

Raising Awareness

Recently, my mother and I have been getting into some of the silliest disagreements. We have fought about what I am wearing, if my room is *really* clean, or why I'm watching so much television. In fact, I have also been bickering with my brothers. After we fight, I really begin to put things into perspective. While I am in a petty disagreement with my mother, some mothers in Africa are dreaming about having my family's lifestyle.

In sub-Saharan Africa, an estimated 28.9 million people live with HIV and AIDS. Many mothers in Africa are so desperate that they humanely euthanize their children, and then commit suicide themselves. If you were about to die of a horrible disease, would you want your child left alone to starve? Most mothers and fathers say no, including these mothers in Africa. While I am in an insignificant fight with my mom, some mothers are making the most important decision of their lives.

Though many mothers choose to go down that path, putting children in an orphanage is also quite common. As African orphanages slowly fill up, help is nowhere to be found. As this heart wrenching epidemic flows thru Africa, the African government will not let missionaries into their

country. Though this makes it much harder to help African residents, we should still try. There has been an assortment of new organizations that have begun to raise funds for African hospitals and orphanages. There have also been individual funds made to support single African countries.

While it may seem impossible to help, I know that one man can make a huge difference. I know of one man, from my church, Shano, who has been working for years to try to make a difference throughout this epidemic. Shano's family is from Zimbabwe, and his sister still lives there. While I bicker with my brothers, Shano is worried about his sister and thinking about her often. Shano's sister has AIDS, and he is on a mission to help. Shano has a dream, to go to Zimbabwe and start an orphanage. Though it will be a long, hard journey to Zimbabwe, I believe that with the faith that Shano has, he can succeed in anything and everything.

When I think of how life might be in Africa, it makes me count my blessings. Though Africa seems millions of miles away we should still care. If more people in this world would be more like Shano, then Africa might not be in such bad shape right now. Everyone should find out more about this raging epidemic. People should try to donate money, talk to people about HIV and AIDS prevention, or do anything that they can think of to help. Let's begin today by changing our way of thinking. We need to be

thankful for our family, our health, and our lifestyle. As we appreciate all of the simple joys of life, we will begin to find ourselves reaching out to help others.