

# News on Nyumbani



*The first facility for HIV positive orphans in Kenya.*

[www.nyumbani.org](http://www.nyumbani.org)

Volume VI, Issue 1

First Quarter 2005

## Eleventh Annual Nyumbani Benefit

- ❖ Tuesday, September 27, 2005
- ❖ Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC
- ❖ Mark Russell, Featured Entertainer
- ❖ Kathleen Matthews, Mistress of Ceremonies
- ❖ Annual Report by Father D'Ag

*Look to the next issue of this newsletter for further details.*

## Bring Home the Children's Voices

Award-winning children's musical artist Judy Pancoast recently released "Songs from the Children of Nyumbani."

The songs evolved from a workshop Pancoast led during a week-long artist-in-residence stay at the orphanage. Pancoast helped the children write lyrics and compose the melody, which was then recorded in Nairobi. Pancoast oversaw the production and design of the CD from her New Hampshire home.

The CD is being sold for \$7.50 (including U.S. shipping and handling). All profits go to the children. To order, please call (703) 934-8534 or email [info@nyumbani.org](mailto:info@nyumbani.org).

## Dear Friends of Nyumbani:

Christmas this year was extra special for many reasons—not the least of which was the presence, for the last time, of Archbishop Giovanni Tonucci, Apostolic Prelate to Kenya. He was days away from leaving Kenya to be reassigned to Scandinavia. The children's rousing 'Amen's' to his dismissal of the Mass will remain a symbol of the way he touched our lives during the almost eight years he was with us. His unwavering support of Nyumbani, even during difficult times such as when we were getting unfavorable press last year, has been a tremendous validation of our efforts to reach out to the nearly 1,400 children now in our programs.

Christmas was also special because, as always, so many friends of Nyumbani went out of their way to make the festivities memorable for the children. We had a donated Christmas turkey, gifts from Santa and parties for our Lea Toto children. Helen Northfield from the UK, her friends, and our volunteers also made the ushering in of 2005 special for our Nyumbani children.

Christmas and the beginning of the New Year also brought special guests such as USA Board Member Dino Di Concini, his wife, Beth, and son, Keith. Shortly after the family left, we welcomed two more USA Board Members: Jim Desmond, Immediate Past President, and Michael Litzelman. Then came Adriana Depero, our lead person on the Italian Nyumbani board; Stuart Eastwood, Chairman of the UK Nyumbani Board; and his wife Jan, another UK Board Member. On Sunday, January 23, we had a historic meeting of all these representatives and our Kenyan

Board—forging the beginning of what has been a dream: an international Nyumbani affiliation.

The Year 2005 also started off with three exciting new ventures:

On Monday, January 24, we launched the ART (Anti-Retroviral Treatment) program in our Kangemi-Kawangware Lea Toto program, which is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Our hope is to follow that shortly with ART for the children in the other wing of our Lea Toto program, Kibera-Kariobangi.

Also on that date, we awarded a contract for building new houses that will accommodate 12 to 16 adolescent girls and boys in each house. The group itself is growing rapidly and we now have 24 in their teens. We must give special thanks to our friends who stepped forward to assist us by donating a total of \$39,000. They include Dr. Thomas Shea, Illinois; Ray Grace, Maryland; the LoPresti family, Rhode Island; Sandra Rankin, Ohio; John & Susan House, Virginia; River's Edge Community Church, Michigan; and St. Mary's Church, Virginia.

The third exciting event is that we have started to build the Nyumbani Village. The Kitui County Council awarded us 1,000 acres of land on Friday, January 21. Trusting that God was guiding us, we had cleared about 80 acres in advance of getting the deed so that we could site the village. We then took advantage of the rainy season to plant 18 acres of food. Recent Nyumbani guests have visited the site, including representatives from



# President's message

Doesn't it seem like every year, you read in this newsletter that the fundraiser was the "best ever?" There's a reason for that – and this year's fundraiser was no exception. We had more people in attendance and raised more money than in any previous event.

The reason it keeps growing? What started as one man's effort to take in a few abandoned children with HIV/AIDS and give them a loving home has grown into something much larger than an orphanage—a caring and life-enhancing environment for almost 100 children as well as outreach programs that help thousands of other Kenyans. We are teaching those we touch to live happily and with faith and dignity intact despite the everyday reality of disease. Father D'Ag has truly created a family of Nyumbani and that family includes all of us—the donors and volunteers all over the world that care enough to give their time and resources.

The USA fundraiser is a reflection of how strong and how broad our family has grown. And this year, it was helped along by some really terrific, hard-working committee members led by MaryLynn Qurnell. It was also helped by the wonderful generosity of Giuseppe and Mercedes Cecchi, who donated funds so that we could direct more of the proceeds to the children. The roster of attendees reflected how deeply our roots are spreading as we welcomed officials such as Senator Lamar Alexander of Tennessee and chairman of the Senate's Africa Subcommittee; Ambassador Randall Tobias, the Czar for the Global AIDS Fund; Tommy Thompson, Secretary of Health and Human Services; and Father Tim

Brown, head of the Maryland Province of the Jesuit Order.

I'd like to welcome to our family the newest U.S. board members (see story on page 3) and express our gratitude to those who are leaving. The USA has always had a strong, effective board and those that have gone before us have truly laid a solid foundation upon which we will face tomorrow's challenges.

Finally, I have to express my admiration for Father D'Ag. It has taken us only 12 years to grow this wonderful and large family, and that is mostly because of his dedication, his ability to inspire, his growing reputation for effectiveness in facing a monumental problem, and his tireless efforts on behalf of the children.

If you've been a member of our family these past few years, please continue—and open your arms to welcome others. The challenges we are currently facing are growing at a pace that our work can only hope to parallel. We need your help, and we need your prayers.

**Ben Palumbo, President,  
COGRF**

## Treasurer's Report

I wish all our readers a Happy New Year 2005 and pray that you are blessed with peace and joy. This brief column is a review and unofficial report of 2004 to all our readers, friends, and donors.

My first comment is that I feel the 3,700 people who receive this newsletter, as well as countless others who read it, must have been ardently praying for the children of Nyumbani this year because 2004 was a remarkable year that could only be explained by the power of your support. Just look at these unaudited statistics for this past year:

- ✓ Our mailing list grew from 3,100 to 3,700 people.
- ✓ All donations from every source during 2004 amounted to \$491,030. This is a 44% increase over the record returns of 2003.
- ✓ Through your Board, you sent a monthly subsidy support to the Nyumbani children that totaled \$135,600 for the year.
- ✓ Each year requests arrive from Nyumbani for special needs projects. This year, the Board responded with \$35,000 for badly needed new lab equipment.
- ✓ Some donors designated their gifts for special needs at Nyumbani (such as school tuition, medications, staff support.) This year, these funds amounted to \$43,004, which was sent directly to Nyumbani in addition to the subsidy.
- ✓ Administrative costs for the operation of the Board in 2004 are estimated to be \$58,000, based on the average annual cost of 12% over the past few years. (The actual cost will be determined after our annual audit.)
- ✓ Proceeds from last September's Annual Benefit were a record \$125,000.
- ✓ Our Reserve Fund (begun with an anonymous gift in 1998) against future needs is now at \$1,055,696. This is an unexpected increase of 28% and helped us to reach our goal of \$1 million in just seven years. The Board adds to this sum regularly after paying Nyumbani expenses and sending money for special needs.
- ✓ Website donors (55 of them) sent us a total of \$19,532.
- ✓ Responses to this quarterly newsletter (278 donors) totaled \$53,320.

People often ask me what the average level of giving to Nyumbani is. Here is a snapshot of giving this past year:

- 731 donors gave under \$99 for a total of \$27,605,
- 405 donors gave from \$100 to \$249 for a total of \$52,425,
- 237 donors gave from \$250 to \$499 for a total of \$98,213,
- 109 donors gave from \$500 to \$999 for a total of \$59,836,
- 88 donors gave from \$1,000 to \$4,999 for a total of \$130,761,
- 16 donors gave \$5,000 to \$9,999 for a total of \$81,000,
- 6 donors gave \$10,000 or more for a total of \$100,524.

I am sure you will agree that this is an impressive report for 2004. More importantly, it is a wonderful reflection of the generosity of all of you, our donors. The Board thanks you, the children thank you, and the sisters and staff thank you. May you feel the warmth of the Sunday blessings that Father D'Ag sends your way with much love and gratitude.

**Joseph S. D'Agostino, PhD**

A copy of the latest U.S. financial report and official registration filed by the Children of God Relief Fund, Inc. can be obtained by contacting COGRF, Inc. at P.O. Box 3465, Fairfax, Virginia, 22038-3465, or by calling (703) 934-8534. Residents of the following states may also obtain this information by contacting: NEW YORK - New York State Attorney General's Charities Bureau, Attn: FOIL Officer, 120 Broadway, New York, New York 10271; VIRGINIA - Division of Consumer Affairs, P.O. Box 526, Richmond, Virginia 22304. Registration with these governmental agencies does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.

# Nyumbani's Backbone: the Board of Directors

Nyumbani's support system consists of donors and volunteers all over the world. In the U.S., one of the most important supports is our dedicated Board of Directors, which is approved each December. This year, we have several new members. *News on Nyumbani* found out from some of them how they heard of Nyumbani and why they decided to become part of its backbone.

Long-time Nyumbani supporters can probably guess from her name how Gail Dalferes became involved. Gail, who is manager of Customer Service for Gannett's Information Technology Department, is the daughter of George Dalferes, one of the first Nyumbani U.S. presidents. Gail says that like her father, who volunteered his time after pulling through a serious illness, she wanted to give back.

"I feel strongly that my father's legacy of involvement continues through me," Gails says. She points to Nyumbani's most recent effort—the Nyumbani Village—as a way that effect can be broadened.

"Efforts to couple the children of Nyumbani with the elderly whose own children and lineage have been all but wiped out by AIDS make the Nyumbani mission critical to the survival of these people. The elderly have much to offer, and children are so absorbent. This makes Nyumbani an essential cause of our time. Success here will serve as a role model for the world. I want to be part of that," she explained.

Long-time supporters may also recognize Mike Sherwin's name, though not through lineage. Sherwin retired several years ago from USAID, where he was deputy assistant administrator for Management and was responsible for overseeing all the agency's grants and contracting programs. He has been essential in helping Father D'Ag, whose family he's known personally for many years, in getting USAID funding, and he now serves on the Nyumbani Village International Board.

"Nyumbani and Father D'Ag are perfect examples of what it means to live in a global community and live by the dictum that we all are our brother's keepers," Sherwin says.

Sherwin's daughter Libby, a fourth-year medical student, will be doing a medical rotation at Nyumbani this spring.

Karen Robb's name may be new to some Nyumbani supporters, but many people in

Washington, DC know her name because she's worked in both the Senate and with the Executive Branch as a lobbyist. She currently runs a legislative consulting business and serves on a committee with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

A complete list of board members includes:

<b>President</b>	Gail A. Dalferes
Benjamin L. Palumbo	George L. J. Dalferes
<b>Executive Vice-President</b>	Dino J. DeConcini
Larry E. Byrne	James M. Desmond
<b>Vice-President</b>	Lawrence Duncan, III
Rev. William George, SJ	Marilyn C. Jerome, MD
<b>Treasurer</b>	Michael F. Litzelman, PhD
Joseph S. D'Agostino, PhD	Thomas E. Mooney
<b>Secretary</b>	Marian E. Ord
Townsend A. Van Fleet	MaryLynn Qurnell
<b>Board Members:</b>	Karen A. Robb
John B. Brew, Esq	Michael Sherwin
Janice E. Conway	The Honorable Alan Wheat

"In that capacity I was present at an awards ceremony honoring Father D'Ag for his work at Nyumbani. I was truly inspired, and as a result, I looked for some way to make a contribution to this worthy cause."

Lawrence Duncan, III is also involved in politics as vice president for Congressional Relations, Trade and Regulatory Affairs at Lockheed Martin Corporation. Larry, who first heard about Nyumbani through former president James Desmond, is also excited that the Nyumbani effort is growing broad, and he says his involvement has to do with being the parent of two.

"It is important that we—as a global community—do all we can to control the spread of HIV/AIDS. I believe Nyumbani plays a central role by caring for the needy and working toward finding a cure for the suffering these children now endure."



(Continued from page 1)

Lazio Roma, special Village donors who contributed the 500,000 in Euros that enabled us to begin construction. We cannot thank God enough for this generous donation.

We plan for the Village construction to take place in three phases, with the first phase consisting of 48 houses, administrative buildings, and a guest house. This phase is scheduled to be completed in 6 months, which means we look forward to welcoming our first children and grandparents by mid-2005. Eventually, we envisage 700 orphans and 300 grandparents.

On a personal note, I received a special surprise January 26 on my birthday when volunteers and staff organized a "This Is



Your Life" skit starring the children, who were aided by several cohorts in the U.S. Imagine my surprise when I walked in to see a few dozen photos of my youth (complete with knickers and shorts). I was even more surprised when the young children, made up with moustache and whiskers, told stories of my very young days. I was overwhelmed at what the children and their helpers did.

As always, I cannot express how important your encouragement is to Nyumbani. Knowing you are thinking of us, and keeping us in your prayers is a tremendous support to our morale.

Fr. Angelo D'Agostino,  
SJ, MD

# Youth Helping Youth

Generosity comes in many shapes and sizes and is not limited to the adult population, if recent gifts to Nyumbani are an indication. The orphanage and its outreach program recently received several generous gifts from school children, and learned of other efforts in the works. And these students aren't just digging into the pocketbooks of friends and family to raise money—they are creating their own projects to show they care about the children of Kenya.

A group of boys that attend Collegiate School in Manhattan, NY raised over \$1,000 at a bake sale last fall and recently began a letter-writing campaign to Nyumbani boys. The idea to help came from seventh grader Mac Wilkinson, who approached school community coordinator Jeanne Simon, after learning about Nyumbani from his grandfather Jack Doyle (A friend of Board Secretary Townsend Van Fleet).

"My grandfather told me all the good things Nyumbani does so I decided I wanted to do something to give to this community. I shared the idea with our community service club, and we all agreed that kids helping kids was a great idea," Mac said.

Students at Heritage High School, Leesburg, VA, had the same idea. Several groups at the school have "adopted" the

Nyumbani effort after learning about it through student Juliet McLeod, who is a great-niece of Father D'Ag.

For the last two years, the National Honor Society at Heritage has sold Nyumbani-made bracelets to other students at the school, advertising their project by posting pictures of the Nyumbani children in school hallways. This year, they sold the 300 bracelets they ordered in just two weeks! Proceeds from that sale, as well as projects of the Interact Club, a community-oriented group, resulted in a \$300 donation for the orphanage as well as a collection of clothing, linens, kitchen supplies, and cleaners. Last year, the technology education classes at the school incorporated a toy-making exercise as part of their final exam. The class sent 30 small wooden toys to the children of Nyumbani.

There are also several ongoing projects that resulted from a recent trip to the orphanage by two families. Caroline Matthews, daughter of Kathleen and Chris Matthews (last year's fundraiser speakers), and sisters Kelly and Brooke Monahan, daughters of Laurie and John Monahan,



From left to right: Brooke Monahan, Father D'Agostino, Holton Arms Headmistress Diana Beebe, and Kelly Monahan.



Sales of Masai bracelets at Georgetown Visitation school netted \$700 so far. Caroline Matthews organized the project.

have begun awareness and fundraising campaigns at their schools: Georgetown Visitation school, Washington, DC and Holton Arms, Bethesda, MD. More on these efforts in a later issue.

## Nyumbani-USA

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More photos from Father D'Ag's birthday.