Joan’s latest post- February 8, 2013: Two more amazing days in Uganda, Part 2.

Today, we spent most of the day at a community outreach event in a church on a hillside. Hundreds of people showed up. The Village Health Team started by doing a skit that poked fun at Americans with their sunglasses, pick bags, and constantly taking photos! They nailed us - very funny. The local political leaders came to greet us and the crowd. Then "stations" were created throughout the church, including blood pressure, HIV testing, immunizations, weights for children and more. They opened a station for anyone with a problem, and I watched as Dean Xerras, Raquel Reyes and MGH med/peds resident Rebecca Cook were swarmed with patients. Most were routine complaints, although a few suspected cases of malaria and TB were identified. The most striking part of this visit were the children. Most had never seen muzungu - white people - and were utterly fascinated. They surrounded us and, unlike unruly American children - were serious and quiet and just stared with their big eyes. By the time we left, at least 50 surrounded our car and Sarah let them touch her skin and she swirled her long blonde hair and they shrieked with delight.

Then we were whisked down the hill where the village women's group was waiting for us. We met in the home of the chairperson - mud house, no electricity, no running water. They work on domestic violence, a cooperative business and improving cooking for women. They read us their annual report in perfect English with their accomplishments and challenges. It was so impressive. They asked for our feedback on some of their work which was daunting. As we drove away - after the closing prayer - I was yet again struck that so much more unites our experience than divides us as human beings on this planet.