J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust

GRANTS AWARDED IN 2014

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust is a charitable fund established in the memory of Kirby Simon, a Foreign Service Officer who died in 1995 while serving in Taiwan. The Trust is committed to expanding the opportunities for community service, professional fulfillment and personal well-being of Foreign Service Officers and Specialists and their families. The Trust has been funded with contributions from Kirby Simon's colleagues, friends and relatives and other persons interested in the purposes of the Trust. The trustees are present or former members of the Foreign Service – State Department community and Kirby Simon's parents.

In the Fall of 2013, the Trust once again invited proposals for the support, in 2014, of projects initiated and carried out by Foreign Service personnel or members of their families, or by other U. S. Government employees employed at American diplomatic posts abroad. In response to this invitation, the Trust received a substantial number of proposals. With its modest resources, the Trust was able to provide funding for 34 of these projects. Grants ranged from \$950 to \$3,750 for a total of \$76,168.

The following pages describe the projects supported by the Trust in 2014. (Material in quotation marks is taken from the proposals describing the projects.)

ARGENTINA--BUENOS AIRES –Building and grounds improvements for a foster home – a project proposed by Elizabeth J. Pokela, Nonimmigrant Visa Chief; and Nathan Austin, Consular Officer, Nonimmigrant Visa Section.

"El Hogar Casa del Sol is a non-profit residence for foster children housing more than twenty toddlers, children and adolescents and is run by a group of professionals and many volunteers." A group of Embassy employees "made a site visit to El Hogar to discuss the home's needs and their main priorities for assistance were all related to building maintenance." Funds from the Trust will help to "replace the flooring in the recreation room, improve the outdoor play area with a new sandbox and playground equipment and plant new grass to cover patches of dirt." Embassy staff will organize volunteers to perform the work.

BOSNIA—SARAJEVO—Enrichment program for disadvantaged and handicapped children—a project proposed by Adam Lamoreaux, Management Officer, U. S. Embassy Sarajevo.

"The unemployment rate is above 30% in Bosnia and services for special needs children are very limited." "Svijetlo, an organization devoted to helping and supporting disadvantaged children with special needs and their families, raises money through fund raising and grants and supports 24 children from 13 families with limited financial assistance, supplementary education and social activities."

Funds from the Trust will enrich the lives of these children and their families by providing funding for birthday parties, trips to the local zoo and school supplies, clothing and footwear for the children.

BULGARIA – LOPYAM –Math education software and training for a school serving poor children – a project proposed by Bernard Coffey, Eligible Family Member and spouse of Eva Coffey, Vice Consul, U.S. Embassy, Sofia Bulgaria.

"The U. S. Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria has had a continuous and special relationship with the children at the boarding school in Lopyan for the past ten years." Located in a "very poor and rural village," the school is "predominately comprised of Roma children who are subjected to rampant discrimination, a hostile public climate, entrenched school segregation and deplorable living conditions at home."

"The school put in a special request for purchasing and training the teachers in the use of a mathematical software program" to be used in grades 1-4 and "the request fell out of the annual budget and fundraising activities" of the Embassy.

Funds from the Trust will pay for the software and Embassy volunteers will help with training the teachers and children in its use.

CHINA—BEIJING—Support for a foster home for sick children—a project proposed by Serena Lew, wife of Henry Lew, Foreign Service Officer, Plans and Programs Section and Julie Korb, Event Planner and Protocol for Embassy Beijing and wife of Lawrence Korb, Foreign Service Officer, Economic Section.

"Founded in 2000, New Day Foster Home began accepting children in need of serious surgeries in 2008." "A major effort to expand the kitchen and create an isolation space for the children in need of the most intensive care is underway and they are in need of water filtration and sanitizing equipment." In addition, safe and affordable transportation to medical appointments, and to and from the hospital for surgeries, is a critical need. Lastly, Embassy volunteers would like to continue sponsoring quarterly birthday celebrations for the children. Funds from the Trust will contribute to these needs.

ECUADOR – GUAYAQUIL – A study room and audio visual center for an orphanage – a project proposed by Dolores Craig, Office Management Specialist, U. S. Consulate General.

"Sor Dominga Bocca is a shelter that provides housing and rehabilitation for up to 26 abused and mistreated girls, most who are 6-12 years old." "The girls live in three crowded dorm rooms that have bunk beds and shared dressers, so they have no quiet space for reading, writing or studying."

In cooperation with the foundation that founded the shelter 16 years ago, Consulate volunteers will create a study room and audio visual center where the girls will have access to computers, CD player and DVDs and where they can use educational materials, including an English language program.

Funds from the Trust will be used to purchase furniture, a computer, audio visual equipment and educational materials.

ECUADOR – QUITO – School supplies for working children – a project proposed by Oksana Heeger, spouse of the DHS attaché to U. S. Embassy in Quito, Ecuador.

"Founded by several Foreign Service spouses, Quito Cares supports local Ecuadorian charitable foundations through fundraising events and volunteer opportunities."

"The Working Boys Center, founded in 1964 to address the educational needs of boys working on the streets, has served thousands of families with services and programs on education, personal formation, food, health, housing, family, and financial responsibility."

"With an average of 400 families – 2000 persons – being served at the Working Boys Center each year, meeting the demand for school supplies is a never-ending challenge."

With funds from the Trust, Quito Cares will continue its steady support by providing notebooks, pencils, erasers, crayons, paint, rulers, etc. that are crucial for the students to learn inside and outside the classroom."

ECUADOR – QUITO – Construction of space for physical therapy for a clinic –a project proposed by Erzsebet Best, Community Liaison Officer and spouse of Ramon Best, FSO.

"Founded by several Foreign Service spouses, Quito Cares supports local Ecuadorian charitable foundations through fundraising events and volunteer opportunities."

"Catalina Avilés founded Fundación Jonathan in 2002 to honor her 8 year old son, Jonathan, who had been kidnapped and murdered. The core mission of Fundación Jonathan is to provide children and elderly living in extreme poverty with medical and dental care, clothes, food and a safe place to study and spend time."

"Three therapists offered their time for free, but there was no space where physical and occupational therapy could be provided."

Funds from the Trust will help with the construction expenses for new space and Quito Cares will continue with their financial support and many volunteer hours.

GREECE—ATHENS—Improvements and medical supplies for a shelter for disabled children and adults—a project proposed by Giovanna Missmar, Office Management Specialist and Emily Schubert, Economic Officer, U. S. Embassy Athens.

"Agioi Anargyrio, a non-profit home for 52 children and adults with mental disabilities, receives no funding from the state and since the economic recession in 2008 has had to do more with less." Due to lack of funding the Association of Parents and Guardians has been unable to get carpeting to cover two flights of slippery stairs and several accidents have occurred."

In addition,"Agioi Anargyrio provides on-site medical care for its residents and is in need of plastic bed/mattress covers to help maintain clean hygiene practices."

Funds from the Trust will provide the carpeting for the stairs, the mattress covers and will also provide paint to embassy volunteers who will donate time to freshen up the stairwells with a fresh coat of paint.

GRENADA—ST. GEORGE—A stove/oven for an orphanage—a project proposed by Louis J. Crishock, Charge d'Affaires, U. S. Embassy, St. George's, Grenada.

"The Bel Air Home for Children and Adolescents was built in the 1990s as a cooperative endeavor between St. George's University and the Grenadian Government," and between the two, "roughly 60 % of the operating budget is met." The orphanage has a capacity for forty children, ranging from toddlers to young adults.

The grant applicant wanted to offer cooking and baking lessons to the adolescent and young adult residents, in order to build skills that they could carry with them when they had to leave the home, but the stove did not work properly, "in spite of several costly attempts to repair it." Funds from the Trust will be used to purchase a new combination oven/stove, cooking utensils and supplies which will enable the grant applicant to conduct the cooking classes.

INDIA – BADLAPUR – Expansion of a library for children of trafficked sex workers – a project proposed by John F. Krotzer, EFM/co-CLO, spouse of Tania Romanoff, FSO/CON at the U. S. Consulate, Mumbai, India.

"The Bombay Teen Challenge Academy in Badlapur, India, opened in January 2014, is operated by Bombay Teen Challenge (BTC), a nonprofit organization that has been educating children of trafficked sex workers for over a decade."

"Currently educating 114 students across all grades, the Academy's library remains one of its least supported areas."

Funds from the Trust will be used to "double the size of the library with books that have a track-record of engaging young readers."

IVORY COAST—ADIAKÉ—Improvements to an orphanage caring for handicapped children—a project proposed by Sarah Gardiner, Political Officer and Agnes Ambrosi, Foreign Service Health Practitioner, U. S. Embassy Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

"The *Pouponniere des Anges d'Adiaké* is a privately run orphanage about an hour outside of Abidjan. The orphanage is run by a community of nuns and normally cares for children under age 2." However, "they are now caring for 3 boys, ages 6, 12, and 20, who were abandoned by their parents due to their severe mental and physical disabilities, and the orphanage lacks even the basic equipment and facilities needed for their care."

Funds from the Trust will be "used to buy a shower commode chair which can double as a wheelchair, and improve the handicap accessibility with a ramp, improving the care of the three boys."

LAOS—XIENG KHOUANG PROVINCE—Supplies and equipment for improvements to an elementary school—a project proposed by Daniel Dolan, Vice Consul, U. S. Embassy, Laos.

"The Mounlapathom School, located an hour's drive along a bumpy dirt road through the mountains and jungle, is home to twenty Hmong elementary students whose parents are all subsistence farmers." "The area around the school was heavily bombed during the Vietnam War with many craters still visible today."

"The school is very rudimentary, with no electricity, no running water and no bathroom, and many of the children drop out to work in the fields with their parents before completing elementary school."

Funds from the Trust will be used "to paint the school inside and out, provide much needed basic school supplies and sports equipment for the children to use during recess." In addition, "the grant applicant will seek donations of clothes and foodstuffs from the embassy community to distribute to the children and their families."

LATVIA—RIGA—A commercial-grade stove for a soup kitchen—a project proposed by Victoria Olsa, Eligible Family Member (EFM), spouse of Aaron Olsa, Management Chief, U. S. Embassy Riga, Latvia.

"The St. Savior's soup kitchen was established almost 20 years ago in the basement of St. Savior's Anglican Church and now serves 7,500 meals every year to hungry and homeless men and women at no cost." "In addition, to the soup kitchen, the canteen runs a day care center and cultural activities for the elderly two days per week."

"The five burner stove and oven that was donated over twenty years ago can no longer be maintained because the parts are no longer available."

Funds from the Trust will be used to purchase a new commercial-grade stove and the grant applicant will supervise its delivery and proper installation."

LITHUANIA – PABRADE—Lamps, pillows and towels for an orphanage—a project proposed by Maria Comsa, Community Liaison Office (CLO) Coordinator, and Heather Boyers, Community Liaison Office (CLO) Coordinator and spouse of John Boyers, Operations Coordinator, U. S. Embassy Vilnius, Lithuania.

"At the Pabrade Orphanage there are roughly 60 children from ages 5 - 18 from the Vilnius and Svencionys regions, some who have learning and physical disabilities, who are provided with a safe and healthy learning environment."

Funds from the Trust will "be used to replace tattered pillows and towels and to purchase lamps for the individual rooms at the orphanage."

LITHUANIA – VILNIUS—Refrigerator/freezer and shelves for a food pantry/soup kitchen—a project proposed by Maria Comsa, Community Liaison Office (CLO) Coordinator, and Heather Boyers, Community Liaison Office (CLO) Coordinator and spouse of John Boyers, Operations Coordinator, U. S. Embassy Vilnius, Lithuania.

"The Ekklesia Charity Foundation was founded in 1997 by Larisa Cherkaskaja, who was inspired by the generous donations which saved the life of her grandchild by paying for a critical surgery her family could not afford." Since then, the purpose of this foundation has been "to feed the poor", but the mission now provides 160,000 meals per year and also provides a place where homeless people can take a bath and do laundry." "The 'staff' is made up of volunteers and by needy people who work for four hours in exchange for the meals they receive for themselves and their families."

Funds from the Trust will provide refrigeration and shelving to store donated food off the dirt floor." and will "enormously improve the Foundation's Kitchen services and food storage".

MALI—BAMAKO—Funding for an orphanage—a project proposed by Düden Yegenoglu, Economic & Commercial Officer, U. S. Embassy Bamako.

"Les Cris des Mères (the Cries of Mothers) is a private orphanage in Bamako, Mali, established in 2008 by Ami Kane, commander of the Police Brigade in charge of children with funding from international organizations, but following the coup d'etat in March 2012, funding for the orphanage dried up."

"Conditions at the orphanage, which cares for 16-18 children ages 2-18, became terrible after the loss of funding, with Commander Ami Kane paying for food, water, and electricity herself, but rent and salaries left unpaid, paid staff quit, leaving care of the children to the older orphans at the home."

The grant applicant and two friends stepped in and paid the back rent and then raised additional money to keep the orphanage open and improve conditions.

Funds from the Trust will help to maintain the orphanage until permanent funding can be found."

MEXICO-- CIUDAD JUAREZ—A house for a poor family—a project proposed by Elizabeth L. Davidson, Deputy Fraud Prevention Manager / Vice Consul.

"Proyecto Abrigo (Project Shelter), founded in 1996 by Rev. Jose Luis Portillo, is a non-profit organization that has built over 7,000 houses in the poorer sections of Ciudad Juárez, where as many as 65 percent of the 1.2 million people live in poverty." "The single family houses are built of cinder block, measure 12' by 24', have a cement floor, and are replacing houses made of cardboard or shacks of wood with tin roofs."

"A team of thirty Consulate staff, volunteering for two consecutive weekends, will build one single-family house." Funds from the Trust will help to pay for the materials.

MEXICO—HERMOSILLO—Beds and equipment for a shelter/medical clinic—a project proposed by Kimberly R. Harmon, NIV Officer, U. S. Consulate General Hermosillo.

"Started in 1984, the Santa Eduwiges Shelter and Clinic is a non-profit organization that currently assists approximately 500 to 600 people per month with housing and food, while the clinic offers services to more than 200 patients." "There are 40 beds at the shelter, and many of the mattresses are over 20 years old."

Funds from the Trust will "help with the purchase of new mattresses, a physician's weight scale, a small refrigerator, filing cabinets, and a metal storage cabinet" "to help improve the quality of care provided."

MEXICO – MERIDA, YUCATAN — A bilingual library for a primary school- a project proposed by Mary Tibbetts, spouse of Robert Tibbetts, Consular Officer.

"Agora Comunidad Educativa has a student body of 152 children from Nursery to Grade 6, but has no library." "As a result, students do not have access to learning resources such as books and technology, especially in the English medium."

Funds from the Trust will be used to create a bilingual library, "giving parents a place to go with their children for materials that provide guidance for raising bilingual students and will create a space where teachers can store and share learning resources."

MOLDOVA – CHISINAU – Renovations to expand a hospice clinic– a project proposed by Michael Ball and Hay Alto, Political Economic Officers, U. S. Embassy Chisinau.

"Hospice Angelus is the only provider of palliative care in Chisinau." The clinic has "a very small team of medical professionals who serve a wide population under very difficult conditions." "Due to the high demand, many patients have to wait outside for long periods of time."

Funds from the Trust will be used to renovate additional space "which will allow a 50% increase in the number of patients who can be seen and will provide a safe space where they can wait for medical help."

NIGERIA—LAGOS—Cancer education and screening for impoverished women-- a project proposed by Dr. Otto Dickman, RMO – West Africa; Esther O Ajayi-Lowo, Administrative Assistant – Lagos; Oladapo Afolabi, Medlab Technologist-Lagos; Litah Miller, Vice Consul – Lagos; Eugene Novikov, Vice Consul – Lagos; and Catherine Roden, Vice Consul- Lagos.

"Tomaro Island is part of a cluster of 5 islands off the coast of Lagos where most of its residents are either fishermen or are unemployed." "Prior to 2012 there was no medical care available." "A small clinic was funded with a grant from the Trust in 2011 and now the clinic is staffed by a local healthcare provider and Consulate volunteers, but the clinic's ability to provide health care services remain very limited."

"Funds from the Trust in 2014 will enable the project to provide breast and cervical cancer education and screening for women of child-bearing age." "Participants will be taught to do breast self-examinations, and mammograms and pap smears will be provided." In addition, "Consulate volunteers are performing blood pressure and blood glucose screenings, vision tests."

PAKISTAN—PESHAWAR—Musical instruments for a Girls' Choir—a project proposed by Vicki Burnham, NP. Medical Officer; Yousaf Yaqoob, Diplomatic Pouch and Mail Room, U. S. Consulate; and Javeria Rachel, lead member of the Choir.

"The Department of State cited Peshawar, Pakistan as the most austere and dangerous operating environment in the Foreign Service. Terrorist attacks including murders and bombings occur daily."

"The Peshawar Pakistan All Girls' Choir, led by volunteer Director Mr. Imtiaz, sings and performs at the U. S. Consulate and local churches, bringing peace, hope and encouragement for better times with their songs of love and hope."

Funds from the Trust will be used to purchase "a keyboard, a guitar and a flute to accompany the choir with their message of hope and unity."

PERU—LIMA—Water and soil for a community organic garden—a project proposed by Karen Kuzis, Vice Consul; DeMark Schulze, Vice Consul; Christopher Meyer, IRM Mail Clerk and spouse of Karen Kuzis; and Colleen O'Donnell, spouse of DeMark Schulze, U. S. Embassy Lima.

"Villa El Salvador is one of the largest and poorest districts in the city of Lima, but is well-known for its self-management practices by residents, who have built infrastructure supplying electricity, water and sewage to many of the now-permanent homes, in addition to public kitchens, health facilities, along with income-generating projects and education." "The community has already started the construction of an organic garden that will provide vegetables and herbs to about 90 people, but they lack funding for a 'fog-catcher', which can collect up to 100 gallons of water per day in an area that gets only one third of an inch of water per year, and for the initial supply of topsoil, which they plan to replenish with a composting program."

Funds from the Trust will "help cover the costs of the fog-catcher and the top soil necessary to get the garden started."

PHILLIPINES—MANILA—Medical equipment for a birthing home—a project proposed by Jill Fazio, Fraud Prevention Unit Consular Assistant and spouse of John Fazio, Political Officer, U. S. Embassy Manila.

"Since 1991, the Shiphrah Birthing Home has offered dignified, safe, and caring births to women and their families from poor communities." "Serving more than 1500 women per year with education, prenatal care, weekly childbirth classes, and a safe birthing place, Shiphrah's fundraising efforts have had to go to the purchase of medical supplies rather than to improvements in structural components of the home."

Funds from the Trust will pay for supplies used to create 'birthing kits' and equipment such as a new autoclave and Fetal Dopplers, allowing Shiphrah to use the funds they have raised to do much needed building repairs.

SWAZILAND—NGCULWINI—Sports equipment for an athletic club—a project proposed by Paul A. Clark, Assistant General Services Officer, and Carla T. Nadeau, Consul, U. S. Embassy Mbabane.

In Swaziland, "one third of the population is under 14, and a staggering 45 percent of children are orphaned or vulnerable, with a high incidence of gender-based violence (GBV) and HIV." "The school system focuses on academic programs; physical education and sports are nearly non-existent."

In 2008, "Muzi Mabuza built a small track and field club, called the Manzini Athletic Club (MAC), out of his home." "He accepts any child who wants to run, regardless of income, many who have experienced violence." His program "produced the only two Swazi track and field Olympians for the 2012 Olympic games."

Funds from the Trust will help to provide sports equipment for MAC's newly created athletic training facility, complete with a gym, track, tennis court and soccer field."

THAILAND—CHIANG MAI—Vocational education at an orphanage—a project proposed by Jennifer Wise, spouse of William Wise, Special Agent with Drug Enforcement Administration, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

"Projects for Asia Foundation (PFA) operates *Hope House Children's Home* and *Hope and a Future School,* which houses and provides schooling for 60 Hill Tribe children from grades 1-12 who are abandoned, orphaned or whose parents are incarcerated." "The ultimate goal is to provide the children with the skills necessary to function in Thai society."

"The Foundation is supported by donations that sustain the basic funding for the school, but the support is not sufficient." Funds from the Trust will help to establish vocational training in such as areas as "cooking, woodworking and carpentry, hydroponics gardening, and sewing by paying for the tools, equipment, and educational materials."

THAILAND – MU SU DAM VILLAGE – A sewing machine and supplies for a revenue-producing project for disadvantaged women – a project proposed by Dr. Kelly Dowdall-Garberson, U. S. Consulate Management Assistant, Spouse of Captain Ronald Garberson, Defense Attaché Office and Amy Sarabi, spouse of Captain Shane Hughes, Defense Attaché Office.

"The majority of the hill tribes in northern Thailand are subsistence farmers who have very little opportunity to improve their lives." "The women of the Lahu tribe in Mu Su Dam village petitioned the government for funds to build a community center, used mainly for daycare, and the center was completed in 2013." "In addition, the community has devoted time to develop skills to create handicrafts including embroidery, woodcarving, and weaving, enabling the women to earn additional income to improve their lives and community."

"Some women of the tribe attempted to expand their opportunities by experimenting with designing and creating handicrafts for sale, but due to the relatively high overhead cost of establishing such a business, the attempt did not succeed."

Funds from the Trust will be used to purchase "supplies, sewing machines and unique designs for the handicrafts so they will appeal to foreigners to purchase." In addition, the day care center will be enhanced with art supplies, school supplies and toys so the women can devote more time to the project.

UGANDA – KAMPALA – An industrial sewing machine for a revenue project for disadvantaged women – a project proposed by Katie Borchert, spouse of Jeff Borchert, Epidemiologist, U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U. S. Embassy Kampala.

"Katie Borchert began <u>Lifted Uganda</u> in 2010 with the vision of empowering a small group of Ugandan women with income generating projects." Besides raising money that has enabled the women to keep their children in school, they have learned business and money management skills. Using "creative sewing skills to create one-of-a-kind handmade crafts," the women from a slum near downtown Kampala have been successfully selling "creative Baby Bibs in high end craft stores and craft fairs." Their next project, Art Aprons, have a plastic covering and are difficult to sew by hand.

Funds from the Trust were used to purchase an industrial sewing machine, "assisting Lifted to make the aprons better quality, cleaner-looking and much faster."

VIETNAM—HO CHI MINH CITY—Office equipment for a Community Development Center—a project proposed by Samuel Lam, spouse of Monica Lam, Foreign Service Office Management Specialist.

"LIN Center for Community Development provides support and grants to more than 121 small local not-for-profit groups in Ho Chi Minh City. LIN provides meeting space, mentoring and offers free workshops and consultations to the local NPO groups."

Funds from the Trust will be used to "outfit their Community Training room to make it a better learning environment, including a multifunction color printer, a hot/cold water dispenser, a microphone system and office supplies such as pens, paper and cups."

VIET NAM – MY THO – Educational materials for a home for underprivileged children – a project proposed by Maria Quigua, Vice Consul and Linh Chi Nguyen, NIV Clerk, U. S. Consulate General, Ho Chi Minh City.

"The Little Rose Shelter (Mái Âm Hoa Hông Nhô) was established in 2008 and now provides a home to 19 girls who are orphans, abandoned children or children who come from abusive families." "Although the organization raises funds from its daycare business, Little Rose does not deny day care services to children whose families cannot afford to pay, and their funds are not sufficient to provide access to technology and English educational materials."

Funds from the Trust will be used to purchase "textbooks, games, computer tablets and language software, and Consulate volunteers will work directly with the girls and cross train the Little Rose staff."

YEMEN – SANA'A – Hospital beds and equipment for special needs patients – a project proposed by Jan Flattum-Riemers, Regional Medical Officer; Tamra Halmrast-Sanchez, USAID Deputy Mission Director; Susan McIntyre, USAID Senior Humanitarian Adviser; Muneer Ghailan, USAID Health Specialist; Carmencia N. Carmen, U. S. Embassy Health Unit Nurse; and the Missionaries of Charity.

"The Missionaries of Charity provide day-to-day care to 86 mentally, physically and emotionally handicapped children and adults in a facility that is clean but has limited equipment and supplies." "The Sanaa Community Service Club, composed of Sanaa Embassy Foreign Service officers along with local Yemeni staff, in a cooperative effort with the Missionaries of Charity, will enrich the program" with much needed equipment.

Funds from the Trust will purchase special hospital beds "for the most severely handicapped who are currently tied to their beds to keep them from falling out, a physical therapy platform that will facilitate the physical therapy sessions and implements for self-feeding." "The Embassy physical therapist will conduct trainings on basic physical therapy exercise and will monitor their progress."