

# the corner



Photos by Paul Dixon and courtesy of Harry Gbetuwa for MCW  
(1) Opening ceremony for the new MCW Community Center in Sierra Leone; (2) Volunteer engineer Nicholas Orso with a Sierra Leone member of the construction team; (3) MCW center's multipurpose community hall.

## MCW Opens Youth Center in Freetown, Sierra Leone

By **Amanda Blount**

After three months of construction, MCW opened the Mwakawago Youth Resource Center, a new community center in Kissy, Freetown in August. Among the 200 guests at the opening ceremony were MCW Co-Founder Eddie Bergman, Miracle Corners Sierra Leone Advisory Board Members, Sierra Leone police, and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) representatives.



Amanda Blount with Sierra Leonian youth.

"The center aims to bring young people together to dialogue and help build better lives for themselves and for each other, while promoting education, empowerment, and entrepreneurial opportunities," said Bergman.

The center was named in honor of former UN Special Representative of

the Secretary General for Sierra Leone Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago. In 2003, Mwakawago invited MCW to Freetown to assess the government's efforts to create jobs for youth.

With support from the UNDP, MCW raised funds for the project. Serving over 1,000 youth and the community, the center's educational programs are tailored to the government's development plan, focusing on youth empowerment and community development.

The building sits on five acres of land donated by the local police and includes classrooms, a computer room with Internet services, a cafeteria, a multipurpose hall with a large-screen TV, and office space.

For nominal fees, community members can participate in computer training, math, and other skills-development courses, as well as police-civil society dialogues and sports programs. The center also supports an after-school club and a pre-school.

At the opening ceremony, Senior Police Representative T.M. Lahia spoke

about the center's role in reducing high crime rates among youth in the area.

"The project works well with the Sierra Leone police department's strategic plan on youth empowerment. We are committed to providing security to the center and ensuring transparency."

With almost 5.5 million people, Sierra Leone is one of the world's least developed countries, according to the UNDP Human Development Index.

*Volunteer Amanda Blount oversaw construction, working with US volunteer engineer Nicholas Orso and Harry Gbetuwa who helps manage the center.*

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Miracle Corners of the World (MCW) was founded in 1999 as a non-profit organization serving youth worldwide, primarily through programs of youth leadership, community development, and healthcare. 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 friends, volunteers, and supporters from the public and private sectors to achieve "Local Change through Global Exchange™."

## MCW Programs

### Local Change Through Global Exchange™

#### Youth Leadership

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 global and local communities. Since 1999, MCW has held 10 youth leadership retreats.

#### Community Development

Developing sustainable community centers, housing units, educational facilities, and IT training centers as spaces for learning, exchange, and entrepreneurship. Since 2001, MCW has built community centers in Arusha and Songea, Tanzania, as well as in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

#### Healthcare

Addressing the needs of communities in Tanzania with limited access to care through dental care outreaches, school-based oral health education, HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention training with partner organizations, and helping hospitals obtain medical equipment and supplies.

#### Partner Initiatives

Working closely with a global network of friends, volunteers, and supporters from the public, private, and non-profit sectors to leverage their collective resources to benefit youth.

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Jessica Racioppi for MCW

## From the Editors

By Sharon Hakakian, Sharon Roling,  
and Paul Bergman

In this third issue, we highlight growth in each of MCW's core program areas, especially Community Development, with two active centers in Tanzania, a new community center in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and the anticipated construction of another center in Rwanda.

We hope this issue demonstrates MCW's successful efforts in building on our foundations, moving forward, and always continuing to look ahead.

The Corner™ is growing rapidly along with MCW. In our first issue, we invited the MCW community to be active participants in the newsletter by contributing their voices, ideas, and stories, sharing how they see MCW making a difference.

Just two issues later, we have over 20 articles written by different MCW faces—some who are new to the organization and others who we count as longtime supporters. This issue bears testament to our collective effort.

As you read *The Corner*™, please consider what is most inspiring, so that you too can grow with us and contribute your photos and stories in our next issue.

Thanks again to the MCW community who makes this newsletter a reality every year. Our highest obligation is to share the story of MCW. This promise holds today, as it did in the beginning. Here's to the best of MCW's possibilities, now and in the years to come.



## Co-Founder Corner

By Eddie Bergman and Rob Alsbrooks

As you read this amazing issue of *The Corner*™, you will no doubt agree that MCW continues to take steps toward building sustainable programs and growing as an organization.

Longtime and new members alike are emerging as MCW leaders, bringing a commitment to our vision to give youth the opportunity to make a difference—a vision conceived on our 1999 trip to the Ivory Coast, where we helped build a three-room school and agricultural initiative for women. At that time, we also worked on Long Island and in Philadelphia to make positive change possible. Most importantly, we formed MCW, drawing inspiration from a *Philadelphia Enquirer* article, "Miracle on 34th Street."

Eight years later, Miracle Corners Philadelphia continues to advance, recently launching the Broad Street Boys program. The three-room school in the Ivory Coast has tripled to nine rooms, graduated over 200 students in 2007, and now boasts seven teachers. That original experience became the catalyst for new MCW projects.

MCW recently opened a third center in Sierra Leone, building on the Songea and Arusha models. As we celebrated our 10th Youth Retreat, we introduced the one-of-a-kind MCW curricula to a new generation of leaders and mentors. We sent our sixth dental team to Songea, expanding the program to include oral hygiene education. As part of our Partner Initiatives program, MCW launched Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner and sent two containers to Tanzania. We also received our largest contribution—\$100,000—from a new MCW friend.

Part of the miracle of MCW is the support we receive from people like you who invest in youth. As we move forward, we count on our relationships as the main reason we continue to be so successful. We look forward to continuing to work together, so youth can continue to make a difference.

# Youth Leadership

## Youth Plan a Better Future

By Yasmin Elachi



Continuing its mission to empower youth, MCW brought together 50 youth delegates from around the world—China, Israel, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, the U.S., the West Bank, Zambia, and Zimbabwe—for its 10<sup>th</sup> Youth Leadership Retreat held at Champlain College in Vermont for the second year in a row this past July.

Past participants returned as mentors to help guide this year's delegates. Mentors first met at New York University before the seven-day retreat to discuss ways to strengthen participants' leadership qualities. Upon arrival at the college, delegates participated in ice-breakers and games to help prepare for the intense week ahead.

In collaboration with MCW Project Coordinator Khalid Elachi, MCW Board Member Roberta Richin led the youth and mentors, working with Advisory Board Members Cathy DeLeo and Nancy Scanlon, as well as Champlain's Global Reach team. The delegates took part in team-building activities and discussed their visions for the future.

"Returning alumni not only guided the new participants in their progress to create a vision plan, but they developed lifelong friendships," said Elachi.

This year's guest speakers included

Champlain's Frank Canovatchel, Ben & Jerry's Director of Social Mission Rob Michalak, *Lite My Way's* President Mary Ellen Reis, TheHipHopProject's Chris 'Kazi' Rolle, Golden Brick Award Winner Divine Bradley, Gemnasium Founder Kheperah Kearsse, and Senator Patrick Leahy's State Director Chuck Ross. Speakers connected with the participants, encouraging them to be leaders.

Youth delegates worked on their personal vision plans, receiving direction from their mentors and input from their peers.

"The diversity of my peers gave me a wider range of input," said Jessica Racioppi, 16, of River Edge, New Jersey. "This helped me improve my vision plan and get an enhanced understanding of how to make it successful."

From Champlain College, the participants traveled to New York where they visited the Rubin Museum of Art. The program concluded with its culminating ceremony Open Doors at New York University's Kimmel Center. Participants came together to perform and display the results and power of the program.

"MCW changed my view of the world," said Horton Li, 17, of China. "I made a lot of friends from different corners in the world and this program helped me achieve my dream of helping the world through local change."



Dr. Catherine DeLeo for MCW

"My plan is to create an Internet program that helps youth from China and America communicate with each other. To become a reality, I need to create the program, raise funds, and find volunteers to participate. I hope my vision plan will make some contribution to the world."



—Horton Li, Florida, USA

"My vision is to eradicate hunger by educating and empowering rural people in Zimbabwe. I want to start an agricultural school where young people can learn sound agricultural practices and develop skills to help them obtain food daily. The curriculum will include climate study, recordkeeping, animal husbandry, horticulture, conservancy, and self-sustenance. The first class will have 20 students, and it will expand from there."



—Nancy Mangemba, Harare, Zimbabwe

## Retreat Alumni Corner

The MCW Youth Leadership Retreat is one of the most gratifying experiences I have ever had. The retreat emulates a point of view Albert Einstein described: "Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow."



As both a retreat participant and a mentor, I exchanged ideas and experiences with people I would not normally have had the opportunity to meet: people who make a difference, who want results, and who are not afraid to have an impact. If you attend the retreat, you come out knowing YOU can make a difference, especially through MCW's unique "vision plan" format.

Since then, this format has helped me conceptualize and break down my long vs. short-term goals. Often, we have ideas but don't know where to begin. We are unaware of the steps involved in turning our goals into possibilities. Using the plan to break down our projects into goals and steps not only helps us get organized, but also to imagine creative additions to our original plan.

The vision plan is a process of analyzing and thinking that has helped me with everything from putting a big project together to making a timeline for achieving my individual, day-to-day goals. Completing the vision plan and interacting with people at the retreat gave me an unsurpassed feeling of hope for the future of my individual world as well as the world around us.

—Victoria Koke

Georgetown University, Class of 2010  
Founder, service project to make and serve sandwiches to homeless in Georgetown

# Community Development

Courtesy of The Perfect Brothers for MCW



1

Photos by Allen Gong for MCW



2



3

Courtesy of Lameck Junior Yonah for MCW



4

Allen Gong for MCW



5

(1-3) Arusha-based Perfect Youth Group dance performance; (4) Songea students with teachers; (5) MCW Advisor Kym Stewart helps an Arusha volunteer and a US volunteer prepare breakfast porridge for pre-schoolers at the Tanzania-Arusha center.

## ARUSHA, TANZANIA

### PYG Wins Music Award

By The Perfect Brothers

MCW's Arusha-based Perfect Youth Group (PYG) was the winner of the *Music Crossroads Arusha* local festival for Northern Tanzania in November. Thirty music groups participated in the one-day event.

PYG, alongside Maalumando, another performing arts group, represented Arusha at the three-day *Music Crossroads National Festival* in Dar Es Salaam, earning third place.

*Music Crossroads* is an initiative that empowers youth through music. Jeunesses Musicales International

(JMI), the world's largest youth and music network, created this program in 1945. Today, it is one of the largest youth-focused African cultural projects.



PYG, under the leadership of the Perfect Brothers, is a group of inspired and determined youth who meet at MCW's Dr. Herman Wrice Youth Empowerment Village in Arusha.

PYG's purpose is to empower young people to use their talents to achieve self-employment and to increase awareness on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

## ARUSHA, TANZANIA

### Teaching English

By Joachim Mayange

As the English instructor and youth advisor for Miracle Corners Tanzania-Arusha at the Dr. Herman Wrice Youth Empowerment Village, I am always happy and inspired by the large number of students who have graduated from our English language training program.

Many people of different ages attend our program to learn English as an essential tool for communicating with people around the world.

My work involves many great chal-

lenges, such as motivating students to improve their English and bolstering their ambition to improve their communication skills.



My commitment is to empower youth living in Tanzania in order to help them realize their abilities to make a difference in their own lives and in their own communities. I am proud to be a teacher here.

We, the leaders of Miracle Corners Tanzania, have experienced a great deal together and remain eager and committed to continue working together as a team.

## ARUSHA, TANZANIA

### A Bright Future

By Rachel Innocent

The success of the Dr. Herman Wrice Youth Empowerment Village—MCW's first community center—stems from our belief that education is the foundation of our children's futures.

Students from ages three to six, give inspiration to our center each year. We teach math, English, drawing, sports, and skills, wood carving and counting. We also organize trips to one of Tanzania's many national parks.

Over 60 children participate in the

pre-school program, with more than 20 graduating each year to join first grade at different primary schools.

Our porridge program, which feeds our students every day, makes our children strong.

Our mottos are "youth empowerment" and "save the children." We work hard to achieve these goals by providing education to children of poor parents for a minimum of \$3 per month for tuition and \$2 per month for the porridge program.



# Community Development

## SONGEA, TANZANIA

### Pre-School Education

By Lameck Junior Yonah



Songea's pre-school program began in November 2005, with two months of free education.

In January 2006, parents started paying 1,000 shillings (approximately 80 cents) each month for classes.

A year later, 11 pupils have graduated from the program and moved to regional primary schools, mainly the Ruvuma Primary School, which is near the MCW center.

Others attended schools further away from the center, but closer to their homes.

To improve the quality of our program, we tracked the progress of former students in their new schools. Our students performed wonderfully on their mid-term exams last summer.

All 11 were in the top 20 in their new class; six were in the top 10; and two were number one. This will inspire parents to bring children here.

Congratulations to teachers Tina Mushi and Happy Gama and thanks to volunteer Audrey Mlotek, who helped us restart our porridge feeding program for the students in July.



Courtesy of Karen Shulman for MCW



Courtesy of Paul Dixon for MCW

## FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

### A Global Perspective

By Amanda Blount



MCW broke ground in Freetown in May for the construction of the Mwakawago Youth Resource Center.

I worked with Harry Gbetuwa for two years to develop a business plan and construction timeline. Philadelphia-based volunteer civil engineer Nicholas Orso designed the center's blueprints and oversaw construction, hiring local masons, carpenters and electricians.

Harry and I liaised with the U.N.,

the government, and local partners to build a strong network to support our work in Sierra Leone. After three months, Nick and I returned to the U.S., leaving Harry and Freetown youth to oversee the daily operations of the center.

In September, Sierra Leone had a monumental democratic election, the first since the 10-year civil war ended in 2002. The new president H.E. Ernest Koroma met with Harry and I, and pledged his support for future centers.

Thanks to the Miracle Corners Sierra Leone Advisory Board, my co-volunteers, and the entire Freetown community for their commitment to positive change in Sierra Leone.



Courtesy of Harry Gbetuwa for MCW

## FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

### A Local Perspective

By Harry Gbetuwa



Over the last decade, Sierra Leone was known for its brutal civil war. Today, it is redefining itself through youth empowerment, community development, and democratization, thanks to the country's new democratically elected government.

Youth played a tremendous role in this political evolution. Issues like economic development, poverty allevia-

tion, job creation, and civic activity are among the most paramount concerns facing youth today. With political change, the country and its youth hope their concerns and priorities will be shared by President Ernest Bai Koroma.

MCW's community center plans to address the desperate needs of the youth by giving them a platform to share their skills and talents. We hope that the community will become self-sufficient through MCW's programs.

Miracle Corners Sierra Leone hopes to expand its project to Makeni to address the need of youth in the North, dramatically affected by the conflict.



Courtesy of Harry Gbetuwa for MCW

(1) Ambassador Mwakawago with US volunteers, pre-school teachers, and Songean youth; (2) Construction on new Sierra Leone center; (3) Sign post at entrance to Sierra Leone center; (4) New computer lab at the Sierra Leone center.

# Community Development

## TANZANIA

### Community IT Training

By Paul Bergman



MCW's Tanzania Information Technology (IT) training project made great progress in 2007 through the hard work and dedication of our IT project team and with continued support from Microsoft.

Based in Arusha and Songea, the IT project trains underserved youth in information and communication technology (ICT) in order to create job opportunities and generate income.

In Arusha, we welcomed our second computer teacher and technician, Omary Mohamed, and opened an Internet room with five computers to complement the main one with 14. We also began to prepare for an advanced software training classroom in 2008.

In Songea, new IT project coordinator Maina Baina joined the team. We also opened our first ICT center downtown with 10 computers and Internet access. In 2008, we plan to open a second ICT training site at the community center in Kipera Village.

Microsoft has supported MCW since 2001, most recently through the Unlimited Potential (UP) initiative, a global program designed to broaden digital inclusion and aid workforce development by providing technology skills. MCW has received over \$85,000 worth of program grants (\$61,000 for 2007 and \$25,000 for 2008).

We look forward to building on our successes and continuing to train communities on how to use IT as a tool for communication, professional growth, and entrepreneurial development.

## TANZANIA

### Shipping News

By Khalid Elachi

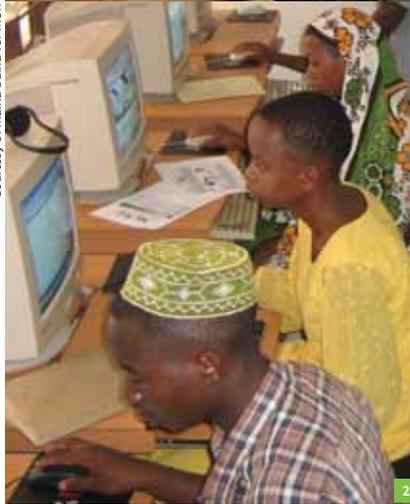


With the help of staff from Ruaha University in Iringa, another shipping container from the U.S.

Courtesy of Marion Bergman for MCW



Courtesy of Maina Baina for MCW



(1) Marion Bergman (top, second from left) and Amy Spencer (top, fourth from left) meet with hospital management and staff; (2) Information Technology center in Songea; (3) Unloading the second container to Iringa at Ruaha University; (4) Outside IT training center in Downtown Songea.

Courtesy of Khalid Elachi for MCW



Courtesy of Amy Spencer for MCW



was unloaded in Tanzania in December. The items were labeled and then allocated to MCW projects in Arusha, Songea, or Iringa to be used by Tanzanian youth and community members.

MCW plans to prepare and send another shipping container of donated items to Sierra Leone in 2008 to support the newly established youth center in Kissy, East Freetown.

## TANZANIA

### MCW Sends Medical Supplies to Tanzania

By Dr. Marion Bergman



Alongside MCW volunteer Amy Spencer and MCW Board Advisor Ambassador Daudi Mwaka-wago, I visited Iringa Regional Hospital and Songea Regional Hospital in July.

At both stops, we met with hospital management and staff, toured the hospitals, and developed a detailed "wish list" of critically needed hospital equipment and supplies.

In Iringa, our goal was to help upgrade women's health and obstetrical services. Equipment like delivery kits, incubators, phototherapy lights, and heating lamps for premature babies—all necessary to upgrade the maternity wing—was included in the wish list.

Songea hospital requested help to upgrade its outpatient dental clinic. The volume of dental caries [cavities] seen at the hospital is second only to malaria, the leading killer of children under five.

Two 40-foot shipping containers filled with medical supplies and equipment reached their destinations in Iringa on 12/9/07 (value \$250,000) and Songea on 12/12/07 (value \$300,000).

MCW partner MedShare International, an Atlanta-based non-profit organization, which distributes surplus medical supplies for use by healthcare institutions in developing countries, prepared and shipped the two containers that were sponsored by MCW friend and supporter Linda Schejola.

# Healthcare

Photos courtesy of nyucd.phanfare.com



Zhemeng Wang for MCW

Courtesy of Marion Bergman



(1) The volunteer NYUCD dental team in Tanzania (from left): Charles Roy, Lauren Meyers, Sheena Lambert, Jill Fernandez, David Treff, Dr. Zhemeng Wang, Dr. Amr Moursi, Dr. Miriam Robbins, Reem Hemantharaju, Dr. Brendan O'Connor, and Nail MacDhubain; (2) MCW and NYUCD dental team with Ambassador Augustine Mahiga of Tanzania in New York; (3) Monica Ngenzi Mbega, Member of Parliament for Iringa Urban and Regional Commissioner for Ruvuma Region, Dr. Marion Bergman, and Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago at the Songea Care and Treatment Clinic; (4) David Treff with Songean youth.

## MCW's Sixth Journey to Songea, Tanzania

On August 19, four dentistry students, one pediatric resident, and six faculty and staff met at New York University's College of Dentistry (NYUCD) in Manhattan to begin a journey that would take them past East Africa's Serengeti to Songea.

Thirty-three hours later, the team arrived at Kipera Village. After only a few hours of sleep, the MCW clinic was opened to the community. (Tanzania has only three dental professionals for every 1.5 million.)

In 2007, the week-long program moved beyond emergent care to introduce oral hygiene education, fluoride varnishes, and sealants.

Nearly 400 patients, including 240 children, received 1,300 treatments (value \$70,000). Songea volunteers helped the team provide treatment. A nurse was also trained to continue the treatment beyond the team's stay.

Below, NYU dental student **David Treff** provides a firsthand account:

Once selected by NYUCD to provide dental care in Songea, I began researching the language, customs, geography, and history of Tanzania. Nothing could quite prepare me for the experience of a lifetime. Only now, months later, can I truly appreciate

what the journey has meant personally and professionally.

From the beginning, MCW volunteers were accommodating and it was their enthusiasm that carried the team through the 17-hour journey from Dar es Salaam to Kipera Village. Once the clinic was fully operational and residents began to arrive to receive care, the experience took shape in a way I will never forget.

From our translators, we learned that patients traveled hours by foot every day to receive badly needed oral healthcare. Children from the nearby primary and secondary schools would wait patiently outside the clinic for hours. As the week progressed, the lines grew longer before the clinic opened. In most cases, the last dental care these people received was a year ago, during the last outreach.

I knew seven words in Swahili: *hujambo* (hello), *fungua tafadhali* (open please), *funga* (close), *basi* (that is all), and *asante sana* (thank you). With the help of translators, MCW volunteers, I treated nearly 40 children and 40 adults in six days.

The opportunity to travel to Tanzania, to meet MCW volunteers, and to treat the children of Songea has inspired me to pursue a career in pediatric dentistry and global public health. To everyone who made this experience possible for me, "asante sana."

## MCW Helps Send Team to PATA Conference

Established in 2004 to help reduce HIV-AIDs, the Songea Care and Treatment Clinic (CTC) is now the busiest clinic at the Songea Regional Hospital, with 4,017 patients (1,373 men, 2,644 women, and 318 children under 15).

Open 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. five days a week, the team (five clinicians, nine nurses, four pharmacy staff, and three lab staff) provides services to children, including 100 babies born to PMTCT+ (Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission) mothers. CTC also offers services twice a month to neighbouring Madaba and Magagula.

To help train staff, since 2005, MCW has helped pediatric AIDS treatment teams participate in Pediatric Aids Treatment for Africa (PATA) conferences. In 2007, four staff participated in the conference in Swaziland.

"PATA provides a forum for health professionals from rural areas to learn from each other and experts in the field," said Dr. Marion Bergman. "This gives MCW the opportunity to help improve rural healthcare, specifically for children with HIV/AIDS. We hope to facilitate the sharing of ideas, experiences, and best practices between healthcare providers in two similar rural communities."

# Partner Initiatives *Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner*

Photos courtesy of Jacqueline Murekatete for MCW



(1) First MCW Commemorative Event on Rwandan Genocide, NYU, April 2007; (2) Crisis in Darfur event, Tel Aviv University, Israel, June; (3) Rally Against Genocide in Darfur, New York, September; (4) MCW Raising Awareness on Rwanda event hosted by Victor Gruber (second from right), Los Angeles, November; (5) Speaking with David Gwertzman, Bucknell University, Pennsylvania, November; (6) Dream for Darfur and Mia Farrow Visit to Srebrenica, Bosnia, December; (7) Alfred Hanssen; Silas Nyirindikwe, Vice Mayor of Bugesera District; and Eddie Bergman at MCW community center site in Bugesera, Rwanda, January 2008.

## By Jacqueline Murekatete



Since the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, which claimed over one million lives in 100 days, the country has come a long way.

Rwanda's political, economic, and social developments are considerable.

Still, the country's progress faces many challenges as the plight of survivors is a reality that the international community cannot continue to ignore. Nearly 14 years later, hundreds of thousands of orphans of the genocide, HIV-AIDS, and malaria, live in Rwanda, women who were raped and infected with HIV-AIDS during the genocide lack access to medication; and disabled and dismembered survivors lack proper medical care.

As a survivor who lost my entire immediate and extended family, it is imperative to educate people about the crime of genocide and to help survivors rebuild their lives. This drove me to create *Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner* with MCW in April 2007.

Since then, we have aimed to raise support for genocide education for youth. We are also building a new com-

munity center in Rwanda, which will help survivors through income-generating and educational programs.

Although it is less than a year "young," our initiative has enjoyed superb progress. Our work has brought us to New York, Milwaukee, Memphis, and Los Angeles, and also beyond the U.S. to Israel, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Belgium. Chicago, Miami, and San Francisco are around the corner.

Thanks to the generosity of our financial supporters and the hard work of MCW staff and volunteers, the MCW community center in Rwanda is becoming more of a reality every day. In fact, we have already secured land for the center in the District of Bugesera and, if all goes according to plan, the center will be operating by the end of 2008.

The future of *Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner* is certainly a bright one. We invite you to continue to be a part of our ongoing effort to create a more tolerant and peaceful world—a world in which the right of every human being to exist, dream, and achieve, will one day be recognized by all.

*Jacqueline is an MCW Fellow and the founder and project director of Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner.*

## By Monica Willard



*Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner* is a powerful, timely initiative. Jacqueline knows first hand about suffering and loss. She also knows that an MCW center can provide a place of hope and refuge for youth to build a new future by learning skills and trust.

Jacqueline has received many opportunities, and now is creating opportunities for others. With her MCW team and many others in Rwanda, she will use MCW expertise and experience to create a thriving, sustainable center with much to offer Rwandan youth.

This important project offers more: the opportunity for people of all ages to show they care for the children and youth of Rwanda—that they want to be a part of building a new history where neighbors live together, even after the horrors of genocide.

This possibility and hope can change individuals and history. You are invited to be a part of that change.

*Monica is an MCW Advisory Board Member and UN NGO Representative for the United Religions Initiative.*

# Partner Initiatives

## Broad Street Beatz: *It Was All a Dream*

By Rob Alsbrooks

Broad Streets Beatz was planted in the heart of North Philadelphia. It began as a once-a-week after-school program for children to learn digital music production and a host of other leadership skills.

With funding from MCW, it grew into a full-time summer program. And now with the help of Elder G. L. Frison, Broad Street Beatz has blossomed into a full-time after-school program.

The first showcase of Broad Street Beatz talent was at a fashion show held in conjunction with the Institute for the Development of African-American Youth, Inc. (IDAAY), a local youth organization. It was well-received and supported by parents and other local organizations. The children were motivated to set new fashion trends.

The students were not only excited about learning how to put on a fashion show, but also enthused about strutting down the runway. They learned that like with many of today's creative leaders, music is often incorporated as a creative inspiration.

Each student put together outfits to express his/her individual sense of style. The show was a huge success. In addition to fully expressing themselves in their unique styles, the young leaders also managed their rehearsal times, practiced their lineups and organized



*The best victory for the students was being able to experience the rewards of all their hard work. Although their hard work and preparation did result in a successful event, the students soon began to learn that being a leader is not always fun.*



Photos by Rob Alsbrooks for MCW

(1) Broad Street Beatz Co-Founder Brandon Grossinger adjusts the sound; (2) Community cleanup and car wash fundraiser in North Philadelphia.

every aspect of the show.

The best victory for the students was being able to experience the rewards of all their hard work. Although their hard work and preparation did result in a successful event, the students soon began to learn that being a leader is not always fun. The children were forced to understand leadership the hard way.

During summer 2007, the facility that embraced the Broad Street Beatz' summer program was burglarized, and the children were robbed of their production equipment.

However, with positive spirits, the students saw this as an opportunity to get involved in their community. By identifying and developing solutions to problems in their community, they organized an art show with donated artwork from Jaded Spirit and me.

The students also organized a community cleanup and carwash. All proceeds from the fundraisers were used to purchase new equipment and supplies and to support student activities.

Although the students may be more passionate about music and its production, they are also excited to receive leadership and entrepreneurial skills at the same time.

Our hats are off and we proudly bow toward the youth who are transforming their dreams into reality.



## Remembering Dr. George Sideris

*George was a longtime friend to MCW, leading exchange and travel study programs for many years to Tanzania. From the very beginning, George used his artistry as a photographer and documentarian to capture MCW's programs and faces, helping turn MCW into what it is today. He brought his commitment to youth, education, and learning to thousands of students, opening their eyes, hearts, and minds to the world. As my professor and thesis advisor, George was truly one of my favorite and most inspiring teachers! I will always remember him as a moving mentor, an entrepreneurial educator, a dedicated volunteer, a hard and passionate worker, and a dear friend.*

—Eddie Bergman

*Professor George Sideris will never be forgotten in the stories of Arusha youth. He always made our ideas come true by being a great helper and by providing real examples of how things work around the world. He was a great person to everyone. Every summer he recruited students and brought them to Africa to join us in many projects. We will remember this forever and we will take action to honor his sacrifices to us.*

—The Perfect Brothers

*I am so sorry for the death of Professor George Sideris. He was a father and a teacher for the entire MCW family, particularly for the youth of Arusha.*

—Felix Nyakatale



Photos courtesy of Anna Gombulis for MCW

# Miracles We Make

## Partnering for Humanity

By Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago



Last July I visited Songea for a second time with Marion Bergman and a team of volunteers. I expected to see some progress at the Kipera site in Songea and little else.

To my pleasant surprise, a new IT center had opened downtown. Through a Microsoft grant, Songea will enjoy a center with over 10 computers, computer classes, and Internet services.

There was excitement all over the place and for good reason. Songea has limited Internet service. Now, with the new MCW facility, Songea will be connected to the world in a more reliable way. And that is exactly what has happened. The center has become a hub of activity. Students take courses while other users avail themselves to the Internet. MCW's profile in Songea has grown tremendously.

That was not the only thing happening. Marion's mission was to facilitate the donation of supplies to Iringa and Songea regional hospitals. She was accompanied by the Spencer family. John, a retired dental operator, provided expertise on the equipment; while his daughter Amy, who works for a dental manufacturing firm, provided strategic input to the enterprise. I mention all this to demonstrate MCW's pulling effect. As I write, news from Iringa is that the two containers for the two hospitals have arrived and were offloaded. That is good news indeed.

One can imagine the two hospitals and the dental units will be fully refurbished in the coming months, to the relief of many patients. I am absolutely sure that many lives will be saved as a result of this generous support. The donors who support MCW are indeed making a difference thousands of miles away. Our grateful thanks to all.

What is happening in Iringa, Songea and Arusha are sure examples of "local change through global exchange™." There could not be a better partnership for the cause of humanity.

## A Story of Relationships

By Alfred Hanssen

Ambassador Mwakawago reminds us, "The driver always needs one mosquito to stay alert and on course. But, with too many mosquitoes, the car is sure to crash." Implicit in this quote is the importance of relationships built with sensitivity and attention. This is the vocabulary behind MCW's story.

In 2001, we built our first center in Arusha, followed by Songea in 2005 and then Sierra Leone in 2006-7. As we celebrate six years of success, we now lay the foundations for new centers across the African continent.

Yet, as we look ahead, we also look back. Strong leadership projects in Songea and Arusha—which was renovated last year due to the sheer amount of use—continue to inspire other MCW centers. Now, we are building a center in Rwanda, drawing on Jacqueline's vision and MCW's model. This is a great undertaking, one that will test our capacity to bring people together to create positive change.



Courtesy of Alfred Hanssen

Outside the Songea ICT center (from left): Volunteer Arthur Peterson, Coordinator Felix Nyakatele, Songea Advisors Chiguru and Mbanu, Alfred Hanssen, and volunteer Courtney Schenk.

With a vocabulary of the power of relationships, we write our own stories; stories that intersect and run parallel, connecting people and connecting *with* people. It is impossible to recount our story in its entirety. It would suffice to say, "this is a strong and good foundation."

So, as we look behind to move ahead, let us act with care, respect, and consideration, and do so without too many mosquitoes.

## Youth Across Tanzania

By Amy Spencer



During a visit to Tanzania last summer, I witnessed MCW's positive impact on rural and urban youth.

Although MCW runs centers in two dramatically different areas—the countryside of Songea and inner-city of Arusha—the results are similar. Children receive educational opportunities that not only improve their own lives, but also influence the future of the country.

The Songea center is a 14-hour journey from Dar Es Salaam. Songea is off-the-beaten path and does not receive a lot of help from the rest of the world. Since educational opportunities in rural Africa are rare, many children growing up in Songea may not have the chance to attend school.

Despite the distance, MCW gives youth the opportunity to attend preschool, English, and computer-training classes, providing them with skills to participate in the government, education, or healthcare systems that impact their overall wellbeing.

The Arusha center is full of energetic youth taking advantage of the chance to learn and improve their destinies. Students come together to discuss how to take control of their own lives, rather than waiting for the government to solve their problems. They talk about education, small businesses, politics and the need for more HIV-AIDS prevention programs.

MCW has created a safe place for youth to learn and become advocates for change.

The fact that MCW makes a difference in both rural and urban Tanzania is more significant than one may think. For change to take place, youth must attack problems from different angles.

MCW develops young leaders with a variety of perspectives and ones who tolerate differences. These young people are their communities' advocates who help shape the country's future.

# News

## YouTube News

Thanks to MCW Project Coordinator Khalid Elachi, MCW has become a designated non-profit channel of YouTube News, a leader in online video news.

Launched at the Clinton Global Initiative in September 2007, the YouTube Nonprofit Program helps non-profit organizations like MCW connect with supporters, volunteers, and donors—almost like an online campaign.

The program offers MCW a website-linked channel to broadcast videos and programs to raise awareness of MCW's global concerns, causes, and projects.

## New York to Djibouti

MCW helped three New York students participate in the Young Professionals Forum (YPF) for students interested in tourism to Africa in January 2008. The small country of Djibouti, located between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, hosted the global eco and cultural tourism event, which was organized by the Africa Travel Association (ATA). YPF was launched in 2005 in the port city of Calabar, Nigeria.

## Ivory Coast Update

In 1999, Eddie Bergman led the effort to build a three-room elementary school in the village of Tangoumassou in South East Ivory Coast. Alsbrooks joined Bergman in the Ivory Coast, where they then conceived "Miracle Corners of the World." Thanks to a field report prepared by UN Political Officer Gamiliel Ndaruzaniye, MCW learned that the school now includes nine rooms, graduates hundreds of students, and boasts seven male teachers.

## Woman of Valor

MCW Board of Directors Member Roberta Richin received the American Jewish Committee's *2008 Women of Valor Award* for her efforts to make the community a better place to live in through education and public service. A ceremony was held in her honor on Long Island in early March. MCW friends joined the celebration.



Courtesy of Johanne Biferre for MCW

1



Photos courtesy of Jean-Claude Harabagabo for MCW

2

(1) Young Professional Forum participants Intisar and Hanifah Abioto with Eddie Bergman and mentor Amb. Mwakawago in Djibouti; (2) School Director Matthew Konan with Ivory Coast youth; (3) Konan next to the elementary school; (4) Roberta Richin (fourth from right) celebrates her Women of Valor Award with MCW friends; (5) Roundtable discussion with Tanzania President Kikwete in New York.



3



Courtesy of Kim Stewart for MCW

4



Opp Show for MCW

5

## Kikwete in New York

MCW hosted Tanzanian President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete at a roundtable discussion on investment in Tanzania in September. World Bank Vice President of Africa Obiageli Ezekwesili joined Eddie Bergman in introducing the event. Fox Business Network anchor Liz Claman moderated the discussion, which included Amb. Augustine Mahiga, US business and non-profit leaders, and Irish and Italian philanthropists. MCW supporter Linda Schejola and Dr. Marion Bergman presented Kikwete with a certificate celebrating the donation of two containers of medical equipment and supplies to Iringa and Songea regional hospitals in Tanzania.

## Generation Next

As part of its civil rights series, New York daily *Newsday* featured Eddie Bergman and Jacqueline Murekatete as a "new generation of activists" fighting "for change on Long Island and around the globe" in its weekend edition in March 2008. To watch the interviews, visit [www.newsday.com/civilrights/](http://www.newsday.com/civilrights/).

## MCW's 2007 Gala

To celebrate their vision of using sports as a tool to empower youth worldwide, MCW honored tennis legend Billie Jean King, World Team Tennis CEO and Commissioner Ilana Kloss, Cal Ramsey of the New York Knicks, Baltimore Ravens linebacker and Super Bowl MVP Ray Lewis, and the NFL at its third annual gala dinner at New York University's Kimmel Center in March 2007.

Special recognition was given to Microsoft's Community Affairs Program for supporting MCW's IT project in Tanzania. Ambassador Augustine Philip Mahiga of Tanzania received the MCW Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of more than two decades of diplomatic service and steadfast support of MCW projects in Tanzania.

Michelle Makori, Bloomberg TV News Anchor, emceed the celebration and Liz Claman, Fox-News correspondent, and Ali Velshi, CNN Senior Business Correspondent, also participated.



Photos courtesy of Anna Morris for MCW

(1) MCW's Third Annual Gala Dinner Gala Dinner on Monday, March 5, 2007 at the Kimmel Center at New York University (from left): South African Consul General Fikile Mabugane, South African Deputy Minister of Sport Gert Oosthuizen, UN Deputy Secretary General Dr. Asha-Rose Mtengeti-Migiro Mgiro, World Team Tennis Commissioner Ilana Kloss; (2) MCW Lifetime Achievement Award 2007 presented to Ambassador to the Tanzania Permanent Mission to the U.N. Augustine Mahiga (from left): MCW Co-Founder and Programs Director Rob Alsbrooks, Ambassador Donald Steinberg, Ambassador Mahiga, Ambassador to the South Africa Permanent Mission to the U.N. Dumisani Kumalo, Dr. John Brademas, and MCW Co-Founder and Executive Director Eddie Bergman.

**CALENDAR**

**APRIL**  
 4th Annual Gala Dinner  
 2nd Annual Rwanda Commemoration  
*New York, USA*

**MAY**  
 Container to *Sierra Leone*

**JULY**  
 11th Youth Leadership Retreat and  
 Open Doors Ceremony  
*Vermont and New York, USA*

**AUGUST**  
 7th Dental Outreach Program  
*Songea, Tanzania*

**The Miracle Corners of the World Team**

<p><b>MENTORS</b>                  Dr. Elijah Anderson                  Lavern McDonald                  Dr. Edward B. Shils *                  Dr. George Sideris *                  Dr. Herman Wrice *  <i>*Deceased</i></p> <p><b>DIRECTORS</b>                  Paul Bergman                  Anna Condoulis                  Roberta Richin                  Dr. Anthony Vernillo</p>	<p><b>US ADVISORS</b>                  Dr. Catherine DeLeo                  Bunny Grossinger                  Amb. Daudi Mwakawago                  Charmaine Peart-HoSang                  Dr. Nancy Scanlon                  Kym Stewart                  Courtney Tuckman                  Ronald Uba                  Dr. Peter White                  Monica Willard</p> <p><b>SIERRA LEONE ADVISORS</b>                  Patricia Brown                  Samuel Hingha Pieh</p>	<p><b>FELLOW</b>                  Jacqueline Murekatete</p> <p><b>COORDINATORS</b>                  Dr. Marion Bergman                  Amanda Blount                  Khalid Elachi                  Harry Gbetuwa                  Felix Nyakatele</p> <p><b>PHILADELPHIA, US TEAM</b>                  Brandon Grossinger</p>	<p><b>ARUSHA, TZ TEAM</b>                  Josephat Aynuur                  Rachel Innocent                  Joachim Mayange                  Omari Mohamed                  Abdunuru Mohamed                  Glory Pascal Paul</p> <p><b>SONGEEA, TZ TEAM</b>                  Maina Baina                  Dr. Bilali                  Happy Gama                  Ismaili Mbaya                  Paskalia Ndunguru                  Augusta Winna</p>	<p><b>STAFF</b>                  Alfred Hanssen                  Nathalie Philippe                  Sharon Roling</p> <p><b>INTERNS</b>                  Yasmin Elachi                  Sharon Hakakian                  Kendra Miller</p> <p><b>CO-FOUNDERS</b>                  Rob Alsbrooks                  Eddie Bergman</p>
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