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Miracle Corners of the World Organizes First Community Development Leadership Training Seminar in Arusha, Tanzania

ARUSHA, Tanzania, May 24, 2008—Thirty-two members of the MCW Community Development Program team gathered at the International Conference Center and the Miracle Corners Trust Community Center in Arusha, Tanzania from May 19-24, 2008 to participate in the first MCW Community Development Leadership Training Seminar. The seminar aimed to empower community center leaders and members to develop the centers as vibrant spaces for education, exchange and entrepreneurship.

"This was quite a week... very emotional, very challenging at times, and also very exciting," said Alfie Hanssen, MCW Associate Executive Director of International Field Programs. "A highlight for me was discussing our different perceptions of one another and understanding how they influence our relationships. I think we all gained greater understanding of what it means to collaborate and communicate as a team. The program was a significant milestone in the story of MCW, and one whose positive impact will be revealed over time."

Participants included individuals from the leadership teams and local advisory boards of MCW's community centers in Tanzania and Sierra Leone, as well as planning committee members from MCW's proposed community center in Bugesera District, Rwanda. MCW's New York office representatives also participated, alongside a volunteer specializing in early childhood education.

Educo Africa, a Cape Town-based non-profit organization specializing in youth and corporate leadership training facilitated the dynamic and interactive six-day training program.

Workshops focused on understanding MCW's vision, shared purpose, core values and culture. Participants worked together to develop shared visions and action plans for individual team members and their community centers. Each exercise encouraged teamwork and collective approaches to solving and preventing problems. Participants also honed their professional skills in order to implement action plans, to achieve shared purposes, and to fulfill individual and shared vision plans.

Until 2005, the Community Development Program focused primarily on MCW's first center in Arusha, which was established in 2001. Since then, the program has expanded to Songea, Tanzania, Sierra Leone and Rwanda. Now, MCW has a dedicated team of youth leaders and mentors, as well as a replicable model and a set of best practices that can be shared with other communities.

"With MCW growing more and more every year, we all thought that it was time to get together to exchange ideas, to develop collective solutions to existing challenges, and to build a strong foundation for a common future," said Eddie Bergman, MCW Co-founder and Executive Director.

Three Educo Africa facilitators led a series of dynamic activities designed to encourage open and honest dialogue, to help participants use the resources at their fingertips to turn their ideas into reality and to practice confronting challenges as a team.

"As an outcome, our center teams are now more connected to one another," said Hanssen. "With this six-day seminar serving as a foundation for our future work, we now share an idea of how to work together to fulfill our individual potentials and those of our community centers. Every participant gained unique perspective on her/his role and on the vision of the Community Development Program as a whole."

MCW plans to hold similar training seminars at a different MCW community center in the coming years.

About Miracle Corners of the World (MCW)

Founded in 1999, Miracle Corners of the World (MCW) is a non-profit organization serving youth worldwide, primarily through leadership, community development, and healthcare programs, as well as partner initiative projects. MCW empowers youth to become positive agents of change, to improve their lives and contribute to their own communities. To achieve its mission, MCW uses entrepreneurial approaches to benefit youth worldwide, working closely with a global network of friends, volunteers, and supporters from the public, private, and non-profit sectors. For more information, visit us at www.miraclecorners.org.



Top to bottom: (1) From left: MCW Sierra Leone leadership team member Ishmeal Abu Kamara, MCW Sierra Leone advisor Samuel Pieh, and team member Harry Gbetuwa outside the Arusha community center in Tanzania; (2) Perfect Youth Group members; (3) Leadership training participants. (Photos courtesy of Alfie Hanssen.)

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