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MOTHERS' LOVE TRAVELS GLOBE

CHARLOTTE GROUP HELPING SOUTH AFRICAN CHILDREN

DAVID PERLMUTT, DPERLMUTT@CHARLOTTEOBSERVER.COM

Her name is Seipati Dlamini. From a photograph by Catherine Anderson of Charlotte, she looks like any American teenager. But she lives **in the** Free State province of South Africa, orphaned by **the** HIV/AIDS epidemic.

There are thousands like her struggling to survive. Little do they know that half a world away a group of Charlotte mothers is trying to help. Forged last year, Mothering Across Continents finds local ways to ease **the** global crisis of AIDS orphans.

Beginning tonight, as a prelude to Mother's Day, **the** group is holding three evenings of events to raise money for programs that will help children like Seipati.

They include several showings of filmmaker Louise Hogarth's film called "**Angels in the Dust**" and discussions with Hogarth and Julia Zingu, South Africa director for Save **the** Children. Mothering has already made an impact.

For Seipati, school is a five-mile walk. But there she's fed a meal. If she doesn't go, there's a chance she won't eat.

"From **the** principals, you hear this a lot: 'A well-fed learner (student) is an educable learner,'" Anderson said.

They're fed through a pilot by **the** Caring Schools program sponsored by Save **the** Children and **the** Nelson Mandela Foundation. Money for **the** \$13,000 pilot has come from Mothering Across Continents.

The group raised \$44,000 last year and hopes to raise \$100,000 **in** 2008.

"**The** problems are big **in** South Africa," said Patricia Shafer, Mothering's co-founder with Lyndall Hare, a fellow Charlottean.

"Our biggest impact to date has been creating an awareness **in** Charlotte of how women and a little money can make amazing changes **in the** world."

Zingu flew **in** to tell Charlotteans what good their money is doing.

Before Caring Schools, **the** South African government fed only elementary school children. Many high school students went hungry, Zingu said.

During meals, she'd witness primary school students pass food through a fence to an older sibling on **the** high school side.

"It was heart-breaking. It was clear that we were only caring for half **the** family," said Zingu, a Capetown native. "Mothering Across Continents made it possible for us to provide for three high schools."

That one meal has more students coming to school, she said. They're focusing. Trouble-makers aren't acting up as much.

Charlotte's generosity, Zingu said, has shown South African orphans that people care. Consequently, she's seen poor South African families become more caring to strangers. "Many families who couldn't afford to share meals did so on Mother's Day last year," she said. "It continued at Christmas."

The pilot will feed students for two years - until each school is self-sustaining, Zingu said. She hopes it will demonstrate **the** need to roll out **the** program to all South African high schools. "One meal is making a huge difference," Zingu said. "Educated children make better choices. They have a chance to break **the** poverty cycle."

Mothering Across Continents

Several events have been planned leading up to Mother's Day.

Tonight, 6 to 8 p.m.: An invitation-only reception of founding mothers. Filmmaker Louise Hogarth will show and discuss her film "**Angels in the Dust**," about how a privileged family opened an orphanage for 500 South African children. Catherine Anderson will also show photos from a March trip to South Africa.

Friday, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.: Public showing of "**Angels in the Dust**" and a discussion with Hogarth. Jubilee Hall: Myers Park United Methodist Church, 1501 Queens Road. Admission is free, but a donation will be appreciated. Any proceeds will be shared by Mothering Across Continents projects and **the** church's Kenya Orphanage Project.

Saturday: 5 to 7 p.m.: Showing of "**Angels in the Dust**" and a discussion with Hogarth. Unity Fellowship Church, 2127 Eastway Drive. Free, but donations appreciated.

COURTESY OF CATHERINE ANDERSON. Seipati Dlamini is a teenager living **in** South Africa who was orphaned by **the** HIV/AIDS epidemic.