



AGTS Student Kim Rozell comforts a South African baby orphaned by AIDS.

AGTS GOES ON AIDS SAFARI IN SOUTH AFRICA

Three AGTS students witness the plight of South Africans afflicted by the devastating AIDS pandemic.

In June 2005, Dr. Johan Mostert, AGTS counseling professor, led three AGTS students back to his native South Africa on what has been called an "AIDS Safari." The two-week excursion allowed Nate Conrad, Eileen Deaver and Kim Rozell to visit local churches involved in the fight

against AIDS, accompany a home-based care volunteer as she made her rounds and work in an AIDS hospice for babies who have been abandoned by dying parents. At the hospice, babies are tested for AIDS, a 12-month process. If the results are negative, they are put up for adoption.

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In the wall surrounding one of the AIDS hospice centers is a horizontal door that covers an opening into the courtyard behind.

The instructions on the poster to the right of the door read: "Is there life after birth? Mothers-to-be in crisis, place your newborn baby in the 'Door of Hope' anytime, day or night. We will care for your baby." Images at the bottom tell a mother not to put the baby in a trash can, but to cut and tie the umbilical cord and put the baby behind the door.



"Her name was Lizzy and she was six weeks old," remembers Kim Rozell. "She was the youngest infant at the hospice and she has an amazing story. She had been found abandoned in a black duffle bag when she was four days old. No one knew where she came from or how long she had been there, but she was still wearing her hospital bracelet.

She captured my heart! I still think about her and wonder if they have found a family for her."



This Swedish mother holds her adopted South African child.

"The particular hospice I was helping at was adopting out one of the babies the day we visited," said Kim, "so I had the rare opportunity of being able to watch an adoption. It was incredible to see the look on the new mother's face as she held the baby in her arms."



“We visited AIDS patients with a community outreach worker” begins Kim.

“One patient, Leah, was in the final stages of battling with AIDS. When we walked into the house, she was lying on the dining room floor in front of a window. She was thin and visibly weak. She did not have enough energy to carry on a long conversation, but before we left, we prayed with her.”



This destitute mother of five, holding her grandchild, is dying of AIDS. She wishes to finish building her home before the rainy season begins. While the meager contents of her home wait outside, her teenage sons are hard at work.

With no income to purchase cement, they make their own clay bricks and use only one nail in the supporting beam joints. Unfortunately, the first heavy rains may undo all of their work.



Nate Conrad, Eileen Deaver and Dr. Mostert enjoy lunch.

Eileen expresses how the trip has affected her. “Most every day now I wear a beaded red ribbon so when people ask about it I can tell them about the AIDS problem down here. One in four people in South Africa is infected with HIV. In other African countries, every other person is infected. A million children are growing up without their parents and one in five 15-year-olds will not live to see another year.”