

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This end-of-the-year letter has traditionally been a time for us to reflect back on the past year and share **mothers2mothers'** triumphs and challenges. With so much of our world in upheaval, it seems more important than ever to look where we can to find hope and optimism. So, inspired by the courage and positive outlook of the extraordinary mothers of **m2m**, we welcome the opportunity to celebrate their achievements and as part of our extended family, we hope you'll join us as we recapture a few of the highlights of 2008.

- In this one year alone, **m2m** expanded from South Africa and Lesotho into **five new countries** - Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, Swaziland, and Malawi, adding 158 new international sites.
- In South Africa we grew from **118 sites to 304**.
- By year's end we had a total of **462 sites across Africa**.
- We **employ almost 1300 women** living with HIV/AIDS.
- And we **had more than one million client encounters in 2008!**

And breaking news that we are delighted to share

- Yesterday our Medical Director, Dr. Mitch Besser, was presented with the **Presidential Citizens Medal**, one of the highest honors the President can confer upon a civilian, second only to the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Mitch was given the Award by President Bush in the Oval Office, and it is an honor to be shared with everyone associated with **mothers2mothers**.

Yet nothing is more important to us than our ability to increase the number of families we serve while strengthening the quality of our programs. In 2008, we were able to refine our training materials to meet the needs of mothers in areas as diverse as rural Rwanda to urban South Africa. We began to work with new partners who successfully delivered **mothers2mothers** services with our guidance and support. And we were embraced by new donors, like the Elton John AIDS Foundation and UNICEF.

In an effort to improve the program even as we expand it, 2008 was a year that saw the launch of new projects that we expect to have long-term impact on both **mothers2mothers** and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV programs in Africa.

- Reinforcing our commitment to improving delivery and follow up on PMTCT efforts, we launched the **m2m Innovation Center**, giving us the capacity to explore, refine and evaluate new program elements before introducing them in existing programs.
- An **expanded curriculum** was developed to incorporate more in-depth segments of critical importance to our clients, including a greater emphasis on reproductive health and family planning.
- In places where male partners are a key element of the PMTCT process, **m2m** has begun offering education and support groups for **partners and couples**

**m2m's** entrepreneurial spirit was never more evident than it was this year. Working with a variety of wonderful partner organizations and a multi-national staff in seven countries, we have found it more important than ever to maintain our vision with clarity and diligence. To that end, we recently completed a comprehensive **strategic plan** that transforms our dreams for the future into a concrete map to achieve them. And our concern for the health of our program includes taking care of the health of our employees, and we are proud to have found a way to provide medical insurance for all of our full-time South African staff, including our HIV+ site coordinators. This is a project that we hope to extend to all of our program staff

whenever possible.

We are very fortunate to have enjoyed great goodwill from so many in the past year. Looking forward to the coming year, we recognize that times will be difficult for many – war, economic instability, and unemployment are just a few of the issues that occupy our minds and hearts. Yet in a broad sense, these are a way of life for most of **m2m**'s mothers. Anyone who has ever experienced the joy of giving knows that even as we experience hardships, by reaching out to others we help ourselves.

Last week outgoing UNAIDS Executive Director Peter Piot said, "The prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV is not only effective, but also a human right." Countless thousands of mothers, no different from our mothers and sisters, live with the fear of giving birth to a child with HIV and of leaving that child orphaned. We at **mothers2mothers** strive to overcome the challenges that face us, both because so many mothers depend on us, and because our donors continue to put their faith in us. And for that we are enormously grateful.

As we head into the holidays, we wish all of you the joys of family, peace and prosperity. And we hope you may want to share some of that good fortune with the remarkable and brave women of **mothers2mothers**. You can go to [www.m2m.org](http://www.m2m.org) and give in honor of your mother, of a new mother in your life, of a healthy child, or just because you are thankful for all the blessings you enjoy.

With all of our warmest wishes for a wonderful 2009 and our gratitude for being part of our lives in 2008!

**Dr. Mitch Besser**  
Founder/  
Medical Director

**Robin Allison Smalley**  
Co-founder/  
International Director

**Gene Falk**  
Co-founder/  
Executive Director