

News on Nyumbani



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

www.nyumbani.org

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Second Quarter 2004

Mark Your Calendars: Sept. 14

The Nyumbani annual fundraiser will be Tuesday, September 14. This will be the 11th fundraiser since Nyumbani was founded, and each event has topped the previous one in terms of excitement, attendance and positive news to report on the orphanage and its outreach programs.

Your presence at this annual benefit enables us to expand the support to more of the Nyumbani children. We invite you to be part of this mission.

**Nyumbani Annual
Fundraising Benefit
Tuesday, September 14
Renaissance Washington
(DC) Hotel
999 Ninth Street, NW
Washington, D.C.
\$250 per person
6 p.m. Reception
7 p.m. Dinner
8 p.m. Program**

*Invitations will be mailed in
early August*

Dear Friends of Nyumbani:

I trust this note finds you well and filled with the optimism that nature and God brings to the U.S. during the green beginnings of Spring. At Nyumbani, the staff and children carry that optimism with them at all times.



From left: John Noel, Nyumbani lawyer Ben Musau, President Mwai Kibaki, Ambassador and Secretary of the Cabinet Francis Muthaura,

The orphanage and outreach programs have been pulled in many directions the last few months. I could report on many things, but in the interest of your time and our newsletter space, I'll emphasize two

developments I think are important.

First, we had two events that have moved us along significantly in our plans for the Nyumbani Village project, which aims to bring together two groups of people made homeless by HIV/AIDS: the country's youth and the older generation. On March 8 a group of ten people, including John Noel of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, and representatives of the Georgetown University Medical School, visited Lucy Kibaki, the First Lady of Kenya, at the Kenya State House. After a cordial visit with her, she took us to see President Mwai Kibaki, who expressed a very strong interest in the Nyumbani Village project. After hearing about the hopes we have for allowing children and senior citizens left homeless by the scourge of HIV/AIDS to live together self-sufficiently, the president offered the weight of his support.

The very next day another significant step toward the Village occurred when the Minister of Health for Kenya, the Honorable Charity Ngilu, took 30 Nyumbani staff and supporters onboard a DC-30 airplane to travel to Kitui, Kenya. In Kitui, we were greeted by local dignitaries,
(Continued on back page)



Staff Profile: Peter Malusa

The Chef with Winning Ingredients

by Nyumbani Volunteer Ted Neill

Nyumbani was the recipient of the equivalent of about \$5,000 recently from the Kenya Charity Sweepstakes. The money will be used to buy computers for the home.

U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) recently introduced a bill in Congress that would create a formal approach in the U.S. to addressing the HIV/AIDS problem in Africa. The legislation would create a new office in the U.S. Agency for International Development to address the issue and how the country can help.

Father D'Ag wrote to thank Rep. Lee for her efforts. Rep. Lee was honored at the 2002 annual Nyumbani fundraiser for her work on behalf of African children.

When Peter Malusa heard his name called at the Nyumbani Christmas party last year, he was taken by surprise: he did not know he was being honored as Nyumbani's Staff Member of the Year.

"I was very much afraid [nervous] when I heard my name called. Then, when I realized why I had been called, I was very happy but still surprised because all this time I've just been trying to help the children. People say I am doing a good job, and it has made me feel very good," Malusa says.

Malusa, who is a chef at Nyumbani, wasn't the only one pleased. The staff and volunteers are great supporters of the man they call Mzee Peter [Mzee is a title of respect given to elders]. Maureen Karungari, the head chef, says Peter is not only a hard worker, but someone she knows she can trust with the important task of feeding so many people, even when she's not around. "He works so well, and he relates to the entire staff, without exception. Peter has a great deal of experience and knowledge, and he is someone we look up to."

Many of the volunteers and staff say they see Malusa as a father figure.

"Peter is someone you can go to for advice," says Kevin Mbewa, a Kenyan volunteer. "I was very happy to see him receive the award because even when he is not on duty you can go to him for help."

Peter has been a chef at Nyumbani for four years, but his ties with Father D'Agostino go back much further to 1993, when Peter worked at Loyola House, the Jesuit Community House where Father has been based for many years. Father D'Agostino met Peter there and remembered him when he needed help at Nyumbani.

Originally Peter is from Kakamega, in Western Kenya, where he was born in 1934. In 1953 he left home to work as a cook in Uganda. He remained there until

1972 when civil war drove thousands of people from that country. For a time, Malusa returned to farming on his ancestral land in Kakamega, but with a large family to support, he decided he had to journey to

Nairobi to find work. In the city he was a personal cook, a chef in a restaurant and a chef at the Israeli embassy. Father D'Agostino asked him to join the team at Nyumbani in 2000, and Peter says he has been very happy since then.

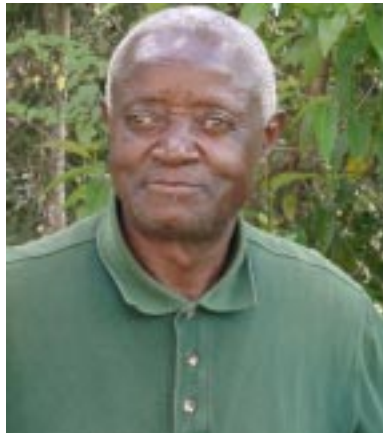
"I hope to work here forever," he says. "I also hope God keeps Father very strong so he can go on working on behalf of Nyumbani."

Malusa says the reason he's so happy with his job is that he's using the skills he has developed to support a cause that helps his country.

"It can be very hard to help people here in Kenya," Malusa explains. "Many people are poor" and resources for being able to help are scarce, he says.

And while there are other children's homes in Kenya, "ours is better," Peter adds. For one thing, it doesn't aim at a particular tribe or demographic group, but rather at children in general. "After all, even though there are many tribes represented at Nyumbani — Luo, Luya, Kikuyu, Maasi, they are all African children. And they are all our responsibility," he says.

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.



The Hearts of Our Donors

By Genilee Swope Parente, editor, *News on Nyumbani*

Part of the miracle of Nyumbani is the generosity it has spawned. That generosity started 12 years ago when Father D'Ag, assisted by Sister Mary Owens, took in three children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. This miracle has blossomed into an initiative that stretches across the world gaining strength with each gift made no matter the size, helping hundreds and soon to be thousands (through the Village project) of children.

The miracle of Nyumbani has also spawned initiative as donors find creative ways to build awareness and raise funds.

Here in the United States, for example, Dr. Arthur Myers of San Diego and Lynn Kirby of West Chester, Pennsylvania took their own skills and knowledge and grew them into generous gifts.

Art Takes on New Meaning

Many Nyumbani supporters know Dr. Art Myers' name because he donated the beautiful black and white photographs to create the 2002 Nyumbani calendar and greeting cards (which are available through the U.S. Board). But this donation was just a small part of what Myers and the people helping him are doing.

Myers put together a talented group of performance artists to create the Song of Nyumbani, which premiered in San Diego in February 2004. The interdisciplinary performance uses dance, gospel music and photographic projections to tell the story of Nyumbani and the children of Africa left homeless by HIV/AIDS.

Dr. Myers, who retired from the public health field about the same time he became a full-time photographer, coordinated the effort and is now overseeing production of a DVD so that the Song of Nyumbani will live beyond that one night.

The dance sequences were put together by well known choreographer Jean Isaacs who Dr. Myers drafted over lunch one day. Isaacs proceeded to draft another well-known talent – the Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Choir – to provide the music. Dr. Myers then brought on film makers Ané and Gina Vecchione – to create a documentary of the creation of the Song of Nyumbani. The hope is that the highly acclaimed local production may travel to other regions, and that the film will become a tool that can be used throughout the world for raising awareness and support.

Dr. Myers, who visited Nyumbani in 2000, says he threw his hat into Father D'Ag's ring because there are so few other rings like it.

"I don't know of any other organizations that are giving children what they are getting through Nyumbani," Dr. Myers says. "This is not a place to warehouse parent-less children, but rather a place to show them how to live happily if you're an orphan with HIV/AIDS," he said.

To illustrate that fact, he wanted to move from the 2D tool of photographs that has become his passion and profession into the 3D world of dance accompanied by inspiring music. "I have always loved dance and followed Jean Isaacs' work. Together, we wanted to show the plight of these children in a way that doesn't punish, but has a strong, lasting effect," Dr. Myers said. The Song of Nyumbani starts out with general scenes of Africa. Gradually, the pictures, the dancing and music get more serious and somber, but they end with celebration.

"The idea is to illustrate that this is not a story of sorrow but one of hope, which is what Nyumbani represents," Dr. Myers said.

For more information on the Song of Nyumbani, see www.nyumbani.org/news.html.

Raising Puppies – and Awareness

Lynn Kirby also visited Nyumbani in 2000 with her high-school-age son Tim, who was about to go off to college. She said the trip was planned so that she could teach Tim a final life lesson, "in an environment in which my teenage son wouldn't be embarrassed to be seen with mom," she jokes. She came away with the same commitment to help that many Nyumbani visitors experience, a commitment which manifested itself this year when she donated \$2,000.

The Kirby's raise Bernese Mountain Dogs, which sell for hundreds of dollars each. Lynn had been contemplating how, as a single mom with three children, she could afford to give a generous donation to Nyumbani. She came up with the idea of setting aside a portion of what she could raise by breeding the pups that year.

"It was like tithing the money," she explains. "Both Tim and I were so



Dr. Myers at work in the infants' room.

affected by the dedication we saw in Kenya that we really wanted to be part of it. Everyone I met at Nyumbani – from Protus [Lumiti, the chief manager] to the laundry people – is dedicated to these children," she explained. She said one particular event illustrated that dedication. Tim drafted her to videotape a conversation between him and Martin, one of the adolescent orphans, as a school project. "They sat down facing each other and Tim said: 'Martin, you must be close to God. What do you pray about?' And Martin said: 'I pray to thank Him for the volunteers who help us. Last night I prayed for you.' This showed us what a loving place the staff and volunteers have created," Kirby said.

While the money she donated will go a long way towards helping the children, Kirby said the sale of the puppies also gave her a tool for spreading the word about Nyumbani and its outreach programs. She didn't market the puppies using the Nyumbani name. But she made sure that each person who bought a puppy got her version of a "doggy bag" – one that contained a brochure on Nyumbani and papers reflecting the donation.

Her hope is that her puppy initiative will encourage others to come up with ways to help, thereby perpetuating the theory her Nyumbani experience has provided her, which is that "good works always take on a life of their own," she says.

Father D'Ag's Message

(Continued from page 1)

including the Mayor and County Council, who took us to a 1,000-acre tract of land that the Kitui Council has donated to the Nyumbani Village organizing committee. The local member of Parliament, Nyiva Mwendwa, then joined us for a ceremonial welcome of speeches, dances and music on the grounds of a local school house, and the day ended with dinner at the house of Minister Charity Ngilu. We thank God for this special day, which signified a major step in the long journey of establishing a foundation for the first Nyumbani Village.

The second development I want to tell you about happened towards the end of March when I traveled to Oxford University, United Kingdom. The Oxford School of Business invited me to be part of a panel to speak at a three-day world forum on a fascinating subject: the concept of "Social Entrepreneurship." Details on the forum can be viewed on the website: www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/html/faculty_skoll_forum.asp.

To summarize my remarks: I told them the history of Nyumbani from its humble beginnings to development of the

great Boards of Directors we now have in different parts of the world. I also told them our future hopes for the children of Nyumbani. It was gratifying to see how well the forum attendees received this information and how much discussion my colleagues dedicated to our efforts.

This forum was hosted and funded by an interesting young man: Geoff Skoll, the billionaire founder of eBay, who actively participated in the discussion. In time the forum will release a full summary of the remarks and what came out of the forum, which should make for interesting reading on how academicians and members of the business community view the world's problems.

My stay in the U.K. was enhanced by meetings with several U.K. Board members including the Chairman, Stuart Eastwood, and by the graciousness of the couple who hosted my stay: former U.K. Chair 'Bimbo' Macchiavelli and his wife Arvil. I was also fortunate to be invited to speak at the Parish at Potters Bar (which committed to assisting Nyumbani for the next five years); to visit St. Alban's Cathedral and meet Sister Germaine; and to be guest speaker to a group of Rotarians at Oxford. In all, my U.K. visit

was most unusual and a very productive six days that went by too quickly.

On a final note, I expect to be in the States in late summer for several weeks to meet with the U.S. Board as well as friends and colleagues following the continued development of Nyumbani's efforts on behalf of children. I will also be meeting with the Nyumbani Benefit Committee to continue planning the September 14 Annual Fundraising Benefit in Washington, D.C. We would like to see this year's event be even more successful than the last few years, which have steadily grown in strength and support.

Best regards and blessings on all of you for what you have done and are doing. Your brother in service to these children,

Fr. Angelo D'Agostino,
SJ, MD



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Last minute news:

Fr. D'Agostino was recently honored by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) at the Third Annual Hope Awards Ceremony in Washington, D.C.. The event honored individuals, corporations, and non-profit organizations whose exemplary efforts have profoundly improved the welfare of children around the world.

Fr. D'Agostino received the prestigious Chairman's Humanitarian Award, which recognizes an individual who works diligently and effectively to positively better the lives of children and families. NCMEC's Chairman, retired U.S. Senator Dennis DeConcini, is a former member of the Children of God Relief Fund Board of Directors. NCMEC was established by Congressional mandate in 1984. Co-founded by John and Reve Walsh after the abduction and murder of their son Adam, the center's mission is to provide services nationwide for families and professionals in the prevention of abducted, endangered, and sexually-exploited children.