

Ntsoaki

My name is Ntsoaki. I am a girl of 16-years.

I live in the district of Leribe. I am a double orphan. My mother passed away in January 2006 and my father passed away in November 2004.

I live with my grandmother. We are eleven living in the house. My grandmother had two daughters and two sons. My mother was one of her daughters. All four of her children have died and so she must look after all of us. There is no one left.

I know that she is very old and I worry that she is too tired and that she will get sick like everyone else. If she dies then there will be no-one to care for us. I am the eldest girl and so I would have to look after all the smaller children. My grandmother says that I should not worry about these things but that I should focus on my studies. She says that I am a smart girl and I should try and attend university.

I am a student at Molapo High School and I am in Grade 9. I am able to attend high school because I received a sponsorship through the Help Lesotho Child Sponsorship Program. I have a Canadian sponsor who pays my school fees and buys my books and school uniform. Her name is 'M'e Susan and she writes me letters every month. I also write letters to her. She is very nice and she recently sent me a photo of her family. She has a daughter and a son and a husband named Bob. Susan is my friend and I love her very much. I can tell her all the things that I think about. Her mother also died in 2006 so she understands that I miss my mother. I keep the letters she sends me in a special place. I read them over and over again when I feel sad and alone.

I know that I have a future and that my dream of finishing high school can come true.

Last month I joined the Help Lesotho HIV/AIDS club at my school. We meet each month to talk about HIV/AIDS. There are many people in my village who have HIV/AIDS and I know many people who have died. I used to be scared that I would get HIV/AIDS but in one of the club meeting they explained how the virus is transmitted and so now I know how to protect myself. I know that sex is the number one way that students my age get HIV. Many boys and girls in my school have sex. They don't always use condoms and I know they are putting themselves at risk. When I have a boyfriend I am going to make sure we talk about sex and HIV/AIDS. If I decide to have sex then we will use a condom every time.