



YEAR-LONG CHRONICLE OF A TEENAGER'S LIFE WITH AIDS

**Thembi's AIDS Diary**  
**A Year in the Life of a South African Teenager**

A Half-Hour Documentary on NPR's *All Things Considered* – Wednesday, April 19th, 2006

No country in the world has been harder hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic than South Africa. More than five million South Africans are living with HIV. Thembi is one of them.

Thembi Ngubane is 19 and lives in the township of Khayelitsha. For the past year she has been carrying around a tape recorder and recording an audio diary of her struggle to live with AIDS. With poetic insight and humor, Thembi has been capturing the small moments that help tell a larger story: telling her father that she has AIDS; a visit to the township clinic to apply for life-saving drugs; being ostracized by neighbors and friends as they slowly learn her status; a moment of quiet, late-night dancing at home with her boyfriend.

"I feel like if a person is listening to my story, that person is with me everyday. Every time she hears the dog bark, it's like she is waking up in my yard. I've taken that person to South Africa, into my shack, into my township, into my everyday routine."

– Thembi

More than five million South Africans are HIV positive. Young women are the hardest hit: three quarters of all new infections in South Africa are among girls between 16-25. **Thembi's AIDS Diary** will provide an intimate portrait of the AIDS epidemic in Africa, uncovering the humanity buried under a mountain of statistics.

"I had become somewhat numb to media coverage of AIDS," says producer *Joe Richman*. "But when I met Thembi I was immediately struck with her charisma, her offbeat take on the disease, and her honesty. She makes the AIDS pandemic very real and human. It's a story that will resonate with everyone who listens."

"AIDS is not going to bring me down. it's only something that is inside my blood. Outside I'll be the boss."

– Thembi

Over the course of one year, Thembi recorded more than 50 hours of tape for her audio diary. These tapes were then edited into the final half-hour documentary by producer Joe Richman of Radio Diaries. For more than 10 years, Radio Diaries Productions has been creating ground-breaking, first-person documentaries for NPR. Past award-winning projects include "Teenage Diaries," "Prison Diaries," "My So-Called Lungs," and "Mandela: An Audio History," which won the 2005 duPont-Columbia University Award, the broadcast equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize.

**Thembi's AIDS Diary** will be broadcast April 19th on NPR's *All Things Considered*, which attracts a weekly audience of 11.4 million people on 629 public radio stations across the country. To find local stations and broadcast times visit [www.NPR.org](http://www.NPR.org).

Extending the reach of the NPR broadcast, Thembi will be traveling from South Africa for a five-city U.S. tour, telling her story to high schools, colleges, to members of the U.S. Congress, UNICEF/UNAIDS, and at public events in each city. The tour includes New York (April 14-23), DC (April 24-25), Boston (April 26-28), LA (April 30-May 3), and Chicago (May 4-5).

Audio clips, photos, background information, tour itinerary, and The AIDS Action Toolkit can be found at The AIDS Diary Project website: [www.radiodiaries.org/aidsdiary](http://www.radiodiaries.org/aidsdiary)

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