November 29, 2010

Lucienne, a mother of four, welcomed Rebecca into her home with a goal of providing a caring environment. While many organizations in Haiti are working on HIV & AIDS, few focus on the stigma and discrimination faced by children. La Maison L’Arc-en-Ciel (MAEC) is one non-governmental organization leading this fight, and at the helm are community volunteers known as “mother delegates.”

The mother delegates are women living with HIV & AIDS who provide care and support to others living with this illness, including the emotional support needed by those who are experiencing discrimination. During this past year, the mother delegates have been learning new coping skills, thanks to their participation in Management Sciences for Health’s Leadership Development Program (LDP) [1]. Offered by the Leadership, Management and Sustainability Program in Haiti (LMS/Haiti) [2] with the support of USAID, the LDP helps participants face challenges in their everyday life by applying key leadership practices, such as focusing on what can be changed and inspiring others to effect change.

Marie Lucienne Milotèce, a MAEC volunteer for seven years, has been living with HIV & AIDS for 18 years. She understands how it feels to suffer discrimination. In April 2008, Lucienne volunteered to become a foster mother to a teenage girl living with HIV & AIDS who was experiencing this discrimination for the first time. Rebecca, 15, had been rejected by her uncle.
and asked to leave her family home because of her illness.

Lucienne, a mother of four, welcomed Rebecca into her home with a goal of providing a caring environment, emotional support, and adult supervision. However, integrating Rebecca into the family proved to be challenging. At first, she was hostile, disobedient, and cried incessantly. Months into the struggle with her foster daughter, Lucienne began learning, through the LDP, how to focus on tackling challenges. She decided to see if she could apply some of these new leadership skills to improve her relationship at home with Rebecca.

These days, Rebecca has blossomed: she is happier, behaves better, and helps Lucienne as much as she can, including helping her foster mother remember to take her HIV medicines daily.

Lucienne notes that before participating in the LDP, she lacked the determination to address many of her daily difficulties. Today, she says "I have no problems with Rebecca, and I can say that she is a daughter given to me by God."

In addition to MAEC, 10 other non-governmental organizations plus teams from Haiti's Ministry of Public Health and Population have participated in the LMS/Haiti LDP.


Links
[1] javascript:HandleLink('cpe_0_0','CPNEWWIN:NewWindow%5Etop=10,left=10,toolbar=1,location=1,directories=0,status=,menubar=1,scrollbars=1,resizable=1@http://www.msh.org/projects/lms/ProgramsAndTools/LeadingAndManaging/LDP.cfm');
[2] javascript:HandleLink('cpe_0_0','CPNEWWIN:NewWindow%5Etop=10,left=10,toolbar=1,location=1,directories=0,status=,menubar=1,scrollbars=1,resizable=1@http://www.msh.org/projects/lms/WhereWeWork/LAC/Haiti.cfm');