

Dear Friends and Family:

You probably know about the AIDS pandemic ravaging Africa. But did you know these staggering statistics? In 2007, AIDS claimed the lives of **3 million** people, including **570,000 children**. In sub-Saharan Africa 74 children die every hour and a half. That would be equivalent to ALL the kids in our church dying during one worship service on a Sunday morning. There are over 12 million AIDS orphans in sub-Saharan Africa. In South Africa alone, there are over **1.2 million kids who are orphans** due to AIDS. That would be like having ALL the kids in Minnesota living without any parents.

You probably know about the AIDS pandemic ravaging Africa. But did you know that you can do something about it? I am part of a fundraising movement called “join the Race.” The “race” refers metaphorically to the race to save lives, but also to Ironman South Africa which our friend Mike Pluimer plans to race in April 2009 to raise money and awareness for CRWRC’s Embrace AIDS campaign. Completing an Ironman is certainly a challenge: a 2.4 mile swim, a 112 mile bike and a 26.2 mile run. I have also committed to completing these distances...only I have a year to do it! We are called iJoiners and in addition to committing to exercise, we have also each committed to raise at least \$500 for Embrace AIDS and to recruit at least one iJoiner.

I am writing today to ask you to consider sending a gift to CRWRC or becoming an iJoiner! You can do either of these easily on the Join the Race website found at www.jointherace.org. (And even if you can’t do either of these options right now, I encourage you to check out the website -- it will tell you more about what we’re up to!) If you choose to send a donation or to become an iJoiner, please indicate on your form that you are sponsoring me or that I recruited you—that way all the statistics stay up-to-date. If you become an iJoiner you can keep an on-line exercise log, chat on the blog, email training questions to Mike, and keep track of his exercise regimen. You can also follow my progress toward this Ironman goal!

You probably know about the AIDS pandemic ravaging Africa. Today is your chance to do something about it and join the Race! Please also keep all of us and the people of Africa in your prayers.