

Compassionate Home Orphanage.

The name of the orphanage is Compassionate Home and Sister Rose Ndupu started it in 1997. At this time there was an increase in the number of parents dying of HIV, thus leaving behind children that the society were responsible for. The stigma associated with AIDS leads to extended family members refusing to take in these children. Before AIDS, the extended family members would typically take in orphans and raise them. Yet the advent of HIV has lead people to be afraid of contracting the virus. Also many of these family members do not have the financial capability of treating HIV even on a small scale. As a result, many of these children were left orphans. These children became the primary focus of the new orphanage.

Since she did not have the funds to start the orphanage, Sister Ndupu approached several hospitals and schools, until finding a hospital at Awka-Etiti (Eastern part of Nigeria) that was willing to donate room for the orphanage. She was given the use of two wards, which in reality is just a large open space. The space is divided into two sections, one for infants and the other for the older children.

The Sister brought in the first babies in April of 1997. All of which were abandoned children that had both of their parents die within two Months of each other. None of these children were positive for HIV. When the news went out and many people became aware of it, even more children began to be referred people to the orphanage. Sister. Rose and other lay people she recruited started to raise more money due to the increased need. Within a few months, they started to take in more babies with HIV, which led to creating a new section to protect them and also the other babies. As they grew, they started to face complications with the weak immune systems of these infants due to HIV. Many challenges accompanied the balance between providing these children medical care as well as feeding them.

The orphanage has since been increasing with even more newborns and toddlers admitted regularly. In 2002, they started taking in young girls who are pregnant and want to give their baby up for adoption. In that year, twenty-five girls were kept at the convent and orphanage to live and have their babies.

Today the conditions are still poor at the orphanage. The babies are kept in used cribs donated by different people. Although there are no mattresses, except ones made out of cement bags filled with cloth pieces and sewn up. They are having serious problems feeding the children. There was a day when they absolutely had no food for the girls or the children. By the grace of God, luckily a woman showed up at about twelve noon with a 100lb bag of rice, 100lb a bag of beans 100lbs and money to

buy meat and other things.

While this was a great help, this was only a temporary solution. Unless we who have the capability to give money, food and supplies act, there very well will be days where there is virtually nothing for these children to eat. Money is needed to help them pay for medical care for the babies and the raising of the children. Funds are also need to develop a permanent site for them so that they will get out of the cramped hospital environment. The caregivers are at risk with lack of supplies to care for the children. They need gloves, sheets, mattresses, pillows and personal items for the babies.

As for the older children, with adoption rates declining, money needs to be diverted to schooling to ensure that these children will be able to have successful lives of their own. This is why the African Student Association is asking for any collaboration on any level to help not only with the problems being faced every day, but to also ensure a better future for these kids so that their children won't be dealt the same fate.