



Tanzania: Knowledge and Life Skills Passed on to Students

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6 August 2011

OPINION

One hundred and ten more Arusha Region students are now equipped with health knowledge that can be passed on to peers, friends, and family.

During the 2011 HIV/AIDS, Health, and Life Skills Day Camp that takes place annually in Arusha Region secondary schools, students were equipped with knowledge about HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, nutrition, human rights, and life skills. This year camp was held at Namanga Secondary School in Longido District.

Every June Global Service Corps-Tanzania (GSC-TZ) brings together college-bound Tanzanians and international volunteers to conduct a two-week long workshop that gives students not only knowledge about HIV and reproductive health but also life skills.

Unfortunately not all the students at the host school can attend the day camp, however to ensure that the lessons learned during the camp are carried on to all students, 31 students also attended a peer educator training workshop. This training will help them to start a health club at their school. The health clubs are charged with spreading the knowledge that they learn on to other students and the community.

Camp instructors, including nine Tanzanians and five volunteers from abroad, use interactive games and activities that are appealing to secondary students to teach the lessons.

As one of the main focuses of the camp is teaching life skills like good communication, goal setting, values, avoiding peer pressure, etc. one volunteer class came up with the idea of using Passports to a Good Life. To provide students with a continuous memory of the lessons and what they learned, each student received a passport booklet and then a sticker for each life skill lesson they attended and participated in. In the end, those with completed passports received a reward.

At the end of the camp program volunteer instructor Brian Ogweno encouraged his students to continue working hard in school and in life and to always believe in their abilities. "I also told them that they were all very special and would one day go on to do great things for their community and the world. I'm not sure how often they hear those words, but I hope they never forget them."

In addition to learning about HIV/AIDS and life skills students also learned about combating stigma and discrimination. A guest speaker, and HIV positive man from Arusha, visits the students and talks about what it is like to live with HIV in Tanzania. He provides encouragement that people infected with HIV can continue to live happy and productive lives.

This year marks the camp's 11th anniversary and brings the total number of graduates to over 2,500 and number of schools participating to 32.

Funding for this program is provided by Partners for Development, an international NGO that works with community organizations around the world, in addition to local sponsors. Local sponsors include: African Walking Safari Company, Benson Ltd, Duma Explorer, Setlife Ltd, Golden Rose Hotel, Kase Bookstore, Kikapu Investments, Meat King, Pop Vriend Seed Co, Sunflad Ltd, and VetAgro.