

News on Nyumbani



The first facility for HIV
positive orphans in Kenya

www.nyumbani.org

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Summer 2011

Dear Friends of Nyumbani,

Greetings from us all during this Easter season when we celebrate the joy of Christ's Resurrection. This year I joined with the Nyumbani Home children for the Holy Week ceremonies, culminating in the Easter Vigil during which several of the children were baptized. I was inspired not only by the faith of our young people but also by their increasing competence and confidence in organizing the liturgy. Easter Sunday brought our British Airways friends for an Easter fun day. Excitement reached a peak when the Easter Bunny appeared to announce a treasure hunt. With recent changes in British Airways scheduling, we weren't sure if this annual event could happen. Appeals to the administration worked the 'miracle' for which we are deeply grateful.

Easter Monday took me to Nyumbani Village where we again celebrated Easter joy with liturgy and entertainment. I was especially delighted that the students in Nyumbani Polytechnic stole the show as the entertainment. Recent great news that all 2010 students passed their tests; the magnificent donation of mechanics ma-

chines from Nyumbani Onlus, Italy; and Safaricom Kenya presenting 15 computers for a computer lab, mean 2011 is becoming the Year of the Polytechnic.

With eight family houses now complete and four more close to completion, we are welcoming six new families into the Village as I write this. We are deeply grateful to our generous donors, which included groups of Irish students who funded four houses and helped with building them. This new intake will bring the number of children to over 800 with 76 grandparents. By the end of this year, we will be close to our target of 1,000 children. Also, two studio blocks for teachers with four rooms each have been completed. This is a start for being able to evacuate staff from 10 family houses where they have been accommodated. I was particularly pleased to see that work on a sports' pitch [field] for Lawson High School (LHS) is well underway, fruit of a silent auction at the House of Commons in February. LHS students are already making their name in football.

Since I wrote last, our 2010 End-of-High School graduates have received

their examination results. We rejoiced that all 35 passed so they will receive a certificate. Now has begun the challenge of obtaining tertiary level training to enable them to get employment and become self-reliant. I sincerely appeal for help in sponsoring these young people. Please contact me at mary@nyumbani.org if you can help.

Against this great success of our school graduates (especially 14 who carry the HIV virus) is the heartache of receiving a call from our national hospital to ask us to accept into the Nyumbani Home a little toddler abandoned in the hospital car park. His only identity on admission was 'African boy.' Now, we call him Ben, and he is already showing signs of being well-socialized.

We were delighted in February to welcome again our UK Rotary friends ready as always to offer 'service beyond self.' One group built 11 shelters for outdoor cooking in the Nyumbani Village and partitioned our new Lea Toto Centre in Dagoretti. The other group revamped and restocked our gift shop and helped reorganize areas that can escape ordinary maintenance. I was invited to share a speaking opportunity at the Rotary International Great Britain and Ireland conference in Dublin April 15 to 17, which gave me the opportunity to thank Rotary for its support of Nyumbani and to sensitize the large audience about the need to access third-line antiretroviral drugs (ARVs).

There is a glimmer of hope in this area from a followup of my visit to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Atlanta. More evidence of the need for third-line ARVs

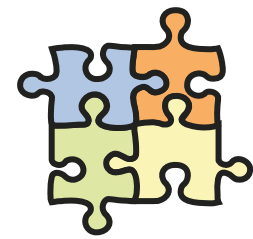


British Airways friends joined the Nyumbani Home crew to celebrate Easter this year.

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Reintegration into the Community



By Nyumbani General Manager Protus Lumiti

The process of reintegration started informally in 1997 when the Nyumbani Home began receiving many orphaned children for admission. Some children were admitted on a short-term basis awaiting counseling of extended family members. They were returned to the families after that counseling was complete.

Reintegration picked up steam when the Lea Toto Community program began in 1998 and most of the orphaned children could be helped by that program. The Home only focused on children who tested HIV positive and were abandoned.

In 2006, Nyumbani began tracing the relatives of the children in the Home whose records were available. In 2007, we had our first voluntary reintegration when our oldest boy asked to move out into the community. He rented his own house, got a job and is now well integrated into the community. Last year, our first girl to move into the community went to stay with her brother; she also got a job, and she is currently living on her own.

The Home also began Open Days where we invite the extended family members to visit Nyumbani and spend a day with the children and the staff. The families then invite the children for a short stay with them during the school holidays.

After positive feedback from both the children and the extended families, we have encouraged the families to invite the children for longer visits; three weeks and more. Last year, we had a record response when not only family members but family friends invited the children to their homes. The children returned happy and willing to go out for visits and stays more often.

Reintegration supports the children under our care by linking up with their next of kin and experiencing a nuclear family lifestyle. The main goal is to prepare the children for adult life so they can achieve a lasting improvement in their lives outside of the Nyumbani Home. Our target is to bring out their full human potential through empowerment after

school and in community life. We believe that as citizens of Kenya, they should integrate with ordinary citizens and have equal rights in society. Reintegration also is an excellent way to fight the stigma of the disease. The government of Kenya has a policy encouraging that children who have extended family members be linked to that family. At Nyumbani, some relatives rejected our efforts at first, but the program has gradually gained success.

Nyumbani considers it our duty to see that the children can thrive in the community from which they came and can live a full, meaningful life with normal experiences such as marriage, kinship, family and community. Our aim is for the children to be able to stay in contact with their roots in hopes they will be reunited with those roots. It is not possible to plan for all 112 children at the same time because they have different needs upon leaving school, so we are taking this process from the eldest to the youngest children. Seniority is also based on school and courses of study because those factors decide what further education they need as well as what life they can lead when they are ready. Those who attain maturity and are at tertiary levels of education

move into hostels outside the Nyumbani Home. They gain training in our Youth Centre where they learn home care and cooking. They do their own laundry and are mentored through life skills with minimal supervision.

Over the past 18 years, we've had 26 children who have returned to extended family, one child who went out on his own, 11 children discharged for adoption and 26 children who went into foster care within family and non-family situations.

These preparations are gradual and include specialized instructions and meetings so that the ones remaining behind do not become anxious or worried. After counseling and meetings, we have an official goodbye meeting with the children who have lived with the departing child and the house mother. We invite the management of Nyumbani, the family that is receiving the child and the social worker to these meetings. We make a formal hand-over of the departing child to the family. Thereafter, we allow home visits to find out how the child is stabilizing.

We also have partnered for the reintegration process with Little Angels Network, a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing children and community networks together for the sake of the children.

Edwin Pursues Dream of Aviation

Editor's Note: *One of the wonders of Nyumbani is that the children that have lived at the Nyumbani Home have now grown into adulthood and are seeking their way in the world. Here's what Edwin says about his hopes for the future and the role his recent trip to Ireland played in career formation.*

My name is Edwin, and I am 20 years old. I graduated from Nairobi Aviation College on November 7, 2010 in flight dispatch. My dream career was to work in an airport surrounding. This is because I've loved airplanes since I was a child, and the day I had the opportunity to travel to Ireland in 2007, I saw that it could be a career. I decided I wanted to work on planes and that a good place to

start is from the ground.

With my diploma, I hope to get a job in aviation that will help in providing safety to others. The feeling and the experience of ensuring that people are able to board and arrive at their intended places safely is even better than wishing them safe journey.

When I first came to Nyumbani, I was very young and scared. It was a new place to me, but as time passed, I felt more and more that I was at home, not an orphanage. I went to primary school then secondary school, and I worked in the Lea Toto program as a volunteer. I also have worked in a local restaurant in Karen part time to experience the outside world. When I enrolled in college, I stayed in the

Nyumbani Changes Lives, and not Just in Kenya

By Izabella Hearn, Vice President, Amigos de Nyumbani

Editor's Note: News on Nyumbani begins a series with this story on what some of the other international boards are doing in their efforts to help the children of Africa. Here, we learn how the newest body—Spain's board—was formed.

My family was already under the Nyumbani spell when Father D'Agostino gave us contact details for Marta Alonso. Marta had been a volunteer in the Home in the late 1990's and her commitment had grown even further over the years. Before long, a group of us met up and started putting our ideas for how to help the Nyumbani family into practice, formalizing Amigos de Nyumbani as a registered nongovernmental organization (NGO) in Spain.

Friends and family collaborated in this effort and spread the word so that in February 2008, the board was officially "launched." This was a colorful event that included a performance by African musicians and a display of handicrafts from Lea Toto as well as speeches and movies of Nyumbani.

We had two main goals when we started our work. One was to support the three Nyumbani projects in any way we could, while always remaining guided by the needs and the advice of the management in Kenya. The second was to raise awareness of the reality of the present day situation for the people of Kenya.

Edwin

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college hostels with the other students, a life that was very different from Nyumbani. However, what I learned at the home enabled me to manage my life, take care of myself and my health, and organize my time. Time at college went very fast, and now I have graduated and am looking for a job. I recently moved out of Nyumbani and rented a small room in the community. Life is different from Nyumbani, and it is my responsibility to make sure I am able to adjust. I now seek to do some small jobs to get income as I look for a career. My future plan is to go back to college for a course that may give me an expanded opportunity in the job market.

We attended our first Nyumbani Board Summit in November 2008 as the new kids on the block—a little apprehensive but always deeply appreciative of the warm welcome we received. We noted with interest how differently each board works, and yet how very much alike the deep commitment is for all of us.

In Spain, our group consists of an Executive Board, made up of six people, including a president and vice president. We also have over 40 paying members who are not part of the board but can choose to play a role in the organization. The board meets once a month and often nonboard members are invited to come along.

One of the most significant contributions to Nyumbani has been the volunteer project. A prestigious university, Comillas, has collaborated with us to select and train outstanding young people that we send to the Home, the Village and Lea Toto. They then spend the summer gaining and sharing expertise in various different areas. We know that the connections made will prove invaluable in the future because anyone who ever spends time in Nyumbani falls in love with the projects.

One of our key sources of funding is through events at King's College, the major British School in Spain that has three centers in the Madrid area. Here, we

I am so grateful and always thankful to all the people who have helped our family at Nyumbani. I look forward to a better future and hope to be part of the future for others through helping them.

Nyumbani provided me a real home. I saw it change over the past years with new buildings. I also saw the children growing up in responsible ways—the youth were able to take on more responsibility as the years went by, and now they can help the younger ones as they grow up. My advice to other children who are within the Nyumbani programs is to remain hopeful and share good ideas that can help all of us in the family grow up responsibly.



Members of the Executive Board for Spain at a fundraiser. From left are Carlos Ballesteros, Marta Alonso (president), Monica Gomez and Izabella Hearn.

have fulfilled our aim of bringing Africa into the hearts of a growing generation. There is not a child at King's College who does not know about daily life in Nyumbani and does not enjoy the updates about the children's antics or details of fun days in the Home.

The children in Spain have a direct connection with the children in Kenya. The Infant School, north of Madrid, has a fund-raising committee of six-year-olds who are taking their role very seriously indeed. Recently, they organized a poster competition and needed a little persuasion from the head teacher to lower the entrance fee from a million euros to one!

In 2009 and 2010, we were delighted to bring some magic from Spain to Nyumbani. Board member Marian Alvarez organized tours of Spanish magicians from the Fundacion Abracadabra. This amazing group travels the world to bring smiles and laughter to children. Last April, the short movie from the 2009 trip (Magical Kenya) was awarded the Publifestival prize for the best social action project. (For a heart-warming look, go to www.amigosdenyumbani.es.)

In the past months we have collaborated with several important NGO's in Spain including Energia sin Fronteras and Manos Unidas. Both groups have already visited Nyumbani, and we have high hopes of major joint projects.

We warmly invite Friends of Nyumbani from the U.S. to join us on Facebook (Amigos de Nyumbani) and follow our events on twitter. You will find photos and details of the events and updates regarding issues that concern us all. We would also be delighted to receive your comments!

ASANTE SANA!

Planning Underway for 2011 Nyumbani Benefit

By Larry Dunham, Fundraiser Committee Co-Chair

Friends of Nyumbani: please circle September 30, 2011 on your calendar—that's the date of Nyumbani's 18th Annual Benefit and Auction, and you won't want to miss it.

Recognizing the tremendous impact that Nyumbani has had on all of us who have been touched by its programs, this year's theme will be "Nyumbani—Transforming Lives."

Ever wonder how the benefit came to be? It stretches back to not long after Nyumbani's founding by Father D'Agostino, when friends began holding events in Washington to support his work in Nairobi. At first, these get-togethers simply provided an opportunity for Father D'Ag and friends to share a meal during his visits to the U.S., and to receive updates on his endeavors in Kenya. Some of the earliest of these meetings were held in local restaurants, such as Georgetown's famous River Club. It wasn't long, however, before it was clear that these occasional gatherings were evolving into something larger. The meetings were attracting bigger crowds so more spacious venues had to be located.

Today, Nyumbani's annual benefit rivals Washington's major social events, drawing attendees from business, politics, the arts and the media, in addition to the legions of loyal Nyumbani supporters

who have participated since the beginning. In recent times, the fund raiser has filled spaces as varied from one another as Union Station, Georgetown Prep, the elegant Embassy of Italy, and the historic Willard Intercontinental Hotel. This year, the event will return to the luxurious Ritz Carlton Hotel in downtown Washington.

No matter the location, however, those who attend Nyumbani's benefits always get treated to a special evening. Over the years, we heard the side-splitting performances of D.C.'s favorite funnyman, Mark Russell, and the insightful, tongue-in-cheek presentations of Father's D'Ag's friend—political columnist and commentator Mark Shields.

We've also been entertained by memorable performances of Mottown's Chris Clark and the talented L'illong Millionig. Last year we were treated to a moving rendition of "I Dream," written and performed especially for the occasion by Broadway star Ernestine Jackson.

This year, the charming Kathleen Matthews, who has been mistress of ceremonies at events stretching back almost to the beginning, will return to host the program to the delight of many who now know her.

Although various forms of auctions have been part of the festivities for the past decade, this part of the evening has grown to be an extensive, exciting part of the event.

From the silent auction featuring hotel and restaurant packages, fine wines, fashions, jewelry, art, gift certificates and so much more to live auction items of home furnishings, sports outings and vacation packages, it is hard to get through the evening without bidding on something. Last year a lucky bidder came away with a trip to

Kenya, complete with a visit to Nyumbani.

Auction Committee co-chairs Gail Dalferes Condrey and Katie Stuart, who organized last year's highly successful auction, are back on the job and promising an even more impressive array of items this year. Beyond the auction are items for sale such as crafts imported



Mistress of Ceremonies Kathleen Matthews was joined at the podium in 2004 by her husband political commentator and television celebrity Chris Matthews.

from Africa, which are always a favorite for those who want to do some early Christmas shopping.

But beyond the glamour of the entertainment, the venue and the auction/sales lies the real purpose for the annual

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Famous political comedian Mark Russell has kept audiences laughing at many Nyumbani fundraisers. This picture is from his performance in 2002.



The D'Agostino family has been involved in supporting Nyumbani from its beginning. Pictured at the 2006 event are board member and former president Joe D'Agostino and his wife Mary Ellen.

Benefit

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event: to focus on Nyumbani's mission. In addition to raising funds, this event offers an opportunity to reflect on how very much has been accomplished since Father D'Ag took in three HIV positive orphans two decades ago. Although Nyumbani now reaches thousands of children and their families through its programs, much remains to be done. As Sister Mary Owens has done each year since 2007, she will travel from Kenya to report on the progress at Nyumbani and discuss her goals for the coming year.

Some of those who have provided support and assistance to Nyumbani and its causes will be recognized for their contributions during the event. For example, one of the awards is the John and Patty Noel Humanitarian Award, which honors outstanding individuals and organizations dedicated to fighting poverty, disease and ignorance, and whose accomplishments are consistent with the goals of Nyumbani.

Arrangements for the 2011 benefit and auction are underway and will be reported in the *Fall News on Nyumbani* newsletter and related correspondence. This is a good time, however, to mark your calendar for that special evening when hundreds of people come together to celebrate their mutual love of Nyumbani.



With Father D'Agostino's passing, Sister Mary Owens stepped in and became Nyumbani's spokesperson. She is pictured here at the 2010 event with Rep. Donald M. Payne, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Africa.



Nyumbani Founder Father Angelo D'Agostino used the events not just for fundraising, but to spread knowledge about Nyumbani. Here he is with

Tommy Thompson in 2004. Thompson was U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services under President Bush.



Each event honors people who have helped Nyumbani and the fight against HIV/AIDS. Pictured here in 2009 is special guest and honoree Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health.



Political Commentator Mark Shields has shared his thoughts with Nyumbani audiences at many fundraisers, including this one in 2007.



Many of the fundraisers have celebrated the joy of Nyumbani with song and dance. Motown Singer Chris Clark entertained at the 2007 benefit.



Patty and John Noel's organization, Make a Mark Foundation, has been responsible for planting hundreds of acres of trees, a main ingredient in the Village's efforts to be a sustainable community. They share conversation here at the 2010 benefit with Sister Mary.



Long-time Nyumbani supporters Giuseppe and Mercedes Cecchi have helped to make Nyumbani's events possible. They are pictured here at the 2005 fundraiser.

Dear Friends

(Continued from page 1)

is being found based on research on the Nyumbani Home by a joint team from CDC and the U.S. Agency for International Development. A Spanish Friend of Nyumbani put me in contact with a service in the UK that makes available compassionate use of two of the three components in third-line. While in Ireland, our Irish Board got me a contact for the third component. As I write, with two boys in the Nyumbani Home and several in Lea Toto needing access to these drugs, I am working for a final breakthrough, not only for Nyumbani, but also for Kenya and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa.

Visitors increasingly come to see us, and we are always happy to welcome them. Lea Toto Kangemi and Kibera and Nyumbani Home hosted groups of Barclay's top executives under the Leaders' Quest program, and there has been a follow-up offer of help. The president of BD Biosciences, Jay Glasscook, and two vice-presidents visited to see our new

laboratory that WHO-Afro is accrediting through BD Biosciences funding. A visit from Ryan Burnett, Alliance Biosciences, came at the right time for preparing for the organization and overseeing of the accreditation process. I was invited to meet the new Executive Director of the Global Health Initiative, Lois Quam, at the home of the Deputy Chief of Mission for the U.S. Embassy, Lee Brudvig. Through our contacts with the London School of Commerce, the Pro-Vice chancellor of the University of Wales, Jaqui Hare, together with Elery Jones came to visit the Nyumbani Home and to hear about our other programs. Following an application for help with funding more studio blocks in the Nyumbani Village, we were delighted to welcome representatives from Manos Unidas, Spain to the Village.

Nyumbani continues, Nyumbani grows, and we rejoice that our children are now becoming young adults and gradually leaving our care. I hope that you, our Friends of Nyumbani, who accompany us on this journey, experience

the great joy that we experience in this realization of Father Angelo D'Agostino's vision. God bless you all,

Sister Mary Owens,

Have you visited or volunteered at Nyumbani in the past 10 years? If so, we want you to be part of our "Visitors and Volunteers" outreach program. To join, please email your contact information to info@nyumbani.org, and we will be in touch soon!

Please note that the address for sending donations by check in the U.S. has changed to:

**Children of God Relief Fund, Inc.
c/o Crowell & Moring, LLP
1001 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004**

The Website remains the same at www.nyumbani.org/us_donate.htm.



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Nyumbani's Founder Father Angelo D'Agostino at past benefits