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Grant application forms on request
at this address or online at FOM
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GRANTS COMMITTEE

FOM's partnership program approves grants for local and sustainable projects as part of a partnership that serves critical needs in housing, health, education or economic development and that integrate community leadership. Projects should utilize local and sustainable practices and products. [Check www.friendsofmalawi.org for partnership details.] The following include partnership updates.

KAPIRI SUCCESS SCHOOL

Kariri Success School was started by Harry Nkhoma in order to include children who have a disability. FOM has supported the school for a number of years. At this time there are 80 children in the nursery and Standards one through four including 40 children who have a diagnosed disability with everything from autism, dyslexia, seizures, and dysgraphia, to stuttering with one child who is profoundly deaf. With a new grant of \$5000, the plan is to add another classroom block, add Standard five for this school year, and have an office space. They already have the four walls up and hope to complete the rest of the structure soon.



PEACE CORPS-MALAWI PARTNERSHIP



ASSOCIATE PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR FUND

Project Highlights Since March 2019

HEALTH

In April, Peace Corps Malawi celebrated World Malaria Month. Many Volunteers participated in this recognition of the importance malaria prevention. Working with their communities, activities ranged from door-to-door bednet checks to Grassroot Soccer Malaria programs. Health Volunteer Natalie wanted to do something big in her community. She involved twenty-four volunteer students and three counterparts who had attended PC Malawi's most recent Counterpart-Only Malaria Boot Camp to plan a Malawi Carnival. APCD funding of \$95 was utilized to purchase materials for activities and demonstrations. On the day of the event, the team set up many interactive stations at which attendees learned various lessons regarding malaria prevention. Over the day, 301 community members attended the carnival and wandered through stations featuring topics such as net washing, a malaria question booth, information on mosquito breeding, a true & false wall, Mrs. Mosquito book storytime, and bednet transformation demonstrations. Other stations included "the cost of malaria" and performance based activities. At the conclusion, there were additional performances, songs, and dramas by students as well as a showing of a malaria film created, acted and filmed with the community's Arts and Theater Club.

EDUCATION

Gender programming is essential in a country that ranks globally 171 out of 189 on the Gender Inequality Index. One issue with gender programming is that often it targets females only. By excluding boys from the conversation, boys can feel neglected and sometimes act out erratically for attention. To combat this, Education Volunteer Moyo decided to plan a one day camp at which boys from the local Community Day Secondary School learned about HIV prevention and transmission, safe sex practices, confidence, decision making skills, gender based violence, gender equality, and how to be an ally to female counterparts. A \$53.00 APCD grant was used for lunch for the 40 male participants. Students who attended expressed an interest in assisting with putting on future similar camps and serving as community advocates for HIV prevention. In addition, the community as a whole is very interested in hosting another HIV themed camp, this time funded by contributions made by the community members and families of the participants.

ENVIRONMENT

Learning dedicated and motivated community groups with whom to work is the first step to progress for many Volunteers. Environment Volunteer Christina met a group of women who called themselves the Ngwiedzano Women's Group. These women met each week to do cooking demonstrations and share nutritious recipes. They requested Christina's help on an income generating fund, the group was able to purchase materials to begin making soap. The sources such as moringa, baobab, and lemon help they connected with a local lodge product for guest use. Based on demand, the soap at the lodge for tourists to buy as a souvenir. They wrapped it in chitenje material for better marketing. These efforts were through a SOLID (Sustainable Opportunities for Leaders in Internal Development) lesson which Christina and knowledge curriculum created by PC Malawi Volunteers for motivated community members. The Ngwiridzano Women's Group was interviewed on Malawi TV and they have begun sharing their knowledge with nearby women's groups who have expressed an interest in learning the skill of soap making.



PALIBE KANTHU (It doesn't matter)

by Beth Evans

Last year, my colleague Fides Ushe and I visited Harry Nkhoma who started Kapiri Success Primary School in Mchinji. Having had polio as a child, Harry was using locally made wooden crutches that were very heavy and had no padding what so ever. We brought him a pair of aluminum crutches. Knowing that he included children who have disabilities in his school, I inquired about the kind of disabilities. Harry said “mobility problems”. As a physical therapist, I suggested a two day “Camp Abilities” during school holiday where I could bring assistive devices and perhaps teach some exercises. I was thinking that maybe there would be about a dozen children. Harry seemed interested.

Upon getting home, I requested a list of the disabilities so I would know what to take when I went back. It took some time, but finally a list came with names, ages and disabilities listed for **40** children with ages from 3 to 13! **Palibe kanthu**.....I can handle that situation. I'll have a group aged 3-6, one of ages 7 & 8 and one of ages 9-13. This appeared to be OK with Harry.

What Harry actually meant by “mobility problems” was that some children live too far away from the school and need to pay for a kabasa (bicycle taxi) to get to school. The list of disabilities had only two with a physical disability and one who is deaf. The rest had dyslexia, autism, seizures, stuttering, dysgraphia, etc. **Palibe kanthu!** We can handle this. We will do lots of fun concrete physical activities that incorporate and reinforce numbers, letters, counting, etc. Trying to use things they would be able to replicate locally, we got busy making all kinds of equipment for doing this project along with teaching materials. (Sobo bottles with a taped on number and a little sand make great bowling pins.) The week before leaving to travel to Malawi, we learned that even though it was school vacation, they would be having school that week and that they wanted all 227 of the students involved in order to demonstrate inclusion!! **Palibe kanthu!! (And we did it!!)**

We arrived a day before to talk with the teachers. I think that they were flabbergasted and maybe overwhelmed, but agreed to help with the activities and scheduling. Even though the project turned out to be something other than my original idea/plan, I know that the children had a great time. I believe that teachers learned some different teaching methods. We left lots of teaching materials, equipment, school supplies and text books for adding Standard 5. We delivered 6 bales of Likuni phala so students could have lunch at school and stay for a full day of lessons. We learned. I know the students learned and we hope that some new teaching methods will be used.

See “Camp Abilities” photos on page 8

After the Kapiri project we delivered a suitcase of medical supplies in Lilongwe and went north to Mzoma where we delivered MK737,401.76 worth of insulin, gloves, medicine and other medical supplies at Embangweni Mission Hospital. At the village of Mzoma we gave soccer and netball uniforms, a soccer ball plus 6 bales of Likuni phala, sugar and salt for the nursery school. In the upcoming “hungry season” children will have at least one nourishing meal a day.



BOLA BANDA FOUNDATION

Former University of Massachusetts women's soccer coach, Kalekeni Banda, started taking sports and school equipment back to the area where he grew up in Malawi. Currently, the Foundation helps 34 primary schools in Nkata Bay and Mzuzu.

Physical education and sports programs were initiated to inculcate a sports culture among youth with the benefit of having children stay in school. The latest effort is to spread the concept that girls and women can play soccer and that they might even have opportunities or a career through sports.

Northern Region sports development officer Georgia Msowoya urged learners to take sports seriously because it can offer opportunities just as other white-collar jobs. Sports is a serious business. (Ed. Note: She Flames, the Malawi Women's Soccer Team recently defeated Kenya and are having a more successful season than the men's team.)

BAKERY TRAINING

The Karisa Bakery Training Center is located in the outskirts of Mzimba. Young, single parent girls have an opportunity to attend for three months to learn a variety of baking and business skills. When they return home, it is expected that they will be able to start their own business and become independent.

Selection to attend is by two districts at a time and tuition is free. Attendees may bring their babies who will be looked after in a nursery while attending classes.

The bakery is certified by the Malawi government as a NGO and has been supported in the past by the American Embassy in Malawi, UNESCO through STEP and EU.



IN MEMORIAM

Margaret W. Jumbe passed away January 22, 2014. She served as a nursing Volunteer attached to the Chikwawa District Hospital, followed by one year as a Peace Corps Trainer in Salima (1978-79). Later she taught at Kamuzu College of Nursing (1981-1991) before moving back to the United States. She is survived by her husband, Harry Jumbe and two daughters, Flora and Katie (RPCV Belize, 2005—07). Malawi was always in her heart and mind and she looked back on her PCV days with fondness.

Michael Joseph Curley passed away October 9, 2016. Michael taught in Italy and Peace Corps Malawi before completing degrees at Harvard and the University of Chicago. In 1971 he began a long teaching career at the University of Puget Sound. He is survived by his wife Sandy Plann and two sons.

Harris Wofford, (1926—2019)

As a student of Gandhi's methods for bringing change through non-violent actions, Wofford will be remembered by thousands of Peace Corps Volunteers for his work as one of the architects of the Peace Corps and his commitment to volunteerism and service above self.

He was an advisor to John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King and assisted Sargent Shriver in the formation of the Peace Corps. During the 50th anniversary of Peace Corps, NPCA recognized Wofford's lifetime of service by establishing the Harris Wofford global Citizen Award.

Anne Hardy, Malawi 3, served at Soche Hill Teacher Training College. She had taught in Georgia prior to joining the Peace Corps and returned there to teach and in Nashville and then Boston. Anne will be remembered for her friendly manner along with her love of fine arts and good bourbon whisky.

FYI: The National Peace Corps Association publishes an "In Memoriam" column each month. Go to n pca@peacecorpsconnect.org and send a text or a link to an obituary on another web site.

THE MOONCATCHER PROJECT

Ellie von Wellsheim started the MoonCatcher Project to make reusable, washable menstrual kits. They are provided to girls in the poorest communities worldwide. Girls can wear MoonCatcher Kits without underwear. They provide a way for girls to stay in school while menstruating, giving them a greater chance to complete their education.

In Malawi, the MCP has three sewing guilds that support women in rural communities striving to provide stability for their families. Women working in these guilds make the reusable kits, then distribute them to school girls. In addition they provide information on menstrual management and reproductive health. In these health sessions, girls share stories and ask questions about menstruation. They learn how to plot the menstrual cycle so they will know when to bring their kits to school. In many communities, this is the only information that girls ever receive.

The MoonCatcher Project is crucial to girls in Malawi. The MCP Kits enable girls to stay in school during their periods. Without menstrual supplies, girls miss school and many drop out. When girls drop out of school in Malawi, family pressure often forces them to marry young. They start having children when they themselves are still children. Educating girls is a key to ending world poverty by making it possible for girls to attend school, complete their education and launch independent lives. (For more information go to:

MoonCatcher.org)

Girls opening their Kits



Sewing a Kit



For FOM Financial Report go to :
www.friendsofmalawi.org

TOPICS IN MALAWI NEWS

Boosting Yields

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has a project to help smallholder farmers boost crop yields through improved seed varieties. The varieties were developed by researchers through the Feed the Future Malawi Improved Seed Systems and Technology project. Despite climate changes, farmers are harvesting more from their land. Using the 50 enhanced yield varieties is critical for future food security. Included in the project were seed systems for groundnuts, pigeon peas, soya beans, drought-tolerant maize and orange flesh sweet potatoes. Nearly 15,500 metric tons of seeds were distributed to about 1.2 million farmers.

Cost of Living

A study for Social Concern reported that the cost of living jumped 3 % in May. In the month reviewed, Mzuzu City was the most expensive. A family of six spent over K130,000 on basic necessities. Maintaining a certain standard of living in Lilongwe, Blantyre and Zomba, families spent a bit less. The minimum wage has been set at K25000 for a long time and needs to be adjusted.

Volatile Maize Prices

Compared to other sub-Saharan African countries, Malawi maize has the highest level of price volatility. The market responds to informal maize production and marketing because there is no commercial production in Malawi. Therefore, prices differ between regions, local markets and traders. Often prices are most volatile during main harvest seasons.

Albanism

The Association of Persons with Albinism are questioning whether they should seek asylum in another country because it has become so dangerous for them in Malawi. In addition, the group accuses the government of giving out expired sunscreen lotion since February.

Hunger

A Southern African Development Community Regional Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Programme report has stated that over 1.1 million Malawians face hunger between October of this year and March 2020 with 676,000 already affected by food shortage. The situation has been rated at a crisis level especially in the Southern Region districts of Balaka, Neno and Nsanje. Karonga, Balaka and Mchinji have reported acute malnutrition rates above 10 percent.

Flood Relief

People of Phalombe were hard hit by Cyclone Ida. Oxfam Malawi has distributed fertilizer to 2, 545 households to help them recover from the disaster caused by flooding.

Foreign Exchange Crops

Tobacco remains the largest foreign exchange earner after tea and sugar. Cotton has been in fourth place. However, cotton crops were down this year.

China

At a two day China-Africa Think Tank in Beijing with delegates from 51 African countries, a representative of the Chinese government said that China will continue to support African countries to boost peace, security and stability across the continent. So far, China is implementing \$1 billion military assistance and \$80 million through the China-Africa Peace & Security Forum and the Sahel Group of Five. In Malawi, the Chinese have acquired land, have built large housing compounds, hotels and schools. One person has been arrested for smuggling ivory and rhino horns and a number were arrested for killing lake turtles for their shells.

Election Aftermath

Demonstrations have been held all over the country since the May elections declared President Mutharika the victor. There are accusations of election fraud and the courts are investigating the situation.

Chileka Airport

South African Airways cannot land at Chileka Airport because renovations started at least 10 years ago have not been completed and the runway is too short. While money was allotted years ago, workers have quit for lack of payment for work they have done. (The airport at Lilongwe has been renovated.)



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ZIKOMO, THANKS, YEWO!

Friends Of Malawi wishes to thank friends and donors for their support. Funds go to support the grants program, the website and the Friends Of Malawi Newsletter. To donate and receive the FOM Newsletter, contact FOM Treasurer:

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