



NEWS RELEASE

July 6, 2007

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Student's research sparks passion for cause

When Natasha Andersen—a Masters student at the University of Toronto left Kenya two months ago, she made her goodbyes to friends and co-workers, thinking she'd never be back.

Andersen, 26, is originally from Vancouver, where she received a degree in biology from the University of British Columbia.

Now she is retuning to work with HelpAge Kenya as a program officer, she will be monitoring the impact of activities implemented by the organization to alleviate poverty facing older caregivers of orphaned children and other destitute elderly.

Andersen will be working in Ahero and will be assisting our Adopt-A-Gran program in that country by visiting with the Grans and providing updates and pictures so that their Canadian sponsors can get to know them.

When Andersen was in Nakuru, she researched households affected by AIDS for her Masters thesis in medical anthropology. What she found was a large portion of the people affected were older and were caring for their grandchildren.

“These people have worked their whole lives and someone should have been taking care of them,” said Andersen.

When Andersen looked over her findings, she was surprised to see that many of the existing HIV/AIDS programs tended to focus solely on children. When she saw the chance to help with some of the grandmothers she jumped at it.

“All their adult children had died from AIDS but these older people tend to get left out,” said Andersen.

For more information, contact Help the Aged (Canada) at: 1300 Carling Ave, Suite 205, Ottawa, ON K1Z 7L2 (613) 232-0727 or 1-800-648-1111 www.helptheaged.ca