

## Newsletter, September 2008

### *Letter from Dr. Rhoda Nussbaum, PINCC Volunteer, Africa, August 2008*

I had dreamed about going on a PINCC mission with Kay and Pat for two years before finally going to Africa this summer. My experience far exceeded any expectations I brought with me.

Kay and I were residents together in the Kaiser, San Francisco Ob/Gyn residency program THIRTY years ago. I had been volunteering at a small hospital in rural South India for 5 years by the time Kay and I reconnected. In each of my visits in India, I would find more women with advanced cervical cancer. These very poor, uneducated women had no access to medical care that could find the pre-cancers early. These sad and unfortunate women were marginalized from their communities and families, and were left to die alone. This infuriated me – **because cervical cancer is so preventable.**



*Dr. Nussbaum with two nurse specialist trainees in Shirati, Tanzania*

Kay's program, PINCC, is based on World Health Organization research. It uses white vinegar and the trained eye of a nurse or doctor to diagnose pre-cancerous lesions. It then treats women with a portable LEEP or Cryotherapy unit. This makes screening and prevention of cervical cancer **possible in one visit, and for very low cost**, in any environment. Most importantly, the program **trains local health care workers** to do the screening and treatment! PINCC makes a commitment to return to each site every 6 months until the local providers are competent in the program, then donates cryosurgery and LEEP equipment to the site. This means that **the community's women will have access to screening and treatment, even after the PINCC team finishes.**

I saw with my own eyes how this program works, how it trains local doctors and nurses. I've seen how illiterate, poor, subsistence level women in Africa were not afraid to come to our clinics and how much they appreciated our presence and our care. I was humbled by the harshness of the lives of these women. I was astounded by the quality program Kay and Pat have put together and how they have dedicated the last 4 years of their lives to its success.



*Mothers in Kisoro, Uganda, feed their infants while awaiting care at PINCC's training clinic.*

I am now committed to helping make sure PINCC can continue to train health care givers in the neediest places in the world. PINCC will be joining me in bringing their program to South India next summer. This will mark the third continent where the work of PINCC will have enduring impact on the health of women.

I am aware that this program relies so much on the strength, vision and commitment of Kay and Pat. It is now up to each of us to step forward and carry some of the burden. PINCC needs many things to be a sustainable organization. It has the capacity to really grow and truly decrease cervical cancer amongst the poorest women of the world.

But this cannot happen without sufficient funding and a growing community of volunteers.

**Please, get involved** by **becoming a volunteer**, on a mission or in helping the organization become sustainable. **Donate your money, your skills, your experience**. You will be so enriched by your participation.

Sincerely,

Rhoda Nussbaum, MD, OB/GYN

## *Dear Friends and Supporters*

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On this Thanksgiving weekend, as we swing into the holiday season, I've been thinking a great deal about how much we at PINCC have to be grateful for.

Despite the turbulent economic situation and unrest in parts of Africa, we have made two journeys to Africa and two to Central America in 2008. With the help of 23 amazing volunteers, we have worked in 6 countries, trained FIFTY doctors and nurses, examined and treated over 1,600 women, and donated 4 cryotherapy units and 3 LEEP sets to enable graduating clinics to function independently. This means that in our community clinics in Chinandega and El Viejo, Nicaragua; 6 small towns and the marketplaces of San Salvador, El Salvador; and in Kisoro, Uganda, poor women can receive care from local medical people to prevent cervical cancer for years to come. 15 other clinics began the process of learning and applying this cost-effective method, and we are committed to returning to complete their training in 2009.

The word about our work is spreading, and we've received requests for training from clinics and hospitals in 4 new countries, as well as others in those we already serve. Our plan is to expand our program as rapidly as financial constraints will allow. This summer, we will go to our first site in India, near Hyderabad. We hope to add 2 trip administrators to our staff this year, to help bring our volunteers to the many waiting sites. The need for our program is huge, especially in Africa, where most poor women have never had a pelvic exam, or even know what cervical cancer is-- though they all know someone who died of the symptoms when we explain it. They are so elated when they find out that we can prevent this terrible disease, in just one visit.



PINCC is growing, and we reached some major milestones this year: we became an independent 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, added to our Board of Directors, hired a staff person, and received our first major grant for \$30,500 this month! We were also honored by the Founder's Region International Soroptimists Club, who awarded Dr. Kay Taylor their Woman Making A Difference Award for 2008.

**We were able to do all of this work because of all of you,** who have continued to send your

donations to help us get there and provide the training and equipment. There are also many volunteers here at home, who have come to help with packing medication and equipment, hold fundraisers, get out mailings, and so many other tasks required to keep us on the road. I cannot list them all here; but people like Maria Moszkowska, age 85, who comes several times a month to update our patient records; Judith Bloom, who donates her accounting skills; and Renee Enteen, who despite her own disability, gets our mailings out. I am so honored by all of your generosity and faith in our program. Thank you all, many times over.

It will get tougher this year, as more people find themselves in rough financial waters. We put our faith in our new leaders and the American spirit, and continue to work harder. **We are hoping you can continue to support us at whatever level you can afford, and give us a hand by letting your friends know of our work.**

One of the ways you can contribute to PINCC is to use the following sites as your web-search engine. We'll get a donation each time you log on. It works under Google, Mozilla Firefox and others, and costs nothing: log on to:



<http://www.goodsearch.com/Toolbars.aspx>, or [igive.com](http://www.igive.com)

Also, if you shop at Lucky's, we can send you a S.H.A.R.E.S. card; with each purchase, 3% will be donated to PINCC, at no extra cost to you. Sign up below.

We wish you all a joyful holiday season with your loved ones, and hope for better things in the New Year. I always come home from our missions thinking that, as bad as things are here, we are all so fortunate to be born when and where we were. It renews my commitment to helping women who have such difficult lives.

Warm regards,  
Kay Taylor, MD  
Director, PINCC

