

# HIGH FIVE CLUB

changing lives, £5 at a time

## Maternal and Child Health Care, Liberia

### Background to the area and it's people:

Liberia's three and a half million people rank amongst the world's poorest and the after effects of the country's second civil war are still very much in evidence. Currently, this West African nation is witnessing an onslaught of violent crime including the rape of women and children. Drug abuse is also on the rise, especially among ex-combatants who used marijuana and amphetamines to embolden themselves before fighting. As with many impoverished African countries, HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria are major killers. Sanitation is poor – only one in 25 Liberians has access to a toilet - and the number of women dying during childbirth has nearly doubled in the past 20 years.

### High Five Club support:

The **IMANI House Clinic** is located in the semi rural area of Brewerville, 6 miles from Monrovia the capital city of Liberia. After just 9 years of operation, Imani House has become an integral part of the Liberian Health care system and is widely recognised within the country as one of the shining stars of Liberia.



The clinic, opened originally to serve thousands of refugees left stranded in the area by the devastating civil war, works closely with the country's Ministry of Health and local community leaders. Imani House offers full family health care services, with a special pediatrics program, a short-stay in patient facility, family planning and emergency deliveries. In addition, it offers dental care, child immunization, laboratory screening services, and education in first aid, nutrition, basic health care, disease prevention and the training of local midwives. In the last 8 months alone the Imani House Clinic has served 9,837 people. The majority of these being women and children, many the victims of sexual violence.

The clinic was established by Bisi Ideraabdullah, a Liberian woman, in response to a lack of local services to meet the emergency health needs of over 10,000 internally displaced Liberians who had fled from fighting in their rural areas. The clinic hence began its life in a tent donated by the United Nations.

**The High Five Club is a not for profit voluntary organisation**

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try sleeping with a mosquito." Anita Roddick**

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The clinic has slowly expanded its reach over time and is now open five days a week from 8 am –



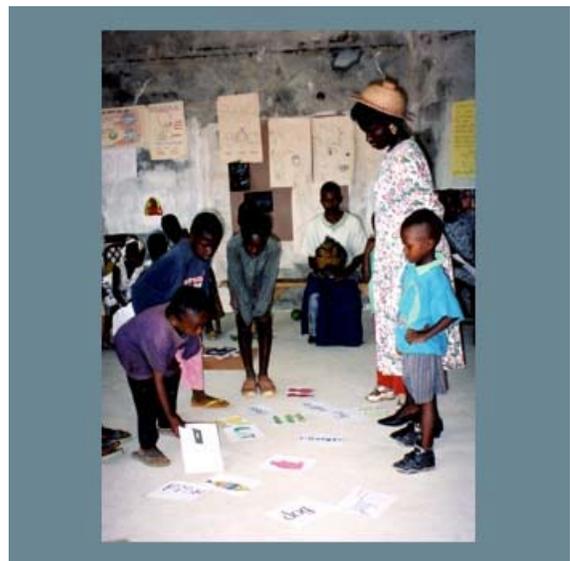
4pm and is staffed by capable and qualified Liberians. The head nurse is an RN with over 25 years of experience; the certified midwife holds a certificate in midwifery with over 22 years experience; the lab technician has extensive experience and worked for the JFK hospital before the war. They also often have visiting doctors from Europe and the US who work to upgrade staff skills.

This clinic is the only clinic in the area and over the years has saved the lives of thousands of people who come from near and far, walking if necessary,

to receive treatment there because of the quality of service and the medicines that they are able to provide.

Along with this free clinic service Imani House runs adult literacy classes, an agriculture program and tailoring training allowing local women to develop a livelihood. Bisi and Imani House have won many awards and commendations for their community work in Liberia including Proliteracy's Family Literacy Award of Excellence, The Presidential Daily Points of Light Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service and The Union Square Award for Outstanding Community Programming.

**This month High Five Club members have donated £350 to the clinic in support of its expansion so it can extend its reach even further and help many more people in this impoverished community.**



Our support means that the clinic has at last reached its target of \$5,000, the funds needed to add three much needed rooms to the clinic and carry out renovation work. These collective funds will enable the clinic to purchase 2,000 dirt bricks; 98 bags of cement for the bricklaying, wall plastering, and floor installation; 12 steel rods for pillars; rough sand for brick laying and smooth sand for plastering; two wheel barrows; roofing materials; 15 windows; 15 gallons of paint; whitewash; assorted other building necessities; and a significant portion of the transportation and labour costs.

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Adding these three rooms to the clinic and renovating it will mean:

- Additional rooms for screening, laboratory analysis, and treatment will be available. This additional space will be used for various health service activities, including child immunization, health talks and education, and other treatments.
- The ability to accept and serve more patients.
- A full building with windows, lights and a good roof. Last year during the rainy season, the roof on the original clinic blew off twice.
- Secure storage space for their medicines and equipment.
- A generator so the laboratory technician can use a modern microscope for analysis.
- The possibility of extending the clinic into evening hours.

The time-scale for completion of these works is between October and December of this year.

Bisi Ideraabdullah emailed us at the High Five Club to say: "Thank you so much for considering this project a worthy one. Because we are small it is often difficult to acquire the kind of funding that would help us do the work of expanding or in some cases keeping up with the high demand for good health treatment at our clinic in Liberia."



For more information on Imani House visit [www.imanihouse.org](http://www.imanihouse.org) or contact High Five Club Co-Founder Dr Cheryl Mvula at [cdmvula@aol.com](mailto:cdmvula@aol.com)

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