

Hand in Hand newsletter

STORIES FROM YOUR MISSIONARIES WINTER 2012



TANZANIA

LEFT: Barbara Robertson
RIGHT: Barbara discusses
AIDS prevention with
young men in Tanzania.



AIDS prevention in Tanzania

In Tanzania, the incidence of HIV and AIDS is a serious health problem. ELCA missionary Barbara Robertson is on a mission to fight that problem through education and testing. Calling herself “a department of one,” she is the HIV and AIDS program officer for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania’s diocese headquarters in Morogoro.

In the first years of her work, the focus was on educating women, as they are the most infected and affected by HIV and AIDS, she says. People needed to know how you become infected and how to care for those who are sick. In recent years her work has shifted to

include young adults. She emphasizes getting tested and knowing if you are infected.

With the support of ELCA members, Barbara has been able to see progress in the effort to prevent AIDS. Many people are now much more willing to be tested for the virus. “Far more people know their HIV status now than even five years ago,” she says, adding that in a country in which there is significant discrimination and stigma attached to HIV and AIDS, this is real progress.

“It has been very rewarding work,” Barbara says.