

# the corner



Dr. Catherine DeLeo for MCW

MCW's youth leadership retreat participants at Champlain College in Vermont.

## Youth from Around the World Gather in Vermont

Youth delegates from around the world gathered at New York University in Manhattan and at Champlain College in Vermont for MCW's ninth Youth Leadership Retreat to learn that they can lead social change.



Khalid Elachi for MCW

Champlain faculty lead youth retreat delegates in team-building exercise.

Committed to empowering youth to realize their abilities to make a difference in their own lives and communities, MCW brought together more than 40 Tanzanian, Zimbabwean, Nigerian, Zambian, Sudanese, Israeli, Palestinian, and American high-school students, as well as former re-

treat participants (mentors), for an intensive, seven-day retreat in July.

"MCW's youth retreats provide young people with opportunities to network with their peers and with innovative leaders from the public, private, and non-profit sectors," said Khalid Elachi, MCW Project Coordinator and 2006 Retreat Director. "It also helps them develop the confidence and tools to make a difference."

Led by MCW board member Roberta Richin, a group of social entrepreneurs, including Martin Kace, who founded Empax, a pioneering non-profit that helps organizations "brand" themselves, shared their work and expertise with the youth delegates.

"It's interesting to see how people from around the world share the same experiences and ideas, despite all their differences," said Nelson Cruz, from the Bronx, New York.

Youth participants prepared vision plans, showcasing their own community's challenges and steps they would

take to create sustainable solutions.

The range of plans was as varied as the experiences and dreams of the participants.

A Palestinian delegate designed a plan to enlist a team of youth volunteers to help children learn to read. A Manhattan high-school student wanted to help adults learn to speak to teens who have endured tragic losses.

Gabriel Poth of Sudan wanted to apply MCW's community model in Arusha, Tanzania to Southern Sudan to

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MCW was founded in 1999 as a non-profit organization serving youth worldwide, primarily through programs of youth leadership training, community center and housing development, and healthcare outreach. MCW empowers youth to become positive agents of change, to improve their lives and contribute to their own communities. MCW works closely with a global network of public and private sector partners and through a commitment to Local Change Through Global Exchange™.

# Local Change Through Global Exchange™

## MCW PROGRAMS

### Youth Leadership Training

Training youth from around the world in social entrepreneurship, cultural competency, and conflict resolution by building the skills, confidence, and networks needed to make a difference in their communities.

### Community Center and Housing Development

Developing sustainable community centers, housing units, and educational facilities as spaces for learning, exchange, and entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on Africa.

### Healthcare Outreach

Providing youth with the skills and knowledge to lead healthier lives, particularly through preventive HIV/AIDS, oral health, malnutrition, and primary healthcare, as well as dental care services, with a special focus on Songea, Tanzania.

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Felix Nyakatale for MCW

The complete welcome archway in Songea, Tanzania.

## From the Editors

By Paul Bergman & Sharon Roling

Welcome to the second issue of *The Corner™*. Since our first issue a year ago, we have made important progress in all three of our core program areas (see left bar).

This issue provides updates on our programs and partner initiatives, news briefs, and stories from our volunteers, friends, and supporters worldwide. We also introduce the Youth Retreat Alumni Corner, spotlighting how past retreat participants have turned their vision plans into concrete projects.

Thanks to MCW friends who helped make this newsletter a cooperative reality by providing written submissions, pictures, and feedback.

We also want to thank New York University student, Sharon Hakakian, MCW's Communications Intern, for the hours she dedicated to designing, editing, and proofing this issue and for always keeping us on our toes. Finally, thanks to our friends at Henry Schein, Inc. for their professional support.

Our goal is to produce *The Corner™* with direct input from you. So please send us your ideas, pictures, and feedback to [sharon@miraclecorners.org](mailto:sharon@miraclecorners.org) or [paul@miraclecorners.org](mailto:paul@miraclecorners.org).



## Co-Founder Corner

By Rob Alsbrooks & Eddie Bergman

Another year has passed and, as always, we look forward to the prospect of what lies ahead. We are excited by the possibilities of doing great things in different parts of our vast planet, which seems to get smaller and smaller with each new MCW project.

We have witnessed much over the past seven years. As an organization, we have seen Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Through MCW, hundreds of ambitious youth have had the opportunity to share their leadership visions and implement their programs.

We have seen friendships born, founding mentors pass away, partnerships develop, and supporters move on to do other great things in life. We have experienced a great deal together, and we have benefited because we have chosen to grow through it not just go through it.

This year, we will begin to look at how we can take what we have learned around the globe, through our initiatives, and bring some of it home, where charity begins.

We hope that everyone who reads *The Corner™* will be reinvigorated to serve humanity in their own unique way. This was a founding idea behind MCW that is still relevant today.



# Youth Leadership Training

## MCW Helps Youth

*Continued from Front Page*

involve schools and religious groups in helping communities integrate displaced people, increase food production, and access healthcare services.

"The retreat has moved me to dream big, start small, and share our stories," said Alan Garcia of Riverdale, New York.

For the first time, MCW held its annual Open Doors Ceremony outside New York City, at Champlain College in Vermont. Dozens of local Vermonters learned about MCW, met with retreat participants, and celebrated the new MCW-Champlain College connection.

The retreat concluded at NYU's School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS) where youth delegates



Photos by Lauren Marie for MCW

shared their vision plans with dozens of MCW friends and supporters.

Thanks to Dr. David Finney, President of Champlain College and former Dean of NYU's SCPS for his continuing support of MCW's youth leadership retreats and for facilitating the connection with Champlain.

Since 1999, MCW has graduated nearly 400 youth from around the world in its internationally-recognized leadership development program.

The retreats have been organized through cooperation with a wide range of individuals and organizations, including NYU, UN agencies, NGO partners, the NYC Department of Youth and Community Development, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and private sector partners, such as MTV/Nickelodeon.



## Youth Leadership Retreat Alumni Corner

Instead of heading to a sunny beach for spring break, students from Long Island's Stony Brook University and Northport High School participated in MCW Long Island's first-ever alternative spring break in April.

MCW Long Island members and former youth leadership retreat participants Levy Solomon and Nick Turvin designed the program, drawing inspiration from MCW's annual youth leadership retreat model.

Solomon and Turvin decided to bring the 17 high-school and college students to Heifer International Outlook Farm in rural Massachusetts.

"We chose to go to this farm because it represents a lot of what we

stand for... a lot of what MCW stands for," said Jane Pechera, a MCW Long Island member who also helped plan the spring trip.

Heifer Farm is a global village that educates the public about world hunger, poverty, and sustainability. By learning about global agriculture, livestock, and housing models, visitors can step into the shoes of people from Peru, Thailand, Guatemala, or Uganda and learn how to be more responsible global citizens.

The students also participated in a variety of educational workshops, covering issues such as female empowerment, global hunger, poverty alleviation, and equitable food distribution.

*"The art of independence is probably the greatest gift I got through MCW. Having faith in myself and knowing that I could do whatever I wanted on my own was all I needed to allow me to grow as an entrepreneur and as a person."*



**Roya Nazarian, New York**

*"MCW makes our world smaller. I never met anyone from Israel before—I only read about them in the Bible—but through MCW, I have met many. MCW is a place where you make life-long friends."*



**Gabriel Poth, Sudan**

*"At the retreat, we had inspiring speakers who presented us with practical approaches to implement [our vision plans] on our ways to becoming great leaders. It was fun to have participants and mentors from all over the world. I loved it."*



**Tanya Praise, New York**

*"The ideas that I learn and the people I meet at MCW inspire me. It was very beneficial for me to learn about new concepts, like entrepreneurship and networking. The opportunity to be a mentor is a tool to help younger participants through their experience with MCW. MCW is not only an organization; it is faces of friends from around the globe."*



**Manar Alnatsheh, Hebron**

*"I always look forward to MCW retreats. They're a challenge, an opportunity, and an amazing experience for those who want to do good in their community and who wish to acquire the tools to do so. My utmost gratitude goes to the organizers, and my colleagues and friends from all over the world."*



**Eyal Ronen, Tel Aviv**

# Community Center & Housing Development

## MCW Expands Continental Reach



Jay Yarrow for MCW

The construction team at the MCW community center in Arusha, Tanzania.

From Arusha to Songea, Tanzania, and from East Freetown, Sierra Leone, to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, MCW sees opportunities to expand its reach to new countries in Africa.



Alfred Hanssen for MCW

A community celebration in Arusha.

“MCW’s Community Center and Housing Development Program aims to help vulnerable communities in rural and urban areas build sustainable youth centers,” said Eddie Bergman, MCW Executive Director and Co-Founder. “Working with grassroots groups, in concert with local and na-

tional government bodies, helps us develop effective solutions to challenges facing the local community.”

MCW runs centers in Tanzania’s rural town of Songea and urban area of Arusha. Working with United Nations Development Program (UNDP), MCW is also building a center in East Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Now, MCW is turning to Addis Ababa as a possible site for a new community center, building on the groundbreaking efforts of Rob Alsbrooks, MCW Programs Director and Co-Founder. In August, Alfred Hanssen, MCW Construction Coordinator, visited potential sites in Addis Ababa to assess the land and discuss designs with local architects. To move ahead, MCW also submitted an application to register as a non-governmental organization in Ethiopia.

Hanssen then traveled to Tanzania to assess the condition of MCW’s centers in Songea and Arusha and to explore new project ideas in Iringa.

“Going to different places, visiting

friends, and assessing our Arusha and Songea sites made me realize that relationships are key to the success of an MCW project,” said Hanssen. Even someone who helps move things into a truck, someone who you see everyday, or someone you go to a restaurant with, [allows you to see how] the strength of these relationships helps the project and gives the community a strong sense of ownership.

## UPDATES

### ARUSHA, TANZANIA

By The Perfect Brothers

The MCW Community Center is one of Arusha’s most important assets, as it does a



lot to make sure that the local people benefit from the low-cost services it provides. This is something we seldom see in our area.

We have a nice center in a pleasant and attractive environment, with Mount Meru in the north and the sunset in the west. Most importantly, we offer a lot for our local people, including:

*Computer Courses:* More than 50 students complete training every three months, enabling them to find employment in different organizations.

*English Courses:* Many people, especially youth, attend these courses because they want to use English as a second language. English is also a means of global communication, which can lead to increased access to information and more job opportunities.

*Nursery School:* We train children to become treasures of the future by providing education that is not yet available in the community. This way, we help create a nation of educated youth. We love kids because we know that this is where we all began.

*Perfect Youth Group:* PYG is for youth with dreams of success. Youth

# Community Center & Housing Development

study performing arts, traditional dance, music, drama, comedy, and singing. These activities help spread the word about MCW in Arusha.

As MCW leaders, we are committed to teamwork. We also want to make sure that our efforts are supported by our community in our quest toward Local Change Through Global Exchange™. We believe that one day we will achieve great success.

## IRINGA, TANZANIA

By Khalid Elachi

I traveled to Iringa in August to visit the new library at Ruaha University. Last summer, we donated most of the books that make up the library's collection, one of the largest in the country. This year, we met with Father Cephus who was excited to hear that another shipment of books from MCW is expected to arrive in the spring. This will surely help the university grow.



## SONGEA, TANZANIA

### A Local Perspective

By Felix Nyakatale

Youth Miracles for Present (YMP) has begun generating income through a new vegetable project, where members buy vegetables for half price. They hope to become Songea's vegetable center. The girl in the purple NYU jacket [below] is the on-duty YMP member, who is selling vegetables to customers.



Felix Nyakatale for MCW



YMP is incredibly excited to begin feeding the community and hopes to help reduce malnutrition in Songea!

### A Global Perspective

By Dr. Marion Bergman

In October, I spent three days at MCW's Community center in Songea, where pre-school and English classes are in progress.



The students are motivated and disciplined and want to improve their English, which is the medium of education at the secondary school level. This is a great challenge for the students, who learn Swahili in primary school. The teachers await the arrival of MCW's second container, which includes school supplies.

The community is proud of its vegetable garden, which is yielding several cash crops, despite the challenges of inadequate water supply. Together, MCW and the local government are currently exploring creative solutions to address this challenge.

I also met with the men's and women's community groups, which are led by graduates of the English courses. We spoke about the lack of affordable fertilizer.

The women also said that they want to make and sell handicrafts. They also want to learn how to contain HIV/AIDS and provide care for ten children who are now orphans after losing their parents to the disease. The men want to attend technology classes at the local college and learn how to fix computers.

## ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

By Rob Alsbrooks

Last year, I traveled to Ethiopia several times to assess the possibilities of establishing an MCW project in the country.

In the capital city of Addis Ababa, I connected with grassroots organizations and government bodies to begin

the process of building an MCW youth community center.

During my trips, I learned about many detrimental issues facing youth. The need to form partnerships with local organizations, grassroots initiatives, and the government to eradicate these issues and address the sense of hopelessness is present everywhere.

Although the process of registering an MCW Trust in Ethiopia is currently underway, we have already initiated some programs and partnerships to begin helping youth.

With a volunteer named Ms. Meskerem I helped establish KiddieTalk, a new computer literacy program that will help street children become computer literate through a variety of CD-ROM educational programs.

The first day of the program was a success. The entire lesson costs only 117 Birr or \$13. Once MCW secures a site and sets up computers, we can do this for a minimal cost per day. This is growth and development at a grassroots level.



Rob Alsbrooks for MCW

In taking step toward building a new community center in Addis Ababa, MCW is working with a local youth group called Tena Kebana, as well as the Gilfile Cleaned Association. Run by two teens, the group works with orphans and uses a small greenhouse, a garden, and an office as a base for workshops in organic gardening, environmentalism, and health education.

It is the simple things in life that mean so much to young people, and we at MCW are happy to be a vehicle of change in the lives of these children.

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# Healthcare Outreach

## MCW Sends Fifth Volunteer Dental Team to Songea



Courtesy of Amita Damani for MCW

The 2006 MCW Dentalcare Team at the Liana Cohen Health Clinic in Songea (Front, from left): Juan Hernandez, Amita Damani, Anne Yu, Meeta Grewal, Sung Min Lee. (Back, from left): Dr. Mitchell Pines, Dr. Girish Shah, Noah Ariola-Tirella, Tam Tran, Clint Timmerman. (Not pictured: Dr. Anthony Vernillo, Dr. Douglas Pollack, Alyssa Brown, Shirley Green.)

In 2005, volunteers from MCW and New York University's College of Dentistry teamed up with Henry Schein Cares, the global social responsibility program of Henry Schein, Inc., to treat hundreds of patients in Songea, a remote region in Tanzania with three

dentists for a population of 1.2 million.

The team, including four dentists and nine students, delivered free dental treatment out of the MCW Liana Cohen Health/Dental Clinic, which opened in the summer of 2005.

Although the two-week initiative was a great success, conditions were far from optimal. Patients received treatment while sitting on wooden chairs with their heads uncomfortably perched on pillows. In addition, the lack of electricity forced the clinic to close at sundown, limiting the number of patients to receive treatment.

Last year proved to be a very different experience. When the dental team reached the clinic in August, they brought with them four state-of-the-art dental units donated by Sirona Dental Systems. The team professionally installed the chairs and additional donated equipment in the facility, even though it meant removing and replacing one of the clinic's large windows.

The team also installed electricity, wiring, and lights to the clinic, enabling the team to extend treatment into the night. When the installation was finally completed, the clinic became one of the most advanced dental facilities in the country.

"This was the most productive and professionally satisfying mission yet to Tanzania," said Dr. Anthony Vernillo, who led the 2006 team.

"We were able to treat more than 1,100 people, primarily children, with a standard of dentistry that is comparable to what we deliver in the U.S., and to provide them with oral screening and preventative education."

"The addition of the Sirona dental units made a huge difference in the level of care we were able to provide," said Keith Drayer of Henry Schein. Drayer provided leadership and technical help at the site, alongside fellow Team Schein Member Jules Paoletti.



Photos by Keith Drayer for MCW

"This is a wonderful example of how members of the dental community—a valued vendor partner like Sirona, dental educators, and practitioners, and a distributor like Henry Schein—can work together to make a real difference in people's lives."

*"MCW's vision of community development and sustainability has a great impact on the people of Songea. I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to be a part of the 2006 dental-care program. Our team treated hundreds of patients in Songea who needed dental work. We were fortunate to have received exceptional support from local health and public officials. Although Tanzania is one of the most impoverished countries in the world, the people of the country were extremely gracious and giving."*



Amita Damani

# Healthcare Outreach



Jules Paoletti for MCW

Keith Drayer (middle, back row) and friends thank Henry Schein Cares for helping transform the MCW Songea clinic into one of the most advanced facilities in Tanzania.

“We are proud to have been part of the 2006 MCW dental project to Songea, and to support the work of the skilled dental volunteers from NYU,” said Jost Fischer, Chairman, CEO and President of Sirona, one of the world’s leading manufacturers of dental equipment and technologies.



Alfred Hanssen for MCW

Alongside an New York University dental student, new MCW Advisor Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago plants a tree in Songea.

“We are extremely proud of our dental outreach program, which began with my former college roommate, Dr. Ruben Cohen, who was studying at NYU’s School of Dentistry. Ruben brought his professor, Dr. Anthony Vernillo, into the program, and he now serves on MCW’s Board. So many amazing people have joined us since then. Dr. Girish Shah has led several dental missions, and Dr. Mitchell Pines has provided on-site support on four missions. Keith Drayer has helped us stock the new Songea clinic with equipment, and Steve Kess has offered strategic support. We’ve sent more than 30 volunteers to treat more than two thousand patients and educated thousands on the importance of oral healthcare prevention. Now, building on our success, we want to offer services beyond the summer with the help of new and former volunteers!”

*Eddie Bergman, Executive Director*

## MCW Supports HIV/AIDS Treatment Exchange

Together with local healthcare professionals, MCW is exploring new ways to help rural Songea, Tanzania deal with health challenges.

Since anti-retroviral treatment was introduced at Songea Regional Hospital, large numbers of HIV/AIDS patients from the region are seeking treatment.

In December 2005, MCW sent a pediatric AIDS treatment team from Songea to the Pediatric Aids Treatment

for Africa (PATA) conference in Cape Town, South Africa.

“PATA provides a forum for health professionals from rural areas to learn from each other and experts in the field,” said Dr. Marion Bergman, MCW Health Projects Coordinator. “This provides MCW with the opportunity to improve rural healthcare, specifically for children with HIV/AIDS in Songea.”

The second PATA conference was

held in Nairobi, Kenya in December 2006, attracting 35 treatment teams from 23 countries in Africa. MCW sponsored the Songea team again, as well as a new team from Kilgoris Hospital, in Transmara, Kenya.

“Our goal is to facilitate the sharing of ideas, experiences, and best practices between the local healthcare providers in two similar rural communities,” said Dr. Bergman.

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# Partner Initiatives

## Long Island University to Arusha, Tanzania

By Anna Condoulis

Long-time MCW supporter Dr. George Sideris, accompanied by MCW board member Anna Condoulis, brought another Long Island University (LIU)-Brooklyn campus class to Arusha, Tanzania in August to spend a week with the community center's youth group, the Perfect Youth Group (PYG).

This visit has become an annual tradition for the U.S. students and PYG members that is both enjoyable and beneficial for everyone involved.



Dr. George Sideris for MCW

Long Island University students and Arusha's Perfect Youth Group members work together on a documentary.

"The idea of a field course is to see things firsthand and experience a habitat with all of one's senses and intellect," said Sideris. "One of my intentions with the field courses is to add a community interaction/service component. In addition to studying the regional ecology, contact with the area's residents should also be established. Students visiting another country should gain awareness of the local culture."

Several approaches were taken to building connections between the LIU students and PYG members. To break the ice on the first day and explore cultural differences, Sideris facilitated an open question and answer session. Both sides asked questions about youth issues, relationships, health, family,

education, and politics.

To continue the conversation on a more personal level, participants separated into groups based on gender. This created a dynamic where everyone felt comfortable sharing their own personal stories, fears, and concerns on sexual relationships, female circumcision, family structure, and gender roles. It also brought participants closer together.

PYG members also asked Sideris to provide lectures on nutrition, infectious diseases, dance, exercise, and motivational techniques.

Building on the 2005 visit, when the young participants wrote and performed a play titled, "In Touch-Our Lives," the students filmed a documentary, depicting the life of young people living in Arusha.

PYG also wrote and filmed smaller vignettes, such as "Geneii and the Three Wishes," "Man and the Honey Bee," and "Friends in the Street." A documentary based on the project is scheduled for release in the Spring.

## IDAAY and MCW

By Rob Alsbrooks

In 2006, MCW formed a new partnership with the Philadelphia-based Institute for the Development of African-American Youth, Inc. (IDAAY), by co-sponsoring a new entrepreneurial program for youth. The program teaches students 'business basics' in an empowering environment at Temple University.

MCW matched a \$2,500 grant, to be used by the students as seed money for new projects. Last summer, the first group of students received \$200 to purchase car-cleaning equipment for their OWN business project.

IDAAY is a community-based, non-profit organization that serves Philadelphia and Montgomery counties. Steven T. Robinson and S. Archye Leacock founded the organization in May 1991 in response to the alarming statistics characterizing disadvantaged youth in the Philadelphia area. To address

these issues, the co-founders created IDAAY. The organization's mission is to provide educational and cultural programs dedicated to serving and empowering youth at risk.

## Coney Island to Calabar

MCW helped send three American college students to an international symposium on eco-tourism in the port city of Calabar, Nigeria to help launch a young professionals leadership forum in November.

Sponsored by the Africa Travel Association (ATA), the symposium brought together dozens of travel professionals, including tourism ministers, travel agents, and tour operators, to promote travel to Africa.

Young people interested in a career in travel also had the opportunity to learn about different tourism opportunities in Nigeria and to network with other young professionals.

"Thank you MCW for helping us discover Nigeria, a country like no other" said Johanne Brierre, a Kingsborough Community College student in Brooklyn. "As a Hospitality and Tourism major, the symposium left me with a lifetime of educational and cultural experiences that go beyond the classroom. I am now inspired to help MCW bring young people to Africa in the future," she said.



Ogo Sow for MCW

MCW Sierra-Leone Project Coordinator Harry Gbetuwa, facilitated the inaugural discussion of the young professionals' leadership forum.



# Miracles We Make

## Human Rights Corner

By Jacqueline Murekatete

In 1994, my country Rwanda experienced one of the worst genocides in documented history.

In just 100 days, more than one million innocent men, women, and children were brutally murdered.

Although I was one of the few lucky survivors, after the genocide I learned that my parents, six siblings, as well as numerous other relatives had all been killed. I was nine years old.



Courtesy of Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the U.N.

Jacqueline addresses the General Assembly on the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide on April 7, 2004, Rwanda's International Day of Remembrance.

Fortunately, I had an uncle who lived in the United States and who, after finding out I had survived, adopted me and brought me to this country in 1995.

As a survivor, I felt a responsibility to call attention to what had happened in my country, both for the sake of those who died and in hope of preventing such a thing from happening again.

And so I spent my high school and now my college years addressing thousands of people through programs at schools, intergovernmental organizations, communities of faith, conferences, and media outlets around the world.

Today, although Rwanda has come a long way in rebuilding, thousands of

orphans and widows remain without such basic human rights and necessities as food, water, and education.

To help redress this tragedy, I recently partnered with MCW to create Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner.

Our mission is to empower Rwandan genocide survivors to secure and protect their rights to live in peace and create prosperity for themselves and generations to come. We seek to build on that success by helping others in need, beyond Rwanda.

I have decided to partner with MCW because MCW truly helps youth develop the leadership and networks to create real and sustainable Local Change Through Global Exchange.™

Since first encountering MCW, I have felt no greater respect for any other organization. Time and again, I am amazed by MCW's commitment to better the world by empowering youth like me to be global leaders.

I have no doubt that the continual dedication and generosity of MCW's staff and supporters will make the world a brighter place—a place of hope for all.

*Jacqueline has established a fund with MCW to support organizations and programs in Rwanda that assist victims of genocide. To get involved, e-mail [jacqueline@miraclecorners.org](mailto:jacqueline@miraclecorners.org).*

## Digital Divide

By Glory Minja



number of students who have graduated.

The courses are based on Microsoft Office software, which includes word processing, spreadsheet development, database analysis, publishing, and electronic presentations through PowerPoint. Students come from different parts of Arusha as well as other towns and villages.

As MCW's computer instructor in Arusha at the Dr. Edward B. Shils Community Technology Center, I feel proud to have a large number of students who have graduated.

Since we began our activities in 2001, about 600 students have graduated, enabling them to work in a variety of new and exciting jobs in Arusha and beyond. These past students often provide me with information on their new jobs, which motivates all of us.

The Dr. Shils Center is very helpful to the community and continues to touch the lives of many people of all ages. For me, it's a miracle corner!

Although the people of Arusha have never met Dr. Shils, his vision of empowerment has helped improve the lives of Tanzanian people. Inspired by him, MCW has introduced computer technology that helps people obtain and create employment opportunities. It also has enabled me to learn a lot since I began working with MCW.

*Glory is a computer teacher at the MCW Community Center in Arusha.*

## Call to Service

By Haviva Kohl



Courtesy of Haviva Kohl for MCW

As a child, I remember being told "When you have a dream, find your North Star and follow it toward accomplishing great things."

So, I did. I went straight to Songea, a rural community in southern Tanzania, where running water and electricity are scarce, laughter is grand, and the average level of education attainment is seventh grade.

But, above and beyond this, it is a place where most of its inhabitants dream small because of their community's lack of social and economic opportunities.

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## Call to Service

*Continued from Page 9*

I remember one of the first English classes I taught to MCW members. I asked every student to introduce himself. Ishmael, 22, said: "My father is a peasant, my mother is a peasant, and I will be a peasant."

I realized at that moment that MCW had a challenging task: to teach community members the essence of dreaming big and providing them with lasting skills and a knowledge-base to bring their dreams to life.

Therefore, I dedicated my time (six months) in Songea to creating sustainable programs that would teach community members just that.

Today, MCW's center in Songea, Tanzania is flourishing, and every day many more miracles are born.

## UPDATES

*Continued from Page 5*

### SIERRA LEONE

By Harry Gbetuwa

Sierra Leone is recovering from ten years of civil war, which destroyed and damaged most of the country's infrastructure, educational centers and services, and private homes.

In fact, almost 70 percent of the nation's schools were destroyed. Approximately only 30 percent of the population is literate.



In Freetown, most children attend school until eighth grade. Yet, since the civil war's outbreak, many children have not returned to school. Things have become even more difficult since only a small number of professionals are trained to teach youth.

As a result of this situation, many children often go to work to bring in an additional income for their families, when they're not in school.

MCW hopes to address the challenges facing Sierra Leonean youth. We hope that a new MCW youth center will provide a creative and empowering outlet for young people in the eastern region of Freetown and surrounding areas to learn, share, and develop new entrepreneurial skills.

Our plan is for the center to help youth develop entrepreneurial and leadership skills through a variety of educational courses and through global cultural exchange programs.

MCW-Sierra Leone also plans to offer basic computer and Internet training to young people. These services have not yet been offered in primary schools. Adult literacy classes will also be provided.

Opening a preschool is another integral part of the project, to encourage education from an early age and to prepare children for primary school.

We hope that the center will be opened by the spring.

*Harry is the Project Coordinator for MCW in Sierra Leone. He is working with US-based MCW Project Coordinator Amanda Blount.*

## Entrepreneurial Boys and Girls Club

By Rob Alsbrooks

One of the biggest problems facing the city of Philadelphia in recent years is a rising murder rate. Last year alone (2006) saw over 370 murders, representing a 30 percent increase from

2002. According to Philadelphia Police Research, approximately 45 percent of those killed were under the age of 25.

Young, inner-city youth are forced to navigate the tough Philly streets, often becoming victims and perpetrators of violence themselves.

It does not have to be this way, and together we can change it.

For the last ten years, I have had a dream to build a safe haven in my community, where public, non-profit, and private organizations can work together with local citizens to enrich the lives of our youth.

We have already begun the process by acquiring a square-acre plot from the City of Philadelphia. I believe that MCW can lead the charge to build the first-ever Entrepreneurial Boys and Girls Club.

To make this happen, I have started a dialogue with the offices of State Representative Jewell Williams (197th Legislative District, PA), and with District Councilman Darrell Clarke (5th District, Philadelphia, PA), as well as other public officials and neighborhood leaders, who are excited to help move this project forward.

After hearing the dream, the Phila-



Rob Alsbrooks for MCW

delphia-based Institute for the Development of African-American Youth (IDAAY) has also expressed a strong interest in partnering with MCW on this unique initiative.

In the fall, MCW Construction Coordinator Alfred Hanssen (see above) visited the site, which is located on block 2200 on North 17th Street in North Philadelphia. He plans to begin drafting the preliminary architectural design of the club in early 2007.

*To get involved with MCW programs in Philadelphia, send an e-mail to Rob at [rob@miraclecorners.org](mailto:rob@miraclecorners.org).*

**2007 CALENDAR**

**JANUARY**  
MCW Winter Trip to Tanzania

**MARCH**  
MCW's 3rd Annual Gala Dinner  
New York, USA

**APRIL**  
MCW Container to Tanzania

**JULY**  
10th Youth Leadership Retreat  
Open Doors Ceremony  
New York, USA

**AUGUST**  
MCW Summer Trip to Tanzania  
Arusha, Iringa, and Songea  
MCW 6th Dentalcare Program  
Songea, Tanzania

## New Jersey to Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania

MCW sent a second ocean freight container of donations from Sayreville, New Jersey to Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania in June. The container was packed with hundreds of boxes of books, donated by McGraw Hill and Harper-Collins, and dental and medical supplies, donated by Henry Schein Cares.

The container also included boxes of new shoes from the Susie Reizod Foundation and twenty computers for MCW's centers in Songea and Arusha, thanks to the University of Pennsylvania donated HP Technology for Community Grant Initiative.



Courtesy of Khalid Elachi for MCW

New York University's Office of Community Services contributed books, sporting equipment, toys, and clothing to the container; and MTV/Nickelodeon added clothing. New Jersey's Bloomfield High School contributed bicycles.

## MCW Honors CNN

MCW presented its first-ever Media Africa Advocacy Award to CNN for its positive coverage on the African continent and its people at MCW's second annual gala dinner at New York University's Kimmel Center in February 2006.



Shareen Mani for MCW

Special recognition was given to Christiane Amanopur, CNN's Chief International Correspondent; Jeff Kepnes, Senior Producer; and Mark Nelson, Senior Executive Producer for their documentary, *Can We Save Them?*, which provided a first-hand glimpse into the challenges facing the African continent in the 21st century.

Lynne Abraham (left), District Attorney of Philadelphia, presented Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago (right), former UN Special Representative to the Secretary General in Sierra Leone, with MCW's Lifetime Achievement Award. He was honored for his steadfast efforts to build a peaceful and stable world and for his long-term support of MCW.



Shareen Mani for MCW

Tanzanian Ambassador Dr. Augustine Mahiga presented Alfred Hanssen with the Spirit of MCW Award for his work in Songea.

More than 300 supporters attended the dinner, including international business leaders, representatives of non-profit groups, and dignitaries from African governments, embassies, and consulates. Michelle Makori, Bloomberg TV News Anchor, and Liz Claman, CNBC Anchor, also participated.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the MCW's Dinner Chairs, MCW raised nearly \$300,000 for programs worldwide. More than 70 items were auctioned off at the silent auction, which was organized by Khalid Elachi with help from Juliette Montague.

For two years, MCW has hosted its gala dinners at NYU's Kimmel Center, which has helped MCW keep costs down by reducing the event's overhead so every dollar raised at the event supports MCW's programs directly.

Congratulations to MCW Board member Anna Condoulis, who led the volunteer dinner planning committee, for a successful event. Thanks to Susan Vassallo, Lorena Bloom, Shareen Mani,

Candice Knox, and Maria Porcaro of Henry Schein, Inc. for their support.

## Continued Partnership with Microsoft

Since donating Office and Windows software to run the first eight computers at MCW's Community Center in Arusha in 2001, Microsoft has provided critical support to MCW's projects.

In 2006, MCW's collaboration with Microsoft was particularly strong. MCW was recognized as a grant, software, and curricula recipient of Microsoft's Unlimited Potential (UP) initiative.

UP is a global program designed to help broaden digital inclusion and aid workforce development by providing technology skills through community technology centers.

UP will support the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Training Program for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Income Generation in MCW's community centers in an urban Arusha and rural Songea.

The program aims to train MCW computer teachers, upgrade networking and Internet hardware, install superior software, and incorporate improved teaching curricula.

In December, three members of Microsoft's Community Affairs team (Akhtar Badshah, Senior Director; Heba Ramzy, Program Manager of Regional Citizenship; and Ntutule Tshenye, Manager for West, East, and Central Africa) visited the Arusha ICT center.

The team toured the site and then met with MCW's local youth leaders on the status of current projects and areas for potential improvement.

## MCW Shares New Office in New York

MCW moved into a new shared office space, on Madison Avenue in midtown Manhattan, in July.



Khalid Elachi for MCW



Ambassador Augustine Mahiga, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the U.N. (left); Eddie Bergman, MCW Executive Director (center); and His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania (right), at an MCW event dedicated to promoting positive news on Tanzania at New York's NASDAQ Market Site.

*"There are many forces of good and evil in this world and I believe the good far outweighs the evil. People like Eddie and Rob represent the good because the work they do in Tanzania truly makes a difference in people's lives. They have a choice—a choice to do good or a choice to do evil. And they choose to do good. Thank you Eddie. Thank you Rob. Thank you."* Archbishop Desmond Tutu



**SAVE THE DATE!!!**

**MCW's 3<sup>rd</sup> GALA DINNER**

Monday, March 5, 2007, 6-9:30 pm  
New York University

For tickets: [events@miraclecorners.org](mailto:events@miraclecorners.org)

**AVAILABLE NOW!!!**

**MCW 2007 CALENDAR**

All proceeds support Arusha, Tanzania's Perfect Youth Group. **\$20 each.**

To order: e-mail [ac5@nyu.edu](mailto:ac5@nyu.edu)

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