

***“And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.” ~ Matthew 14:14***

It was such a scripture as this that inspired Solace ministries to open up a health clinic – a clinic that would serve not only the widows and orphans in the Solace community, but anyone in the area who had a need.



*Solace Clinic at Kabuga*



*Clinic check-in*

While counseling the emotional and spiritual needs of widows and orphans is what Solace was founded on, the ministry has always had a concern for the health of the whole person. With so many women coming in for counseling who had been raped during the genocide – and with the number of AIDS victims in Africa being of epidemic proportion – it soon became clear that caring for the physical health of widows and orphans had to be a priority of Solace as well.

In 2004, Solace had 2 nurses on staff who began taking widows to nearby clinics for HIV testing as well as buying anti-retroviral medicines to treat them. In 2006, thanks to the Care & Treatment Project (CTP) from the UK, Solace had money to set up a laboratory to do on-site testing and treatment, as well as to provide those who were infected with food and basic necessities.

As a long-awaited answer to prayer, Solace now has its very own clinic in Kabuga funded by Drop Inn Ministries. With its grand opening on March 20, 2011, the Solace clinic is already providing an invaluable service to the 20,000 people in the surrounding area (see this issue’s Testimony). The clinic is currently equipped to provide outpatient care, vaccination and disease prevention programs, HIV testing and treatment, family planning, and prenatal consultation. And all of this is provided for just a small fee (200 Rwf/consultation for those who are insured; 625 Rwf for the uninsured).



*Local women receiving care at the clinic*



*Clinic laboratory*

In addition, the goal of the Solace clinic is really to provide a whole program of community health. Clinic staff currently make 4 home visits weekly to serve people living with HIV. There is also a group of community health workers who go house to house two afternoons a week promoting overall health and wellness. They educate members of the community about such issues as personal hygiene, keeping a clean and healthy home, and even economic development with the aim that every family in the area will be able to have health insurance.

With all of these accomplishments to be thankful for, there are still needs that are going unmet and areas for expansion. First of all, there is no doctor on staff. Fortunately, there is a doctor in Kigali who can be called and who is offering his service free of charge. However, there is much that the clinic is not able to do without a full-time doctor on staff. Second, there is currently not adequate space or infrastructure for VCT (voluntary counseling and testing) or PMTCT (prevention of mother to child transmission) for HIV patients. Third, Solace would like to expand the clinic to be able to admit patients who need overnight care/longer stays. Finally, Solace has a vision to build a maternity where babies can be delivered and the newborns and mothers can receive care.

Jesus lived a life of compassion and sought to care for all who were in need – widows, orphans, and those who were sick the greatest among them. The ministry of Jesus is the model for the ministry of Solace. The clinic at Kabuga is one more tool that helps to fulfill that ministry. We pray that God will continue to grow the ministry that has been started there.

### **Clinic Testimony**

The woman pictured here shared her story of how much the Solace Clinic at Kabuga means to her.

She stated that she used to have to walk long distances to receive any medical care. And the walk was dangerous for her, having to travel through bushes while using her cane. Once she finally arrived, she would be made to wait for many hours. Often she would wait all day and be sent home without receiving any care. Patients who needed more care than could be provided would have to walk to a clinic even farther away, wait to be seen again, and finally pay for a transfer to the district hospital which is very expensive.

Now the Solace Clinic at Kabuga is much closer and easier for her to get to. It is clean and comfortable, and she doesn't have to wait long to be seen. She is very thankful for the Solace Clinic.

