

Blessings Can Help



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By Lori Jordahl

“There was domestic violence in my house this morning!”

You could hear the gasps....

“The baby almost died and would have, if I hadn’t been there!”

Now, you could hear a pin drop....

The crowd of over 100 participants in a workshop on AIDS and Women were leaning forward to hear the next words...

“So if you hear a cheep, cheep, it’s my baby parakeet, I got him just in time.”

Sighs reverberated around the room.

I used this real time experience to lead my talk on the importance of prevention, communication and seeking assistance. It was after all the early ‘90’s and AIDS Prevention was still a fairly new topic, especially when it came to women. If only we paid attention and really took action then. Now, years later, women are still too afraid, unsure, unbelieving or have not learned that they are important and can help make a difference.

After the workshop, which included some emotional disclosures from participants, insightful questions and well wishes for the baby parakeet, I did what every good mother would do. I went into the ladies room to get hot water, mix the formula and feed the baby.

The parakeets in my nest hatched out of their shells at different intervals. This little guy, the last born, with hardly a feather was being pecked to death by siblings trying to get more of the food. I had to save him that morning, it couldn’t wait!

So, in the ladies room while I was putting droplets of food down his beak, a group of Ministers approached me from the Balm In Gilead*. They had been in my workshop and

were not only moved by my story but how I incorporated it into AIDS Prevention messages. *I had tears in my eyes as they circled around me and blessed us.*

That was the first 2 blessings that came from this bird. But there was more to come. My friend and colleague, Ellen, was so moved by this experience and a chance to hold the baby that she asked me if I had any hand raised babies that she could have. With a smile in my heart, I told her I would be delighted to give her one and did so the very next day. Her friends and staff hearing that she was getting a pet all chided me for entertaining her with this craziness.

Ellen and “Buddy” were my third blessing. She opened her heart and home, spoiling this parakeet for many years. They made my family smile every time we received pictures and cards for Buddy’s birth family.

Speed ahead more than 10 years... I am presenting a poster session at the same National Conference. Two ladies approached me with comforting eyes and large smiles. They told me I probably wouldn’t remember them, but I had made a difference and they hoped that I was still raising parakeets.

These 2 Ministers reminded me, that blessings no matter how big or small, are still blessings. My work in Public Health is a Blessing. I make a difference!

p.s. Don’t you know that when I left the conference that afternoon, I made a stop...and arrived home with 4 new little parakeets!

Reference: **The Balm In Gilead, Inc.TM is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization whose mission is to improve the health status of people of the African Diaspora by building the capacity of faith communities to address life-threatening diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.*

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