



SUCCESS STORY

Celebrating Life's Small Treasures

Blending clinical care and compassion, a USAID-supported hospice relieves children's suffering

Without access to supportive care and treatment, children living with AIDS can suffer physical, emotional, and spiritual distress, as well as life-threatening illnesses. Soweto Hospice in South Africa has engineered one of the country's first units dedicated to providing holistic specialty care to children. Supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the unit exemplifies USAID's commitment to providing quality care at all stages of life.



USAID/South Africa

Kami captures the attention and lifts the spirits of a young child.

With USAID support, children in Soweto Hospice's new pediatric unit receive palliative care services and a visit from Kami, the well-loved HIV-positive Muppet.

Specializing in palliative care, Soweto Hospice supports a holistic, patient-centered, and culturally sensitive approach to care. Services involve not only the patients themselves but also their families and communities. In practice, the hospice integrates two essential components of care. One is the control of symptoms and pain. The other is supportive care, namely, interventions to meet the psychological, social, and spiritual needs of the patient and family.

In filling the needs of its young patients, Soweto Hospice recently hosted a well-loved guest: Kami, the world's first HIV-positive Muppet on the South African version of "Sesame Street." During Kami's visit to Soweto Hospice, children were delighted to spend time with the playful and fun-loving character and received Kami's words of wisdom encouraging them to live with courage and dignity.

Kami's all-important message is being heard. One doctor recalls a 10-year-old who once said with conviction, "Treat me as a person, not a patient." The child also chronicled his life at the hospice, leaving his journal for others to read. For the staff, the journal serves to remind them of their commitment to each and every child entrusted to their care.