

News on Nyumbani



The first facility for HIV
positive orphans in Kenya.

www.nyumbani.org

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Third Quarter 2006

Nyumbani Annual Benefit

Tuesday, Sept. 26

Renaissance Washington
Hotel
999 9th St., NW
Washington, D.C.

6 p.m. Reception;
7 p.m. Dinner; 8 p.m. Program

Featuring Cabaret Singer
Steve Ross and Mistress of
Ceremonies Kathleen
Matthews, ABC News
Anchor in Washington, D.C.

Dear Friends of Nyumbani:

Who could have foreseen that today we'd have 40 teenagers living at the orphanage? We certainly could not have predicted this remarkable development 14 years ago, when most of the children that came to us succumbed to the ravages of HIV-AIDS. Of the first three HIV+ children who arrived on our doorsteps in 1992, only one has survived the entire time – Edwin, who is now in high school and is a very likeable young fellow. However, antiretroviral drugs combined with the generosity of people around the world mean all our children have a fighting chance to grow up and flourish.

While this situation is a truly remarkable miracle, it also presents challenges. Teens and young adults need a certain amount of elbow room to learn how to be independent – they

Special Announcement

As we go to press, we have been informed that Father D'Ag will be announcing his retirement from the day-to-day details of the Nyumbani programs.

Father D'Ag's new title will be: Founder and Director Emeritus.

This status will allow him to continue his far-reaching public relations and fundraising efforts for Nyumbani.

Because of this development, the Benefit Dinner on September 26 takes on a new meaning. For all those who have followed Father D'Ag and the development of the Nyumbani programs, this is a wonderful opportunity to attend and applaud his achievements.

More information on the changes will be found in our December newsletter.

Looking for Paradise? Bid on a Villa

If you've ever dreamed of having your own villa near a quaint fishing village in a tropical paradise, you can fulfill your dream while helping Nyumbani's causes by participating in the Silent Auction at this year's Nyumbani Annual Benefit.

Lookout Cove Village and Cottage near Montego Bay, Jamaica, are up for auction. The villa is a luxurious oceanfront structure with private lagoons, tropical gardens and unspoiled beaches that sleeps 6. The cottage sleeps 4 and is cliff side near the villa in its own secluded location.

Lookout Cove itself is 3½ acres of tropical splendor next to the sea. The cove, the villa and the cottage are located just 10 miles from the famous town of Negril, but offer complete privacy, comfort and a staff dedicated to cooking and caring for the occupants. (See www.lookoutcove.com for more information).

And Lookout Cove is only one of the many items people have generously donated. You can also bid on: signed copies of books by Senators Barack O'Bama, Orrin Hatch, and Ted Kennedy and political commentator William J. Bennett; limited edition prints by watercolor artist Robert E. Kennedy; gourmet Italian dinners at Primi Piatti and Sesto Senso; overnight stay at DC's Renaissance Hotel; Cristophe Salon beauty treatments; sweatshirt autographed by basketball star Roy Hibbert; original hand-stitched quilt by Marsha Gratton; original watercolor by Mary Ellen D'Agostino; carved leather map by African artist Don Rawzi; hand-crafted miniature sailboat by woodworker Henry Black; and a number of other donated goods.

need to learn to do their own cooking, laundry, cleaning and to develop a sense of pride in their living quarters.

Thanks to the generosity of our Irish friends, the Irish government and the persuasive appeal of Sister Mary Owens, we have

(Continued on last page)



In Memory of a Husband/Father

Nyumbani supporters found a way to say goodbye to a friend while raising funds for Nyumbani on August 28 when they held the Anthony Alberico Memorial Golf Tournament at Penderbook Golf Club in Fairfax, VA.

The event, which was planned by Brian and Mary Keegan, honored the memory of Anthony, who was stricken down at a young age, leaving two small children and his wife Laura behind.

The Albericos were married by Father D'Ag in 1997 and planned to one day travel to Kenya with their children Mikayla (6) and Tyler (4), but wanted to wait until they were older. Anthony died unexpectedly late last year from a heart ailment.

"Anthony had such respect for Father D'Ag and what he created with Nyumbani," Laura Alberico says. "I will honor this dream one day and take my children," she vows.

Meanwhile, the tournament "was a perfect fit," adds Brian Keegan. "Anthony's spirit of caring for and helping others is the embodiment of the work at Nyumbani," he adds.

Much of the money raised was through sponsorships, as well as entry fees for the tournament. More on the success of the tournament in the next *News on Nyumbani*.

In the mean time "A special thank you to our dear friends Mary and Brian Keegan and everyone else who helped with the tournament," Laura Alberico says.



Stanley Waringo's Dream Takes Him Cross Country

By Genilee Swope Parente, Editor, News on Nyumbani

Many of the people who have found a way to help Nyumbani and its causes have done so through a passion they hold. Such is the case with Stanley Waringo, who combined a lifetime dream of cycling across the U.S. with a fund- and awareness-raising drive for Nyumbani.

"I always wanted to ride my bike across this country I have adopted, but I wanted it to be for a cause. I thought this was a good way to raise funds, and to bring Nyumbani's efforts to the attention of other people," he says.

Waringo was born in Nairobi, but came to the United States 12 years ago to pursue his education. He learned of Nyumbani through a college friend, the sister of Christof Putzel, the young man who traveled to Kenya several years ago to make his award-winning documentary "Left Behind." Stanley's two brothers who remain in Nairobi also had heard of Nyumbani.

Although Stanley got to see some spectacular scenery and experience the ambience of many smaller towns during his trek across nine southern states, the trip he chose was hardly a leisurely sightseeing expedition. Stan made arrangements through America by Bicycle to join a group of cyclists who would make the 2,900-mile trip in just 27 days – averaging 115 miles per day with only two days of rest.

"It was an incredible experience. I was the youngest in the group at 31 and ages went up to 65. The riders were from all over the world including Norway, Germany, the UK and the USA," he says

Before the April 24 to May 20 trip, Stanley spent more than four months training, cycling 70 to 120 miles per day to build up his stamina. He made the trip when he did because he quit his job late last year and decided to fulfill his dream before going on to pursue a graduate degree.

And even though he had trained and has been a bicycling enthusiast ("I think my family and friends might say 'obsessive cyclist'"), there were surprises along the way.

"One of the lessons an experience like this

teaches you is a broader perspective. Some days you have tailwinds to help you along. Sometimes you have a head wind of 30 miles an hour fighting you, or it rains all day. You have to keep to the schedule and keep going with the flow," he explains.

What that taught him, he says, "is to be in the moment and appreciate that moment," he says, whether it's seeing the majesty of U.S. scenery or "being in a job you like. You have to learn not to focus on the small details," he adds.

He also learned how generous people are. The group of about 25 cyclists were making the ride for different causes, but regardless of why, he saw much interest and enthusiasm from people along the way.

"People talk about how generous Americans are. I saw it happening. It's incredible how many people would stop,

give us a glass of water, a sandwich, ask why we were riding so far," he says.

He remembers one particular woman in a restaurant, for example, who was sitting at a table next to the cyclists in his group. She heard them talk about what they were doing and asked Stanley about his cause.

"She asked me why I was there and when she heard about what was happening in Kenya, this complete stranger handed me \$100," Waringo says.

Editor's Note: Stanley's donations are now approaching \$3,000. To read more about Stanley's ride or to make a donation, go to www.stanacrossamerica.com. (The page links to Nyumbani's web page.)



Stanley (left) and friends hit the mountain roads



An exhausted bunch: Stanley Waringo (center) spent much of the ride with new friends Don McGoldrick from Pittsburgh, PA (left) and Johannes Helne from Norway (right)

Please Remember Mark in Your Prayers

One of the children of Nyumbani has been in and out of the hospital several times with debilitating head problems. Mark's had several surgeries and suffered ongoing and horrible pain. Volunteers and staff of Nyumbani have been by his side during the long hours of his illness. What they've all been through shows how tough it can be to see children suffer, but how rewarding it is when events proceed favorably and how brave these children are.

The following excerpts are from a weekly letter that Sister Julie Mulvihill sends home to family and friends. She has tried to keep them apprised of how he's doing.

May 27:

[Mark had been having headaches. A CAT scan at a local hospital showed nothing, so he was taken home. However, he was readmitted as the headaches grew severe.]

"The volunteers took turns staying with him since he was screaming out in pain throughout the day and night. No matter how much pain killer he was given the pain was still bad. Finally, the neurologist ordered an MRI. The MRI showed that the skull was full of blood and Mark needed surgery ASAP. He was screaming as we wheeled him to the theater (Operating Room). As I waited for them to take him, I could no longer contain my tears."

[Sister Julie's and others' prayers were answered and the surgery went well, and Mark was "up to his own impish self" the next morning. Sister Julie brought treats and balloons for the other five residents of the hospital room and their families, who she said had been very good to Mark and not complained about the screaming. That night, he had to be moved into isolation because of infection, which they did not want spreading to the other children.]

"He and I had a great fight with our balloon swords. We also watched TV and ate junk food. I'm sorry to say I did not sleep that night, but it was so good to see Mark sleeping peacefully that I didn't mind being awake."

[Upon discharge, Mark did well for several weeks, though he had swelling in his head. However, in mid-June he started having severe headaches again and was readmitted to the hospital. He had exploratory surgery and again went through severe trauma and pain, but was eventually discharged. However, blood started to fill his brain again and by late June, he was back in the hospital.]

June 24

"I think I have become his (Mark's) security blanket ... A day after he came out of surgery he began to bleed and the swelling on the right side of his head returned. He went into a short procedure yesterday and the

doctor aspirated the blood again and put in a drain. Mark was in a lot of pain when he came out and he shouted that he was going to die . . . I tried to convince him that he was going to be okay . . . I hope and pray I'm right. I don't know what to say or do when a 5 year old tells me he is going to die."

[Mark made it through that round of surgery and several quieter weeks. However, in late July, he was back in the hospital after fluid and blood began seeping from his head. He was scheduled for more surgery.]

August 1:

"Once again, Mark was traumatized and refused to lie down on the stretcher to the OR. The nurse asked why he was so sad. I explained that Mark was not sad, he was just totally aware of what was about to happen to him. He had been to the OR for 5 surgeries and he was only 5 years old."

[He had to remain in the hospital several days, but was discharged in late July. Although that particular hospital stay was as horrible as the rest, one good thing occurred...]



"Mark has a 15-year-old brother he had not seen for a year. His name is Raphael and he took care of Mark for the 4 years before he [Mark] came to us. Their mom died when Mark was a baby. Can you imagine a 10-year old boy caring for an infant? Raphael was happy to see Mark, and Mark gradually remembered him."

[Mark will need further surgery down the road to remove a shunt from his brain. Sister Julie says that even though he's "a tough little guy," she's not sure how much more he can take. Still, Sister Julie points out that Mark has been more fortunate than many Kenyan children.]

"Luckily for Mark he is at Nyumbani where we have generous contributors who donate the finances we need to provide for him."

Editor's Note: Nyumbani has spent about \$13,000 U.S. dollars caring for Mark, but he will need more surgeries to bring back his health. If you'd like to help with this unique need, use the enclosed envelope.

Giving Hope through Micro-Credit

Along with medical and counseling services, Lea Toto, Nyumbani's community-based program, is looking at financial avenues to stop the cycle of poverty. One such avenue is micro-credit. Micro-credit services are needed because individuals in low income brackets are ignored by mainstream banks, leaving no financial options to pull themselves out of poverty. Micro-credit provides loans and teaches how to save, budget and expand a business.

Many caregivers of the HIV+ children in the Lea Toto program have organized themselves into Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to pool resources and offer mutual support. Currently, Lea Toto is working with 12 SHGs to boost income-generating opportunities. Six of those groups specialize in making crafts such as leather and bead work, tie dye, weaving, and banana leaf and sisal products.

To help them, Erin Melendy, Nyumbani's U.S. Board Administrator, founded HopeCraft, Inc., a U.S. non-profit organization whose purpose is to create a global market for these wares. The organization does this by purchasing the crafts directly from the SHGs at fair market prices so the women have immediate cash. The crafts are then imported and sold in the U.S. All profits are returned to a micro-credit program in Kenya facilitated by the Lea Toto staff. As a result, money is now available to the members of the SHGs to borrow to put their children through school, pay for housing, medical care or improve their businesses.

The organization received its name for a good reason: HopeCraft is very much in the business of hope.

For more information on HopeCraft and how you can help, please visit www.HopeCraft.org or contact Erin Melendy at info@hopecraft.org. The products also will be sold at Nyumbani's annual benefit in Washington, D.C.

Father D'Ag's Column

(Continued from page 1)

been able to construct four, 2-story hostels that can accommodate from 12 to 16 older children per house. Two of those houses are up to roof level already, and by Christmas, they should be ready for occupation. That brings us to the next challenge: these homes need adult supervision. We're searching now for several young couples who might want to take on the job of house counselors. This is truly an opportunity to influence our youth as they move into adulthood.

On another note – but one that also could be called a remarkable development – we've been notified that we will receive a \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to expand our very successful Lea Toto community outreach program. After a thorough (55-page) evaluation of our current program by a USAID committee, we received a favorable ruling. In fact, it was so favorable, we were asked to expand the program from the current 2,000 clients to 4,000 clients by 2009. Recently, I learned that in all of the USA, there are about 3,800 HIV+ children. While this is a separate tragedy for those children, the numbers illustrate to me just how broad the problem is in Africa – we'll

hopefully be treating 4,000 children in Nairobi alone by 2009!

Besides the expansion, recommendations the USAID committee made for Lea Toto were to develop programs to prevent mother-to-child transmission and to create a one-stop place that children and their caregivers can go to receive help. Unfortunately, the current budget would not cover those new programs, so we'll need to look elsewhere for funding.

And now for a third remarkable development: Kitui, which was once a semi-arid, barren area in Kenya, is now a flourishing oasis producing vegetables and fruits for local markets. This is an incredible miracle helped along in great part by many volunteers. Although I don't mean to single out an individual, American volunteer Aldo Magazzeni deserves our gratitude for his help as we put together a functional water system in just three months. The system provides abundant water for homes, water for drip irrigation and other agricultural needs. Without that water, the Village could not have survived. This shows us how one volunteer can have a huge impact.

Finally, as an organization, Nyumbani has realized we are no longer a mom & pop organization. With an operating budget close to \$3 million and growing and a staff of over 120 throughout the organization, we needed to take a look at restructuring of management. To that

end, we've engaged a management consultancy firm – PACT-Kenya, which will advise us on how to carry forth into a bright future. We hope to have a report from that firm shortly.

Needless to say, as we watch the hand of God at work unfolding the plan for his special Kenyan children, we can only pray that He will allow us to act as facilitators in that plan. We pray for all our concerned benefactors that you will be blessed for your kindness.

Fr. Angelo D'Agostino,
S.J., M.D.

A copy of the latest U.S. financial report and official registration filed by the Children of God Relief Fund, Inc. can be obtained by contacting COGRF, Inc. at 3050 K St. NW, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20007-5108, or by calling (202) 342-8488. Residents of the following states may also obtain this information by contacting: NEW YORK - New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau, Attn: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10271; VIRGINIA - Division of Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 526, Richmond, Va. 22304. Registration with these governmental agencies does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.



The entrance to Nyumbani



Best pals share a snack



Photos courtesy of Lloydie Zaiser (reading to the children here) and Gaby Grebski (above, with one of the children). Lloydie and Gaby worked with Cottage D children during a two-week visit to Nyumbani in June.



Above: A miracle is growing: the older girls of Cottage D.

Nyumbani-
USA

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