milk. When the mother is dead or incapacitated by illness, GAIA helps ensure the orphan’s survival by providing funds and supplies to help them attend school as well as clothing, nutritional supplements, food, soap, and blankets, which are shown to reduce the chances of contracting pneumonia—an infection that kills vulnerable Malawian children every year.

In a country where the average annual income is $180 and most people work as subsistence farmers, the strain placed on extended family members who care for AIDS orphans is immense. The support GAIA offers helps relatives who desperately want to care for orphaned relatives but lack the means to feed, clothe and educate them. Keeping families intact helps prevent the growth of more orphan-headed households—households shown to be at higher risk for malnutrition, disease and death. We work closely with orphans’ extended family members to ensure that these vulnerable children receive the protection, care and guidance that comes from living with loving adults.

In December, Civic Ventures designated Bill Rankin, GAIA’s president, as one of its 2008 Purpose Prize Fellows. The Prize honored Bill’s innovative approach to the global AIDS epidemic. The Purpose Prize aims to engage millions of retirees over the age of 60, in encore careers, which combine social impact, personal meaning, and continued income in the second half of life - and produce a windfall of human talent to solve society’s most pressing issues.

In November, Ellen Schell, GAIA’s International Programs Director, was inducted as a fellow into the American Academy of Nursing recognizing her leadership in international HIV/AIDS work and her contribution to the nursing profession.

GAIA funds school costs, and provides clothing and nutritional supplements for orphaned children.

In a country where the average annual income is $180, many extended families lack the resources to support orphans.
Bay Area

Three hundred and forty guests attended the Garden Party for GAIA at the Marin County home of Linda and Jon Gruber on April 27, 2008. Over $400,000 was raised through the help of author Anne Lamott and SF Chronicle columnist Jon Carroll. Trustee David Gilmour did an extraordinary job as event committee chairman.

Anne Lamott read from her book *Traveling Mercies* and Jon Carroll emceed a live “fund the need” appeal to support GAIA’s services for children, women, and men affected by AIDS. Nobel Peace Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu was Honorary Chair; Maria Shriver, First Lady of California was Honorary Co-Chair.
Malawian staffer Gertrude Chipungu shared stories from the field including a story of a 13-year old boy caring for his mother who was dying of AIDS-related illnesses. With GAIA’s help, the boy’s mother received HIV testing and counseling, and anti-retroviral medications that saved her life. Her son received financial assistance from GAIA allowing him to purchase a school uniform and supplies as well as tuition, which helped ensure that he was able to attend high school. In Gertrude’s words, when this boy and his mother needed help “GAIA was there.”

**Southern California**

Jane and Ron Olson of Pasadena hosted a Garden Party for GAIA on May 4, 2008. The festive event was attended by over 200 guests, and raised over $300,000 to support GAIA. Archbishop Desmond Tutu was the event’s Honorary Chair. GAIA Trustees Dr. Michael Gottlieb and Lyla White served wonderfully as benefit co-chairs.

Emmy-nominated Actor Rainn Wilson handled emcee duties for the afternoon’s festivities. Rainn currently stars as the neurotic Dwight Schrute in the award-winning series “The Office” on NBC.

Dr. Gottlieb, who as a young doctor at UCLA identified the first AIDS cases in 1981, paid tribute to Dame Elizabeth Taylor for her pioneering work on behalf of those affected by HIV and AIDS. Dame Taylor’s granddaughter, Laela Wilding, accepted an award on her behalf.
## 2008 YEAR-END SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orphan Care</strong></td>
<td>Orphans cared for</td>
<td>5000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orphans assisted with secondary school tuitions</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIV Prevention</strong></td>
<td>People tested for HIV</td>
<td>3078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People reached with prevention messages</td>
<td>20,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth prevention clubs funded</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth served through clubs</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pregnant mothers tested for HIV</td>
<td>572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Based Care</strong></td>
<td>Caregivers trained in home based care</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patients cared for</td>
<td>878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HIV+ children provided nutritional supplementation and/or transport to follow-up clinics</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women’s Empowerment</strong></td>
<td>Women receiving micro loans</td>
<td>990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community income generating projects initiated</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nursing Scholarships</strong></td>
<td>Students supported</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hospitals/Clinics Supported</strong></td>
<td>Number of hospitals and clinics supported</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mobile Clinics in operation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patient visits to Mobile Clinics (Oct.-Dec.)</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HIV &amp; AIDS Training Conferences</strong></td>
<td>Training in community based organization capacity building</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Palliative Care training</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Tots from all programs combined*
INCOME

In 2008, GAIA’s income totaled $2,334,499, and expenses totaled $2,158,503. Funds raised in excess of current year expenditures have been held over in reserved funds for specific future program funding.

EXPENSES
GAIA’s Southern California Resource Group commemorated World AIDS Day, December 1st, 2008, with a celebration of the 70th birthdays of Don and Mary Thomas.

So many have been inspired by Don and Mary’s outreach to those affected by HIV and AIDS in Malawi. They have always been at the core of GAIA’s efforts to raise resources for the work in Malawi, and have done expansive educational outreach on the epidemic. Don and Mary have led Transformational Journeys to Malawi for All Saints Church in Pasadena, hosted informational home gatherings, volunteered for major benefits like Art Out of the Box and Village by Village Garden Parties, and have addressed faith communities across the U.S.

World AIDS Day was a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge their generosity of spirit and resources.

In lieu of birthday gifts, Don and Mary requested that contributions be made to GAIA. Two thousand dollars was raised in their honor. Attendees included GAIA supporters Michael Gottlieb, M.D., Kitty Dillavou, Agnes Grohs, Richard Beatty, Kathleen Dwyer, P.J. Johnson, Joyce Kohl, Peggy Phelps, Dorothy Christ, Phyllis Chambers-Emmons and Janet Cunningham, M.D.
St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church Donates GAIA Malawi Building in Honor of David Miller

David Miller’s decision to retire as rector of St. Matthew’s Parish, Pacific Palisades, in June of 2008 was met with profound feelings of sadness and loss. While we rejoiced at the new life ahead of him, we mourned the end of a fifteen year career in which this devout and spirited man led a complex community of Episcopalians to a place of flourishing spirituality and unprecedented outreach giving. The desire to honor his departure with a substantial symbolic gift to GAIA in his name came naturally and was met with great joy by David and the members of the St. Matthew’s Outreach Commission.

After all, St. Matthews has supported GAIA’s outstanding humanitarian work in Malawi for almost a decade. Our hearts and dollars are firmly staked in the orphanages, education programs, hospitals, and medical care realized throughout the rural regions of a beautiful country full of big-hearted people in desperate need of food and healing. Knowing that GAIA’s good work in saving lives will be expedited by the existence of this much needed headquarters, and that David’s name will shine on the wall of the new building, is deeply meaningful to him and stirs the spirit of giving anew in all of us.

The new headquarters is a lovely one-story building located in the southern region of Malawi near Shire Highlands Hotel, close to CARD offices and a mosque. The building will provide office and kitchen space for GAIA staff, accountant, and receptionist. David and everyone at St. Matthews feels graced knowing this space will be blessed by the daily use of its occupants in service to helping solve the HIV/AIDS crisis in Malawi and greater Africa.

- Michelle Bitting
St. Matthew’s Parishioner

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We wish to thank trustees Gordon Radley and Sharon Youmans, who completed service on the Board in 2008.

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*GAIA currently employs 33 Malawi-based staff*
We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers for their extraordinary support in 2008. Your enthusiasm and passion inspires us as we work together to bring help and hope to the people of Malawi.