

## Highlighting Mopani PTLP, Francinah Chauke

By *moderator*

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Dear Moses

(TAC Mopani PTL Coordinator)

I am just writing to inform you about how wonderful Francinah Chauke is and how very much she has assisted our staff at Leeways Agri-Biotech (Pty) Ltd.

As you know, Francinah visits us regularly around once per month to give our staff informative talks about HIV and AIDS, for which we are most grateful. You may not be aware, however, that Francinah also assists us in many other ways. I would like to tell you about the following:

On 5th May, Francinah brought us a group of people from Hope Humana. They came with four tents which they pitched on the ground outside our laboratory. They were able to do voluntary testing and counseling on 29 of our staff members on that day. This was a big step forward for us because we had more VCT's done on this day than ever before.

On 25th May, Francinah came to visit us in order to remind those who had attended the Hope Humana VCT session to make good use of the information they were given as a result of their tests. Historically, our staff have been reluctant to go for treatment if they are found to be HIV positive. Francinah is constantly reminding them of the absolute necessity of doing so. I know that some of these people have now been to the clinic and that they are now receiving treatment.

On 7 July, Francinah again visited us with the Hope Humana people. This time they did VCT on 17 people. We have a total of 40 staff members here, and we now feel almost certain that everyone either knew their status before, or they have now been informed of their status. This is remarkable ? and it is all thanks to Francinah.

On the personal level, we also have Francinah to thank for her help. She has freely given out her cell phone number and I know that several staff members have contacted her, day and night, for assistance with problems. She has also freely given of her time to come into Tzaneen to assist staff members who are afraid to go to the clinic alone. I know of some of these people, but I am sure there are others who prefer to remain anonymous.

One amazing story relates to one of our employees who has recently passed away. This poor young woman was aware of her positive status for some time, but decided to ignore it. When we realized that she was becoming ill, we tried to counsel her and arranged for Francinah to meet her at the clinic. Her family was not helpful at all, so Francinah took this young woman into her own home and cared for her for several days ? during which time she began to put on weight and to improve. Sadly, she could not stay with Francinah because she needed to be with her family. However, Francinah went to visit her regularly and reported to us on her progress. All was going quite well until the last visit, when she had deteriorated so badly that she had to be hospitalized and finally passed away because of pneumonia. It is thanks to Francinah and her dedication to people that this young woman had someone to support her with love and friendship during the last weeks of her life ? even though that person was not of her own family.

I would like you to know that Francinah is a remarkable woman. We owe her so many thanks for her unending support of so many of our staff. She is so confident and so competent that she has a really strong influence on all who come into contact with her. I believe she has saved many lives right here at Leeways, and we all thank her ? and the TAC for enabling her to do what she does so well ? from the bottom of our hearts.

Yours sincerely,

Sally van Aardt  
LABORATORY MANAGER  
n/a

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