

Kageno Roots

Planting the seeds to grow places of hope.



A Quarterly Newsletter

volume 4 spring 2006

KAGENO KIDS



Kageno Kids

On April 11th, Kageno cofounders Rob Place and Frank Andolino along with Kageno Kids Project Director Jayne Hinds Bidaut, officially launched the Kageno Kids Art Exchange Program.

The launch party was held in New York City at Sugar Lounge in Tribeca. General Bilimoria Wine, Krait Beer, and Skyy Spirits provided sponsored drinks for the generous guests who donated over \$6000.00 to the program.

The Kageno Kids Art Exchange Program is a unique art based exchange between school groups in Western Kenya and the United States. The program allows children in Kenya and the United States to share their ideas and culture through art.

This program facilitates communication between children from these diverse cultures and harnesses the power of their images and ideas, leading to a better understanding of cultural identity and living situations.

Through various activities, which include drawing, painting, writing and photography, both groups exercise the balancing act of right/ left brain communication, ultimately sharing their deepest thoughts and leaving the participants with an inner understanding and connection to one another... and through these very intimate and sometimes abstract exchanges of physical art work, a very unique and special story unfolds.

Kageno Kids is an outreach program of Kageno Worldwide.

Currently we are working with 4 primary schools in the surrounding area of the Kageno Kenya project. At these schools we have organized groups of 30 students, with ages ranging from 7 to 19 years. In New York, there are 3 primary schools, two high schools and one nursery school currently participating.



York Avenue Preschool Kageno Kids

For our participating groups in Kenya, this cultural exchange not only brings a myriad of opportunities previously unavailable, but also provides them with much needed school and art supplies. Augmenting their regular coursework with engaging and artistic activities teaches personal creativity and connects the students with children from different cultures.

The Kageno Kids in Kenya also receive an inflatable globe for their class room, answering the all too often question of "where is this New York?"



Kamasengre Primary School Kageno Kids

The Kageno Kids Art Exchange Program brings hope, fun and new ways of connecting, as well as new forms of communication to our exchange friends in extremely remote areas of the world. This, after all, is the cornerstone of Kageno, meaning "A Place of Hope" in the native Kenyan language Dhlouo.

Every child deserves the chance to go to school and have a hopeful future. Investing in education helps break the cycle of HIV/AIDS, hunger, illiteracy and extreme poverty. Each additional year of education is an investment in the future that helps these children live longer, more productive, and healthier lives.

The number of children attending the Kageno Nursery School has increased to over 186 children, far beyond current capacity. Children now gather in one of two temporary classrooms that lack tables and chairs and has a dirt floor. In order to effectively teach the growing number of students, Kageno Kenya will be constructing a permanent school. Kageno, through the various programs dedicated to helping kids, is helping to better the world one child at a time.

If you would like to help us make a difference, please visit www.kageno.org. Donations can be made on-line to one of our specific programs or to support the organization as a whole. Thank you.

Progress Report



From top left: Frank, Scott, Melissa, Beth, Donell Rachel & Alphonce (middle row) Zack, Dee Ann and Paul (front row)

In early March, Kageno cofounder Frank Andolino and returned Peace Corps Volunteer Scott Zmrhal led a group of 6 passionate Texans to the project site in western Kenya.

This was Beth Plumlee's second visit to the project... Beth and her family first visited Kageno in August 2005 and have been fervent supporters ever since.

Beth brought together a group of her friends who wanted to get their hands dirty and make a difference.... and that they did!

Beth, along with Donell Wiggins, Dee Ann Payne, Melissa Lowrey and Paul & Melissa Stewart met with our nursery school teachers, HIV / AIDS counselors, project managers and a support group for individuals living with AIDS.

Once armed with a solid understanding of what Kageno is all about, the group split up and went to work.... One team visited a primary school involved in the Kageno Kids Art Exchange Program and completed a series of assignments, another group worked with a recently hired nurse to examine all 186 children attending the Kageno Nursery School. Paul worked with a group of local Kageno volunteers to clean up the compound and site of the future Nursery School... including the removal of 2 decaying cow carcasses that had recently (or not so recently)died as a result of the terrible drought that has devastated the country.

New Feeding Program:

Approximately half of the 186 children attending the Kageno Nursery School are orphans, and at least that many do not have a reliable

daily source of nutrition. While some kids do come to school with a small snack or pail of porridge (uji) to eat during the 10:00 am tea break, many sit, watch, and wait until whenever their next meal will be. Many of these kids' parents/guardians simply cannot afford to prepare anything.

One thing Beth and her friends wanted to ensure was that all children had something to eat while they are on Kageno grounds. The day before leaving Rusinga, the visitors went to the market and bought cooking supplies and uji mix, to kick off what is now a daily cooking program. The children now all receive at least one nutritious meal every day. At Kageno, no one will go hungry as they watch their peers fill their stomachs. In addition, the uji is cooked by a group of 3 women belonging to Kageno's AIDS support group, who are paid a small fee for their labor. Mama Phoebe is the head of the cooking team, and the other 2 rotate on a daily basis, providing a steady source of income, however small, to the number of women interested in participating.



One meal a day... every day.

While the goal for Kageno is to be self-sustainable and not donor-dependent—as this cooking program clearly is, for the time being—it represents a jumpstart to finding a way for all who benefit, to get on their own feet and support themselves. As the initial donations become depleted, the income-generating activities of Kageno will hopefully be able to supply the necessary funds to finance the uji mix and the women's fees. However, this program would never have been started had it not been for the extremely generous time and financial commitment of these sponsors. Cash donations, whether large or small, are not always the best solutions, but through proper planning and the development of well planned supportive programs (like the crafts project) these donations can go a long way in a village like Kolunga.

Positive Living:

In addition to heading up the cooking committee, Mama Phoebe also chairs the recently-formed HIV / AIDS support group. The VCT (Voluntary Counseling and Testing) clinic has seen a steadily increasing number of clients over the last year, but until recently, was only able to provide testing and one-on-one counseling. As testing continues, the number of people Kageno has touched has increased beyond the capacity of what a single counselor can provide. As a result, the HIV / AIDS support group was formed, open to any HIV positive community member. This group fosters a support network for the individuals and encourages 'positive living,'. Through their community involvement, the group also helps dismantle the misunderstood stigma in the community. Being HIV or AIDS-positive does not mean an end to a good life, and these women are testament to the benefits of an active and involved support group.

The group meets on a weekly basis, and discuss any issues that they have or support they may need, as well as generate ideas for activities that they might conduct to reach more people. The public is not aware of what the group's identity or purpose is, thus keeping individuals' status confidential, but as a group they are targeting the community at large to reduce the stigma associated with the disease.

Living with HIV or AIDS it is a challenge—physically, mentally, and emotionally—but the burden becomes a bit lighter when shared with others facing the same or similar obstacles.



Mama Phoebe with Beth and Melissa .

Give of your hands to serve and your hearts to love.

-- **Mother Teresa**

Kageno Spotlight

New Faces at Kageno



Rachel Cernansky moved to Kenya from New York in January of last year and was living in Nairobi when she discovered Kageno Kenya. She graduated New York University with a degree in nutrition and politics in 2002, and worked for several years as an editor at Satya Magazine, focusing on environmental, social justice and animal advocacy issues. After approximately four years, Rachel decided she wanted to experience first hand the problems she had learned about from her office in Brooklyn. In October, Rachel moved to Rusinga Island to join the Kageno team. Today, Rachel is helping to coordinate the different aspects of the project, build a market for the water hyacinth crafts, and bridge the cultural communication gap between the U.S. and Kenya; and aside from the occasional snake, is enjoying life in her mud hut at Kolunga Beach.



Zack Lejipis Lenawamuro, our new general manager, is from the Maasai tribe in Kenya and hails from a family of seven siblings, of which only two were fortunate enough to attend school.

Zack's story is one destined for Hollywood. When he was a young boy, Zack was forcibly removed from his family's home and taken to school by the chief and his policemen. In 1974

the government gave a directive to effect that all Maasai families must send one of their children to be enrolled in school. Many Maasai believed that formal education was not important for their children who would grow to be herdsman. "The police came to our house at 6 am and asked my father which of the kids was going to be taken. My father, looked at all the seven of us and looked at me and said to them, "Please take Zack because he is not very productive in looking after the livestock". I cried but could not do anything at the time."

Zack was very sad for a few days, but then learned to love his school and was given a wonderful education. In a short period of time he grew to prefer school to the life of hard work with his family in the village.

Zack not only went on to graduate from primary and secondary school in Kenya, but also received his degree from University. After high school Zack was offered a scholarship to Brandeis University in the United States. Unfortunately, the scholarship he was offered would only pay for half of his tuition. Zack began working with his family to earn his part of the tuition. His family organized a harambee (a traditional Kenyan fundraiser) and his family utilized all of their resources, selling 120 cows, goats and sheep. Despite these extraordinary efforts, he was unable to raise all of the necessary funds.

During Zack's schooling, he became close with a friend whose father was President Daniel Moi's minister. This minister prayed daily with the president of Kenya. When he learned of Zack's situation he went directly to President Moi and requested an audience for Zack.

Soon after, Zack found himself meeting with the most powerful man in Kenya. His friend's father took him to the meeting dressed in his best clothes, introduced him to President Moi and left him to present his case. After a short conversation, Zack left President Moi's office with enough Kenyan Shillings in his pockets to cover the remaining funds needed for his education. The only promise Zack had to give President Moi was that he would return to Kenya to utilize his education for the better good of his compatriots.

In 2000, Zack went to Brandeis in Boston to pursue a Masters in Sustainable International Development. His masters thesis was on Microfinance.

Upon completing his degree in 2003, Zack made good on his promise to President Moi and returned to Kenya to be with his family. He was first employed by the Kenyan gov-

ernment to work on a project called Ewaso Ngiro Development Authority as a Regional Development officer. He was at that time attached to International Labor Organization as a microfinance Trainer for two years.

Just prior to working with Kageno, Zack was employed by Pride Africa, first as a Research Development manager and then as Operations Regional Manager. He was also at the same time appointed by German Technical Cooperation Group under the ambassador's office as their National development trainer for Organizational Development. "This is when I got attached to the poor. It is very encouraging to touch poor people's lives. It was the time I made my mind up to go for further education to be able to help the poor better... I am happy to be part of the Kageno family in trying to look for solutions with the Kageno community on how to touch their lives and make a difference."

Our man in Rwanda....

Simon Camp is our newest addition to the Kageno team.

Simon, his wife Nicole and their nineteen month old daughter Senna moved to Rwanda in early April.

While doing doctoral research, Nicole will be part of a collaborative research project in Nyungwe National Park that will examine the ecological role of primate seed dispersal in forest dynamics.

In addition to assisting Nicole with her work and taking care of Senna, Simon will be building the foundations for our Kageno Rwanda project by establishing a Kageno Trust in Rwanda as well as preparing the site for the first phase of construction. He will also begin to identify local individuals to manage the project.

Simon's background includes working as an assistant head of an elephant reserve in Berkshire, England where he cared for seven elephants. Simon has also been a Supervisor of Forest Site Development at the Cercopan Forest Monkey Rehabilitation and Conservation Center and a Volunteer Supervisor at the Drill Monkey Rehabilitation and Breeding Center in Nigeria where his responsibilities included animal and staff management as well as construction and general maintenance of the site and maintenance of project vehicles. Simon was also responsible for the design and installation of a battery based photovoltaic (PV) system for the Conservation Project of the Nyungwe Forest (PCFN) and trained staff in the assembly and use of PV systems while in Nigeria.

Asante sana (thank you)

The following individuals have been very generous to Kageno in 2006...

Tribal Chief (\$10,000 and above)

Sarah & Ross Perot, jr.
Beth & Dan Plumlee

Tribal Elder (\$5,000)

Floresta USA INC.
Dr. Frank C. Andolino

Tribal Warrior (\$1,000)

Dr. & Mrs. William Weber
Melinda Winn
Melissa & Paul Stewart
Dee Ann & Marshall Payne
Donell & Phillip Wiggins
Gaby & Natalie Stern
Melissa Lowrey
Mark Robohm
Aaron Serafino

Jayne Hinds Bidaut

Tribal Family Member (\$500)

William Attard
Dr. Anthony Chillura

Tribal Family Friend (\$250)

Claire Chappell
Adrian Gonzalez Jr. & Thomas Blair
Gigi Perez
Baumol Family Foundation INC.

Frank & Emily Andolino
Robin Renzi

Barbara & Jim Moroney
Beth & J. Puckett
Mickie & Mike Rawlings
Kathy & Bob Wright
Peter & Bonnie Smith
Vedat Alaton
Michael A. Macko

Donating

Your tax-deductible contribution to Kageno will support all the work we do to help people in need through our documented **projects** (found on the website). These community projects will provide sustainable interventions on Rusinga Island, Kenya and Banda Village, Rwanda.

Help us make lasting, positive change in the lives of people in need - donate now to one of our projects and watch it change lives. Please make checks payable to: Kageno Worldwide and post to:

Kageno Worldwide, Inc.
261 Broadway 10D
New York, NY 10007

We are now able to accept donations online at www.kageno.org

Mission Statement

Kageno **targets** villages suffering from impoverishment, AIDS, genocide, and limited access to education and healthcare.

Living standards are **improved** by offering health services, access to clean water, improved sanitation, job creation, and environmental initiatives.

Kageno **builds** the framework that supports these changes through innovative community centers.

Through a mix of social programs, capitalistic ventures, and technology, under-served individuals are able to participate in the global community and therefore realize better living standards.

More Information

Please visit our website at www.kageno.org or contact us:

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