

J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST

GRANTS AWARDED IN 2008

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 2007, the Trust once again invited proposals for the support, in 2008, 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 65 proposals from 48 countries. With its modest resources, the Trust was able to fund 40 of these projects, conducted in 35 countries, in whole or in part. Grants ranged in amount from \$750 to \$4500 for a total of \$102,735.

The following pages describe the projects supported by the Trust in 2008. (Material in quotation marks is taken from the proposals describing the projects.)

ARGENTINA – BUENOS AIRES. Sewing machines and materials to support an income-generating project for a children's soup kitchen – a project proposed by Rachel Martinez, Office Management Specialist.

Buenos Aires, like so many places around the world, is filled with hungry children. Some of them are fortunate enough to live in the vicinity of El Hornerito, a soup kitchen near the city's airport. Every weekend, the kitchen feeds approximately 130 children who have no access to a meal when school isn't in session; during the week, it supplies snacks to roughly 20 children who aren't yet in school. Over several years the project has acquired a building, electricity, running water, a freezer, ceiling fans and bathrooms, but donated food supplies are often insufficient, there is no gas line, money to purchase firewood is often unavailable, and the sole (unpaid) staff member must subsist on only "a meager unemployment pension."

Because some of the children's mothers work in garment factories, a sewing project seems a promising way to accomplish several objectives. By "taking advantage of the hours that the existing structure is not in use," the project generates income for the soup kitchen and for the participating women themselves, and at the same time creates a vehicle for more active parental involvement with El Hornerito. A grant from the Trust has enabled the purchase of two used industrial sewing machines, as well as sewing tools and supplies.

BANGLADESH – HAZRAPUR. Materials and labor to build a playground at a group home for orphans – a project proposed by Foreign Service Officers Loye Howell, Ann Hardman, Charles Jarrett, Pam Kazi, Aleta Kovensky, and Carter Wilbur, and Mr. Jarrett’s spouse Alana Jarrett.

“Bangladesh is among the poorest countries in the world,” a place where 179 million people struggle to survive in an area “smaller than the state of New Jersey.” Almost half of the population lives below the poverty line, and literacy rates are correspondingly low, with only 53% of males and 31% of females able to read.

Bangla Hope is a group home that “provides comprehensive care for 67 orphaned children” who receive “shelter, clothing, food, and a good foundation for a healthy and productive life.” However, “though the children are well-cared for and have comparatively decent housing, they have no space of their own to run around, play, be creative, and practice their motor skills.” Instead, they have “only a balcony in a crowded urban environment to call ‘outside’.” Most of them have never seen a playground, a fact that the project sponsors came to realize when they took several of the children to a local park and “recognized immediately how much joy it brought them.”

In conjunction with Bangla Hope’s move to a larger facility, the project participants are creating a playground that includes two swing-sets (each with three swings), two teeter-totters, one jungle gym, three slides, and a merry-go-round. Funds from the Trust are being used to purchase and transport the necessary materials and hire laborers to build the equipment.

BELIZE – BELMOPAN. Clothing and equipment for a year-round sports training program for children with intellectual disabilities – a project proposed by Floyd Baker, Country Attaché, DEA; Barry Cuthbertson, Community Liaison Officer; Donna Cuthbertson, Administrative Support Specialist; James Muschamp, Chauffeur; Towanda Thorne, Special Agent, DEA; and Aisassa Carter, niece of Ms. Thorne.

In Belize, sadly, children with intellectual disabilities are “quite often marginalized,” and “even their parents fail to advocate for the child’s needs.” One of the project participants, Mr. Muschamp, “serves as a director on the national board of the Special Olympics.” He has identified a group of 15 local children, ages 8-12, who would benefit from a year-round sports program to train them as Special Olympics athletes. Nine competition events are held each year, and “athletes with a minimum of eight weeks’ training are eligible to compete.”

This project “provides coaches, supplies and equipment to train these children as athletes and provide them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other like athletes and the community.” A grant from the Trust has enabled

the purchase of tennis shoes, team shorts and shirts, stop watches, marking cones, and a field measuring tape.

BULGARIA -- LOPYAN. Sports equipment and materials to develop a playground and recreation area at a children's home – a project proposed by Carolyn Turpin, Consular Officer; Joshua Huck, Political Officer; Jonathan Blodgett, Facilities Maintenance Assistant and spouse of Ms. Turpin; and Nida Sophasarun, Communications Assistant and spouse of Mr. Huck.

Bulgaria is “in a difficult position right now” as it struggles to adapt to its new status as a member of the European Union, an organization within which it “remains the poorest country.” Its economy is weak (with an average income of less than \$350 per month), and its physical infrastructure is inadequate. Children are especially vulnerable. “It is estimated that in Bulgaria there are almost 10,000 living in orphanages,” although “the vast majority of these children are not orphans at all.” Rather, they come from families unable to care for them “due to financial circumstances and/or unusual and sub-standard living conditions.” What is worse, many of these distressed families are Roma (Gypsy), which means that they are often discriminated against by ethnic Bulgarians. As a result, they are largely unemployed and even poorer and less educated than their neighbors. Parents are thus forced by circumstance “to hand their children over to be cared for by the local municipal government,” which is itself “just barely scraping by.”

Although the 80 or so children who are to be found at the small village children's home that is the focus of this project are fortunate to live in an environment more stable than that of the families they left, these children are still subject to extreme deprivation, with broken windows, rotting bathrooms, inadequate sanitation, and “the most minimal meals imaginable” prepared over a wood-burning stove. The home's minimal resources must be devoted entirely to basic necessities.

Yet “the children are still children,” despite these enormous disadvantages, and “the ability to go outside and play should not be a luxury.” By creating a play area, this project creates opportunities for the children “to socialize and share, to develop physically, and to heal some of the hurts” they have suffered. Trust funds are being used to procure kits and materials for a swing and monkey bars set, soccer goals, a pole for a basketball hoop, benches, and small items like balls and jump ropes. The older children help to assemble the equipment and the younger ones help to paint it, thus creating a sense of ownership in the final product.

CHINA – BEIJING. An infant incubator for a medical foster home – a project proposed by Daniel Piccuta, Deputy Chief of Mission, and his spouse Christina Piccuta.

The Ping An Medical Foster Home offers a vital service in China, working “in conjunction with various foster homes and orphanages” to provide a better “quality of life” for “Chinese orphans and abandoned children born with physical handicaps”

requiring “surgery or other medical attention.” With a staff of six caregivers and “an army of volunteers,” the Home houses up to eight infants and toddlers and “arranges surgery, rehabilitation therapy and other medical care.” When the children’s physical problems have been addressed, “Ping An works with adoption agencies and Chinese authorities” to place them in “permanent adoptive homes.” To date, more than 160 children have benefited from these services.

Among the children cared for at Ping An are infants who are at particular risk “because of low weight aggravated by birth defects.” “Infants as small as 2.8 pounds have been cared for,” and their chances of surviving and thriving would be greatly enhanced with the use of an incubator. A grant from the Trust has enabled the purchase of such an incubator, which will “aid in bringing health to babies who might otherwise have little chance of survival.”

COLOMBIA – BOGOTA. Medications, medical and dental supplies, vision exams, and eyeglasses for at-risk children – a project proposed by Chuck Wright, Regional Medical Officer.

The Trust has renewed its support, for a third year, of a project providing health-care services through three centers operated by the Fundación Proyecto de Vida. The Fundación is an organization devoted to the needs of children in “poverty-stricken areas around the city of Bogota,” where the typical family comprises “a mother and three to four children who all live on the equivalent of one to two dollars per day.” “The children suffer with the types of health problems” that arise under such conditions, including “diarrheal illnesses, respiratory illnesses, stress-related health problems, and poor nutrition.” While Colombian children theoretically “have access to public hospitals and clinics,” many “do not receive routine basic health care” because their families can’t afford the necessary transportation, and “they do not receive basic hearing and vision screening” because they “don’t attend formal schools.”

The clinic at Soacha, one of the three centers, is now well-established, and additional clinics “have been set up at the Ciudad Bolivar and Usaquen sites.” This project seeks both to continue basic medical care at these clinics and to add dental services, because “the level of dental care” among these children is “terrible, contributing to much disease, malnutrition, and medical illness.” Funds from the Trust are being used for both purposes, first, by enabling the purchase of “an ongoing set of supplies” including medications, vitamins, and treatment supplies, and, second, by underwriting the costs of “consumable dental equipment such as fillings, cleaning solution, tooth brushes, toothpaste, and other expendable items.” Volunteer dentists and dental students are providing their services, and are also acquainting the children with basic dental hygiene.

CROATIA – SISAK. Equipment and services to repair the heating system and install a second bathroom in a home housing Roma refugees – a project proposed by Foreign Service Officers Douglas A. Fisk, Alma M. Johnson, Marlene M. Nice, Sara L. Litke, Christopher J. Rhoton, and Patrick R. Wingate; Metka Jelenc, Foreign

Service National; Brian Papanu, Diplomatic Security Officer; and Christina W. Bergen, Foreign Service Specialist.

The breakup of the former Yugoslavia, and the “ethnically based wars” that accompanied it, were especially cruel for an “extremely vulnerable group” of Roma who had been living “in a small settlement located” near the eastern Croatian town of Sisak. Displaced by the war, the group was first resettled in a “government operated collective center,” then suffered another blow when the center “was closed and demolished” in 2007. The eight families, with 33 members, now reside in “two homes provided by the Croatian government.” One of these buildings, housing the larger number of refugees, “was damaged during the war and lacks a functional heating system,” so that residents “must use a single oven to heat the entire house” during the “harsh Croatian winters” – a significant fire hazard that also prevents use of the stove for cooking. In addition, the building contains only one functional bathroom.

This project is repairing the heating system and adding a second bathroom “to improve safety and health conditions for the community.” A grant from the Trust is being used to purchase and install a boiler and radiators, and to acquire the materials needed to reconstruct a second, previously non-functioning bathroom.

CYPRUS – LIMASSOL. A hospital bed and educational toys for special-needs children – a project proposed by John V. Rhatigan, Assistant Public Affairs Officer.

Special-needs children and youth have been a special focus of Embassy Nicosia’s efforts to reach out to both the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, and to “build linkages” between them. Embassy staff have worked especially closely with the Theotokos Foundation, “a private, non-profit organization that offers comprehensive services to children up to 25 years of age with learning and other developmental disabilities.” Through its residential program, the Foundation offers clients the “opportunity to learn to communicate,” to take care of themselves, and to work, so that they can “become autonomous and active adults.”

The Foundation especially needs to replace its 21 “very old” beds and acquire educational toys that “are critical for learning and development.” Trust funds have enabled the acquisition of one bed and a number of educational toys, the formal presentation is creating another opportunity for community outreach.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO – KINSHASA. School fees and food support for a boys’ home – a project proposed by Tammy Tarlton, Political Office Management Specialist, and Steve Kenoyer, Political Officer.

The Elikia Hope Center is a group home providing “food, clothing, and shelter” for up to 20 boys who have “suffered abuse and/or neglect from their families.” Because the Center “requires the children ... to continue their education” and “public education is not free in Kinshasa,” the need to raise money for school fees imposes a significant financial burden on the Center. This project “provide[s] school fees for all the children and

defray[s] a portion of their food costs,” another significant expense. A grant from the Trust is being used for this purpose.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – SANTO DOMINGO. Medicines, home repairs, educational materials, and other basic supplies for a group home for disadvantaged children – a project proposed by Maureen A. Smith, Foreign Service Officer.

Almost 40 children live in Jackie’s House, “a local, non-profit home that provides a safe and nurturing environment for disadvantaged children.” Some are the offspring of “prostitutes, drug addicts and alcoholics”; others struggle with mental or physical handicaps; still others have been abused and neglected, or simply relinquished by “parents who cannot appropriately provide for them.” Embassy volunteers have sought to help by “donating their time” and offering “a level of personal attention that the house sponsors simply don’t have the time to provide.” Although these volunteers have helped enormously by reading to the children, teaching them English, helping them “develop gross motor skills and coordination through exercise,” and organizing birthday parties and special events, the material needs of Jackie’s House are still overwhelming. Funds from the Trust are being used to buy medicines, diapers, and clothing, and to cover the costs of some needed home repairs.

ECUADOR – GUAYAQUIL. Equipment for a community cooking project that provides daily meals to impoverished children, senior citizens, and physically challenged members of the community – a project proposed by Shane Hough, Foreign Service Officer.

Mujeres de Lucha is “a very active local women’s group” that was formed over ten years ago to address “nutrition problems with local community children.” Many in the “poor Afro-Ecuadorian minority neighborhood” were “skipping at least one meal per day because of the very poor economic situation.” The group began by “providing very low cost lunches to children, senior citizens, and physically challenged local community members”; it has since “opened a community store, small beauty salon, bakery, and used clothing store” to help cover the costs of the project.

The “more than 150 meals” served by Mujeres de Lucha each day are prepared with pots, pans, crockery and kitchen tools that volunteers “have donated individually, most of which would be sufficient only for a normal family kitchen.” Plates and utensils must be washed and re-used many times with each meal, because there aren’t enough for the number of children who must be served. In addition, costs are high because the lack of a refrigerator prevents buying “primary ingredients in bulk.” Trust funds have enabled the purchase of a refrigerator, industrial-sized pots and other equipment, two cooking gas cylinders, and an additional supply of plates, bowls, and drinking glasses.

ECUADOR – MOROCHOS. School uniforms and playground equipment for a primary school – a project proposed by Crist D. Middaugh, Foreign Service NationalI his spouse Denise G. Middaugh, and their daughter Cristin J. Middaugh.

The Pichincha School is the only source of education in this “small indigenous community” of “family owned and operated farms.” The school enrolls “students from Pre-K through sixth grade” and offers instruction in both Spanish and Quechua, a native dialect that is the children’s first language. Family resources are limited, and going to school can impose an extra burden because students may “dirty the few items of clothing they have” – a problem that school uniforms can help to alleviate. In addition, the children of the community need a playground to use not only during the school day, but after hours as well. A grant from the Trust is being used to purchase 150 school uniforms and a three-piece playground set.

EGYPT – CAIRO. Three months of basic food aid to 50 Iraqi refugee households headed by women – a project proposed by Sarah Ezzy, Strategy and Management Consultant and spouse of Foreign Service Officer Blake Mobley, and Janina Khayali, USAID Education Program Officer and spouse of Security Engineering Officer Nathan Mills.

The Egyptian government has “generously provided temporary residence permits to over 150,000 Iraqi refugees” since the war in Iraq began. Once in Egypt, however, these refugees have confronted “significant difficulties.” Their host country, struggling with “overwhelming domestic pressures” on public health and education services, and with rising housing costs and high unemployment, forbids them to “seek access to public health care and education” or “to work in the Egyptian formal economy.” Their plight is exacerbated by the fact that many of these refugee families are headed by women who have lost their husbands to the war, and who are unable to support themselves or feed their children.

To help address the urgent need of these families, the project sponsors have created SADIQ (Supporting and Defending the Iraqi Community), a foundation whose acronym means “friend” in Arabic. Through the foundation, this project seeks to provide three months’ worth of basic food support to the 50 neediest female-headed refugee households in Cairo, and to develop family-to-family sponsorships between refugee families and the expatriate community. In addition to the proposers, thirteen other Embassy employees participate in this project. Funds from the Trust are being used to stock and transport 150 baskets of “basic food items,” including rice, flour, cooking oil, and beans, sufficient to feed a family of four to eight members for a month.

FIJI – TAMAVUA, SUVA. Paint and furnishings for three chemotherapy treatment rooms – a project proposed by Heather Coble, Vice-Consul.

The Fiji Cancer Hospice is operated by the Fiji Cancer Society, a “grassroots organization” with which it shares “an old building” that is “clean, but not very well tended.” The limited resources of the Cancer Society must be used for public outreach

and the purchase of chemotherapy drugs, whose cost would otherwise be “prohibitively expensive for most Fijians,” so patients receive chemotherapy in three “very small,” spartan rooms with bare wooden walls and metal office chairs.

This project will “paint the rooms a cheerful color, add shelves for magazines and books, and buy a reclining chair for each room.” A grant from the Trust has enabled the purchase of paint, shelves, and reclining chairs.

FRANCE – STRASBOURG. Furniture for the common areas of an emergency and short-term living shelter for victims of domestic violence – a project proposed by Kimberly C. Krhounek, Political Officer.

Domestic violence is the scourge of women from all sectors of society, but it is especially horrific for those who are “without family and financial resources.” In France, many of these women are immigrants who have been brought into the country by their abusers. They are often unskilled and uneducated, and those who leave their husbands may be “rejected by their families from more traditional societies” and at the same time stripped of their legal status in France.

The Association de l’Aide de Premiere Urgence (Association for First Response Assistance, or AAPU) is a small organization that runs an emergency and transitional shelter for especially vulnerable women and their children, and also operates ten assisted-living apartments. The shelter “has been seriously overcrowded for a long time” and has negotiated a move into a former convent, “a space more adapted to collective living.” The current facility includes only one common area, which serves as the dining, staff, counseling and recreational room and is furnished with “mismatched and cast-off relics of other NGOs.”

The new building “will have individual rooms for families, rather than the crowded dormitories that exist now,” and “there will be separate dining and recreational areas, with a section reserved for children’s play.” Unfortunately, however, the expanded operation and increased rent for the new facility will leave no room in the budget for household furnishings, and Trust funds are being used to acquire some of these items.

INDONESIA – JAKARTA. In-service training for caretakers, specialized equipment and therapeutic toys for facilities serving mentally and physically handicapped children – a project proposed by Jan Flattum-Reimers, Regional Medical Officer; Libby Heffern, Spouse of Deputy Chief of Mission John Heffern; Holly Ahmed, Legal Attaché Operations Assistant; Eka Yosida and Hundarti Ang, Foreign Service Nationals; and Rachel Adams, daughter of USAID Officers Greg Adams and Foreign Service Officer Colette Marcellin.

The nuns and nurses who operate Yayasan Bhakti Luhur, a Catholic-oriented “foundation helping mentally and physically handicapped children,” provide care for 300 children who are challenged by disabilities ranging from mental retardation, autism and Down’s syndrome to cerebral palsy, blindness, deafness, and delayed development. While many

of these children live in homes operated by the foundation, outreach care is also an essential part of the yayasan's mission because some families "fear the fact" that residential care would be provided in "a Catholic home." At the same time, "the nurses providing outreach care do not feel they can bring expatriates to the slum neighborhoods, given the religious sensitivity and poverty of many of the residents." Appropriate training for the local staff is therefore especially important, yet "most of the nurses and caretakers ... have had minimal specialized training for mentally and physically handicapped children." Additionally, the homes themselves are adequately equipped with "basic medical equipment, appliances and some toys," but "the children lack special sensory motor equipment" that would improve their "gross and fine motor skills," as well as other specialized equipment like eating utensils, walkers, and a lift.

This project is acquiring specialized equipment and training materials; teaching caregivers how to use the new equipment; providing additional information regarding nutrition and the differing needs of children with particular disabilities; and undertaking photo-assisted outreach so that expatriate physicians and medical personnel can better advise the front-line caregivers and review the progress of their patients. Trust funds are being used to purchase the necessary equipment and materials, including a camera, and to mount a one-day seminar for caregivers.

IRAQ – MEDAIN, BAGHDAD PROVINCE. School supplies and backpacks for conflict-affected children – a project proposed by Craig Reilly, Foreign Service Officer and Political Advisor to the Multi-National Division Central Command, and his son Dalai Reilly.

The children of Medain are among "those who have suffered the most in this war-afflicted country." "As the security improves," schools are re-opening and "children are ready and excited about going back to school." This project is intended to "assist these children in what is a human right that has been denied to them for a long time: the right to education."

A grant from the Trust is supporting the acquisition and shipment of backpacks, solar calculators, notebooks, pens and pencils, and similar supplies, for the use of the school children

LIBERIA – MONROVIA. Banners, signs, and t-shirts for a public awareness campaign to clean up a neighborhood beach -- a project proposed by Kristen Grauer, Political Officer.

In an area of just a few blocks in the Sinkor neighborhood of Monrovia, "nearly 20,000 people live in thatch shacks" and use the adjacent beach "as an open sewer and waste dump." Unfortunately, "the beach is also the only area" where local children can play soccer, their favorite game, yet they can't do so "without stepping barefoot in garbage or human excrement." Under Ms. Grauer's leadership, a Saturday morning children's "Beach Patrol" is already underway. "We take them to parts of the beach with the 'cleanest' mess (so as not to expose them to too many germs), distribute garbage bags to

each child, sings songs, and have a race to see who can fill their bag up with trash first.” This popular activity “has become a positive influence in these kids’ lives and given them a sense of accomplishment about their work,” but the results are regrettably short-lived. The cleaned areas are “completely covered with trash again the following day,” and “the children get angry when they see their work spoiled by others and feel powerless to do anything about it.” A public awareness campaign is the logical next step.

This project outfits each participating child with a special “Beach Patrol” t-shirt that is “printed with slogans of environmental stewardship.” These t-shirts achieve several important goals: they “add to the sense of belonging” that has been burgeoning among members of the group, provide “a nice reward for their work,” add substantially to their supply of clothing, raise public awareness, help recruit other children to the effort, and “give kids the confidence to challenge people throwing garbage.” In addition, “picture signs” and banners are being posted, depicting “the illegal acts with big red Xs right through them.” It is hoped that the project will ultimately result in a community organizing and lobbying effort to obtain “adequate sanitation and garbage collection services” for the area. Funds from the Trust are being used to produce and post the signs and banners, and to obtain and print the t-shirts.

LITHUANIA – VILNIUS. Picnic food, games, face-painting supplies, and prizes for a carnival day at a home for abandoned and neglected children – a project proposed by Jennifer Tierney, Vice-Consul.

The Alytus Children’s Home, about 1 ½ hours outside of Vilnius, is “the largest home in Lithuania for children between the ages of four and eighteen.” Most of its residents “are not true orphans, but have been taken away from their parents because of chronic alcoholism, crimes or parental neglect.” Members of the Embassy staff “have cultivated a wonderful relationship with many of the children” over the course of several years, and previous grants from the Trust have been used to fund excursions into Vilnius for children who would otherwise never leave the home because they are without relatives or foster parents.

This year, the Embassy staff decided to move its annual event on-site “to allow for broader participation from the Children’s Home” and to “address difficulties from rising costs and inflation rates.” A carnival day “on the grounds of the Home’s athletic field” provides “a highlight in the lives of the children,” giving them an opportunity ... to participate in normal childhood experiences” and offering “sustenance to their emotional needs, if only for a day, by providing an experience during which they understand that others care about them.” A grant from the Trust underwrites the costs of food, prizes, and face-painting supplies, as well as game and sports items donated to the Home upon conclusion of the carnival day.

MALAYSIA – KUALA LUMPUR. School and medical supplies, food, and fans for Burmese refugee children – a project proposed by Enrique Gallego, Human Rights Officer, and Sharon Haines, spouse of Legal Attaché Christopher Haines.

In 2008, the Trust has renewed its support for a project “to educate Burmese refugee children at two volunteer-run schools” operated by the Alliance of Chin Refugees [ACR] in cooperation with the Chin Women’s Organization [CWO]. The lot of Burmese refugees living in Malaysia is harsh. Almost all of them are “ethnic Chins or ethnic Rohingyas,” two groups that “have faced systematic persecution and a myriad of abuses from the Burmese government.” Their status in Malaysia is not significantly better, because the government considers them “illegal immigrants” “subject to arrest, caning and deportation.” They “are not allowed to work legally,” “their children are prohibited from attending school,” and hundreds “remain locked up in overcrowded and unsanitary illegal migrant detention centers.” Given this situation, the United States government “continues to process several thousand Burmese refugees for resettlement” in the U.S. Meanwhile, in the face of adversity, these refugees “have banded together and formed associations to advance their interests, protect each other and provide basic services.”

One such service is education. With both local and expatriate volunteer support, the ACR and the CWO operate two schools, serving roughly 155 students, in two apartments situated in different parts of the city. Although some funds have been raised through donations and revenues from making greeting cards, these schools lack “money for basic supplies, equipment and one meal per day,” and the children “sit on the cement floor” in cramped, hot spaces. Trust funds are being used to purchase several electric fans, as well as pencils, crayons, exercise books, photocopies, basic medical supplies, and food sufficient to provide one meal per week.

MEXICO – CIUDAD JUAREZ. A training and support conference for paid staff and volunteers who work with abused and battered women – a project proposed by Foreign Service Officers Whitney S. Wiedeman and M. Elise Tokumasu.

The Casa Amiga Crisis Center and the Sin Violencia Women’s Shelter together serve an ever-increasing number of “victims of rape, molestation, and domestic violence.” From 2006 to 2007, for example, Casa Amiga expanded its direct services by 12 percent and its outreach efforts by 20 percent. Not surprisingly, both organizations are “suffering from high turnover due to emotional stress,” and their staffs and volunteers need additional “training and support,” as well as “stronger contacts outside of their local community.”

This project comprises two parts: (1) a conference “designed to help the paid staff and volunteers ... be better equipped to deal with the psychological stress” inherent in their work, to prepare “permanent staff ... to train incoming workers,” to draw media attention to the services offered by both organizations, and to promote “contacts with similar organizations in the United States and Mexico, allowing a synergy of shared ideas to develop”; and (2) an effort to translate Casa Amiga’s web page “into as many languages as possible, so that the network of contacts, and the potential donor pool, may become truly multinational.” A grant from the Trust is being used to underwrite the travel of several expert presenters, as well as the costs of conference space, promotional and instructional materials, and web page design.

MEXICO – ZAPOPAN, JALISCO. Classroom furniture, books, and school supplies for an orphanage – a project proposed by Alexander Hawkes, Vice-Consul, and Shelley Hawkes, Special Education Teacher, and assisted by staff members at the U.S. Consulate General.

In Mexico, many abused or neglected children are essentially orphaned. If they are removed from their families by social services and their parents do not visit them “for three continuous months,” all “parental rights are legally severed” and the children become wards of the state. To make matters worse, children lacking birth certificates “are not allowed under Mexican law to attend school,” and even those orphans who do attend the public schools “are not well accepted and are often discriminated against.”

Nacidos de Triunfar is a privately owned and operated orphanage that shelters 140 severely abused and neglected children ranging in age from four months to 12 years. The facility itself is new and spacious, thanks to its founding donors, but “the lack of operating funds does not allow for adequate staffing.” “There are typically [only] two or three caretakers,” and “the care of the children suffers tremendously as a result.” Education is of particular concern: while schooling for most of the children “is provided in part by the local elementary school,” supplemental efforts are needed because of the children’s special circumstances and the impediments identified above.

The orphanage has therefore retained two part-time teachers and designated two rooms as classrooms, but it lacks basic school furnishings and supplies. Trust funds have enabled the purchase of desks, chairs, bookshelves, books, and skills-building toys such as puzzles and blocks.

MOZAMBIQUE – MAPUTO. Air conditioning/purifying units for an orphanage – a project proposed by Mary Ann Kilkuskie, Executive Office Management Specialist; Ty Flewelling, Medical Officer; Hilary Beverage, Regional Political Affairs Management Specialist; and Sarah Horton, Consul.

Casa da Alegria, a facility operated by the Sisters of Charity just a block away from the main city dump, houses disadvantaged children of all ages and offers “hospice for adults.” “The Sisters have also started a modest school” for children who have never before had access to education. The facility within which these services are offered, however, presents particular challenges. Although some rooms have fans, the structure lacks air-conditioning, so that windows must be left open and “the smell of toxic fumes burning in the city dump continually permeates the orphanage.” The resulting problems are especially acute in “the baby house, toddler dorm, and baby/toddler refectory,” because “the ceiling fans and open windows cause recurrent bouts of community acquired pneumonia in the youngest and weakest children.” In addition, “the temperature in these rooms usually exceeds 95 degrees” during Maputo’s “long summers,” thus “compounding the problem by causing the infants to be chronically dehydrated.”

Air-conditioning/air purifying units are urgently needed in these areas so that the windows can be closed without raising indoor temperatures to insufferable levels. Funds from the Trust are being used to procure five such units.

NEPAL – KATHMANDU. Equipment and supplies to construct an outdoor recreation area for a facility serving poor and orphaned children – a project proposed by Gunnery Sergeant Matthew Bement, Marine Security Guard Detachment Commander.

Run by the Himalayan Children’s Foundation, the Kailash Youth Hostel aims to “improve the education, living conditions and health” of the 89 poor and orphaned children who call it home. These children, “ranging from ages 7-17,” come from “Nepal’s Mountain Regions near the Tibetan Border,” and the Marine Security Guards attached to the Embassy have organized a project to “create a play area that encourages” them “to challenge themselves physically and learn the value of teamwork through team-related sports.”

“With only donated leftover construction supplies, scrap material and borrowed tools,” the volunteers have already built picnic tables, pull-up bars, a weight-lifting bench, a volleyball court, and a rock-climbing wall. Trust funds are being used for equipment, materials, and labor to create a basketball court and a soccer field, to build more picnic tables, and to landscape the area, as well as for the purchase of “miscellaneous sporting equipment.”

NIGERIA – LAGOS. Paint, cleaning supplies, and medical equipment for a maternity clinic – a project proposed by Erin Sweeney, Vice-Consul; Christina Gerhardson, Foreign Service Specialist and Consular Office Management Specialist; and Mary Hess, Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Coordinator.

“Quality of life for the majority of Nigerians is incredibly low,” and “the gap between the rich and poor gets larger by the minute.”

Among the brave pioneers who have sought to fill this gap is Theresa Marques – “Mama Theresa” – who founded the Ile Oluwa Orphanage and Maternity Clinic some forty years ago. Despite her dedication, however, Ile Oluwa has struggled since its inception because of cultural “apathy, manifesting itself in a lack of volunteers from the local community and a lack of support from the government.” Ironically, the facility’s problems have become even more acute because it is situated in a community that has “become very wealthy” in the intervening years. The juxtaposition has not only made “the gap between rich and poor even more stark,” but made it “near impossible to cover operational costs.” Sadly, the future became even bleaker several years ago when a dismissed employee stripped the clinic of all its furnishings and equipment. Since then, Ile Oluwa “has been operating with only two beds, no theater table for Caesarean operations, and ... [no] renovations to the interior.”

This project aims to remedy those deficits in order to “improve the quality of life for the poor women and their families who visit this clinic,” and ideally also to “signal to the wealthy in the community the importance of giving back.” A grant from the Trust is being used to obtain cleaning supplies, paint and painting equipment, an operating theater table, and an infant incubator.

PARAGUAY – CANAL AKA SOLANO ESCOBAR. Major appliances, cookware, and bedding for a facility serving orphans and needy children – a project proposed by Charlie J. Franta III, Office Management Specialist, and Carmen Cason, spouse of the Chief of Mission and President of the *Damas Diplomaticas*.

Located in “an extremely impoverished area” that is “four hours’ drive from the capital city,” the Santa Rita Children’s Home is kept afloat through “the heroic efforts” of nuns from the Congregation Mariana Virgin of the Miracles of Caacupe. With “no financial support from the government,” the nuns rely entirely on private donations to “provide a daily meal to 120 children who would otherwise go hungry, a place for children to socialize, and a place to live for twenty orphaned children.” The scope of the nuns’ accomplishment is even more extraordinary in light of the fact that they have been working without a functioning freezer and with only one small stove, “one 20-liter pot and a few old pans.” Those children who live on-site sleep on the floor.

Project coordinators have obtained donated mattresses, as well as other supplies, and are using funds from the Trust to procure a freezer, a second stove, new cookware, and bedding.

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO – BRAZZAVILLE. Two electric motors for old woodworking equipment used by a deaf carpenters’ cooperative – a project proposed by Cindy Gregg, Deputy Chief of Mission; Trudy Wong-You, Community Liaison Officer; and Kelly Daniel, Vice-Consul.

Founded almost thirty years ago, the Deaf Carpenters’ Cooperative “was the first positive movement” in the country “to assist young handicapped [people] to acquire marketable skills and find life-sustaining employment.” Its members produce high-quality furniture and take on new apprentices who wish to learn furniture-making skills. Although the suburb where the cooperative is located “was one of the worst hit in both recent civil wars,” its members have “managed to continue operating” until recently, when their business was brought “to a standstill” by their “inability to purchase two basic motor parts.” For lack of those parts, “the cooperative members are unable to complete projects and the cooperative itself is quickly dissolving.” “Various groups have been trying to help by loaning them equipment, but this has been an on-again, off-again (more off than on) option.”

A grant from the Trust is being used to purchase the two electric motors needed to repair the woodworking equipment, and “Embassy personnel will continue to invite the woodworkers to display their items at Embassy-sponsored artisan workshops.”

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO – BRAZZAVILLE. English-language texts, learning materials, listening devices and language lessons for Congolese high-school students – a project proposed by Cindy Gregg, Deputy Chief of Mission; Trudy Wong-You, Community Liaison Officer; and Kelly Daniel, Vice-Consul.

The CEG de la Paix High School, “home to over 1,500 Congolese students,” was recently transformed through a project initiated by Ambassador Robert Weisberg. “Over 30 years old,” the school had been “in disreputable shape” until funds from the Navy and “the efforts of 15 SEABEES” created a facility boasting “new bathrooms, walls, doors, and windows where none existed for many years.”

As a next step, Embassy personnel “would now like to provide the students with another educational tool”: texts, materials, equipment, and training to acquire English-language skills. Although the “Congolese are linguistically tied to France,” “English has become the language of choice” for young people, and competence in English will broaden the educational and other options available to these students. A “student-driven English Club” will “provide one-on-one English training,” and funds from the Trust are being used to acquire bookcases, reading tables, chairs, CD players, books, workbooks, CD sets and related training materials.

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA. Office supplies, educational materials, vision aids and related medical supplies, and transportation for a project to survey the vision of HIV-infected children – a project proposed by Dr. Sandra E. Wang-Harris, spouse of Kevin J. Harris, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

HIV-infected children are at especially high risk for ocular problems and opportunistic infections, yet “there is no published survey of the state of children’s vision in Panama,” a country where “there is a general lack of education” about AIDS and the mother-to-child “transmission rate is still alarmingly high.” The Children’s Hospital of the Social Security Fund, which has established a pediatric HIV clinic, has identified “an immediate need for vision services in order to survey the ocular conditions” of HIV-positive children who are 15 years of age or younger.

To that end, this project is permitting vision exams on roughly 125 children, including a check for “vision problems related to learning and schoolwork.” Children who need follow-up care are also given treatment.” In a second phase, the project seeks to “augment the education and prevention portion of the clinical services” by offering “children and caretakers” an opportunity to “participate in surveys to determine their needs and level of HIV awareness” and otherwise “to be involved in HIV education and awareness” efforts. A grant from the Trust is being used to pay for the transportation costs of study participants, for office supplies and educational materials, and for prescription glasses, magnification aids, vision therapy, and some medical supplies.

SERBIA – BELGRADE. Gaming and health-care equipment and supplies for an outreach program targeting impoverished seniors – a project proposed by Cathy

Nemmert, spouse of Daniel R. Muhm, Regional Medical Officer, and Sarah Mauch, spouse of Brandon Mauch, Security Engineer.

“Belgrade has a high percentage of low-income, vulnerable seniors, including many refugees and internally displaced persons,” who “are impoverished, highly visible, and at times begging on [the] streets.” There are “very limited community resources for this population,” and what government aid exists has “been channeled to large institutional models of care for [the] destitute elderly.” Though “community-based models are emerging,” this population is especially difficult to reach for several reasons. First, they tend not to trust social institutions in general, given their first-hand experience of “decades of political strife, wars and corruption.” In addition, many of them have been isolated and excluded “due to ethnic, religious, or family status,” and most are simply unfamiliar with “community support networks and non-profit organizations.”

Hleb Zivota (Bread of Life), a local non-profit serving Belgrade’s vulnerable seniors, has been striving to find innovative forms of outreach that can overcome the seniors’ ingrained reluctance and draw them “to its center for much-needed socialization, companionship and referral to essential services.” One promising strategy has been identified by a group of expatriate women who volunteer at the center: weekly bingo games, which the seniors enjoy and can play even with “limited literacy” and social skills. With “small prizes, primarily non-perishable food and toiletry articles,” the event has attracted 20-25 regular participants and engendered a “sense of enjoyment and positive feeling.” At the same time, the staff is able to offer on-site “blood-pressure monitoring [and] blood-sugar testing,” “keep track of the more vulnerable individuals,” and provide “information, referral and assistance on income, health and needed services.”

This project seeks to supplement Bread of Life’s “limited operating budget” so that it can sustain and expand the weekly bingo event and its associated services. Funds from the Trust are being used to purchase bingo equipment; storage containers; coat racks and hangers; a small stove/oven; a blood pressure cuff and instruments to monitor glucose and cholesterol levels; a digital camera, so that participating seniors can have their photos taken and displayed; a computer for use in a small class offered by the center; and a set of dishes for occasional luncheons.

SOUTH AFRICA – BOYS TOWN TONGAAT, KWAZULU NATAL. Mattresses, bedding, and paint and materials to refurbish sleeping rooms for a project to be overseen by several senior boys as part of their leadership training – a project proposed by Sherry Zalika Sykes, Management Officer.

Boys Town is a residential facility that shelters “South African youth who are in need of support” and teaches them “to take responsibility for their lives.” Many of them are orphaned, HIV-positive, or burdened by behavioral, psychological, or family problems, and virtually all of them have “been given the message by their various communities that they are not likely to amount to much.” In order to help them “cancel out this message and learn new ways to view themselves and the world,” Boys Town has established a

“Boys Council” that allows its residents to learn leadership skills by taking on some of the responsibility for their own community.

This project has built on that model by involving the Council in a process both to identify a specific endeavor that benefits Boys Town and to oversee its execution. After meeting with staff members and the project coordinator to identify possibilities, Council members have consulted with their own constituencies and ultimately agreed “to spruce up the living quarters of the rooms occupied by leaders.” While this focus might on first blush seem self-serving, it is actually intended to provide an additional incentive for other boys to step forward and serve on the Council, which currently comprises only four out of 12 possible members. The current Council members are performing a good deal of the work themselves by seeking out additional donations and “painting, sanding, moving items in and out, etc,” thus demonstrating to all the boys that while nothing comes for free or easily, still the work of leadership has its rewards.” A grant from the Trust is being used to procure paint and painting supplies, replacement doors and closets, mattresses, bedding, and bedside mats.

SOUTH AFRICA – PRETORIA. Health-care equipment for premature, HIV-positive, sickly or injured babies and toddlers – a project proposed by Hearts & Hands, a volunteer organization within the local diplomatic community, through members Victor Williams, spouse of the Legal Attaché; Linda Ingalls, Office Manager; Allan Ingalls, spouse of Linda Ingalls; and Tisha Millersmith, a member of the Ingalls family household.

In 2007, the Trust supported the work of the Tshwane Place of Safety (TPOS), which performs a vital service in Pretoria by coordinating “the care and placement of 200 babies and toddlers in crisis.” Since then, “a donor [has] offered” TPOS the “use of a vacant home.” Although “the property had been vandalized and stripped of all fixtures,” the local Hearts & Hands organization has worked with TPOS to create “a Haven for children well enough to be discharged from a hospital, but too sick for placement in a foster home.” A live-in nurse and two to three staff members now care for “premature and/or HIV-positive babies,” injured toddlers (including some with Shaken Baby Syndrome), and “toddlers suffering from extreme starvation.” Their numbers “change frequently” as the children “become well enough to move on,” but the Haven typically houses “12-14 babies and infants, all requiring closely monitored care, some requiring oxygen, and most requiring a daily schedule of medication.” Not surprisingly, “the especially fragile health of these particular children” presents particular challenges, and the nurse who oversees their care has especially requested several items: “an electronic suction machine to provide oxygen to preemies, a baby scale to monitor the weight of preemies and severely malnourished babies,” disposable diaper bins, and hand sanitizers. Funds from the Trust are being used to acquire these items.

SOUTH AFRICA – MAMELODI. Construction costs to enclose two rooms at a community center in order to secure their contents – a project proposed by the Hearts & Hands organization through members Victor Williams, spouse of the Legal Attaché; Linda Ingalls, Office Manager; Allan Ingalls, her spouse; Richard

Lee Wilkin III, an American citizen teaching at the North American International School; Avril Elkington, a South African citizen and head of Berakah; and Dawn Conklin, a Foreign Service family member.

“HIV/AIDS has changed what a typical South African family looks like.” The epidemic has left many children orphaned or otherwise vulnerable, and women in particular must bear responsibility for raising not only “their children, [but] their grandchildren, nieces and nephews and children of friends.” The Berakah Educational Foundation “is a grassroots organization” serving Mamelodi township, an “impoverished area supporting one million people” that has been especially affected by these trends. In order to address “specific needs within the community,” the foundation “manages a number of worthy projects” that include food and other support for “orphans and vulnerable children,” an after-school care center, a day-care facility, and a sewing program “to teach employable skills to women in the community.”

With help from Hearts & Hands, Berakah is building a new community center to replace the “large worn tent and plywood/tin roof structures” that have housed its operations to date. The project comprises “several small buildings,” clustered around “open play areas,” that can be constructed in stages as funding permits. A donor has come forward to underwrite the first stage, but these funds permit construction of “only the floor and ceiling for the sewing room and library.” Because “precious sewing machines and bookshelves could not safely be kept in a space that is not enclosed,” a grant from the Trust is being used “to construct walls to enclose the library and sewing room.”

SRI LANKA – MT. LAVINIA. Computers, schoolroom equipment and furnishings for a home for orphaned street girls – a projected proposed by Karie L. Ennis, Office Management Specialist.

Among the casualties of Sri Lanka’s ongoing civil war are the ever-increasing number of “street children“ who have been abandoned “because the parents cannot care for them.” The Clarendon Children’s Home, run by the Sisters of Mary Immaculate in this suburb of Colombo, offers a refuge for 65 young girls – up from 40 just last year – who range between 3 and 16 years of age, and who have been left to fend for themselves.

A grant from the Trust in 2007 enabled the Sisters to install a protective stair rail and provide dressers for the girls. This year, renewed support from the Trust is being used to provide other “basic amenities” that will enhance the girls’ “learning and development.” New computer equipment replaces the one old unit that “is constantly crashing,” so that students can learn “basic computer skills,” while a blackboard allows the Sisters to “review school lessons with the girls.” A new, functional refrigerator “reduce[s] spoilage of food, allow[s] the Sisters to keep medicines refrigerated as necessary, and permit[s] the making of ice for cooling drinks and soothing bumps and bruises.” Finally, a new room recently added to accommodate the growing number of residents, which now consists of only a cement floor and corrugated roof, is receiving “permanent shades and/or siding” in order to “keep out the sun, heat, and rain, and allow the room to be used 24 hours a day.”

TAIWAN – TAOYUAN. Laptops for a shelter serving Vietnamese migrant workers and brides – a project proposed by Brad S. Parker, Political Affairs and Human Rights Officer.

“There are approximately 100,000 Vietnamese brides” and nearly that number of “Vietnamese migrant workers” in Taiwan, a “significant number” of whom “become victims of labor or sex trafficking.” As “one of the few organizations” authorized by the Taiwanese government “to shelter trafficking victims,” the Vietnamese Migrant Workers and Brides Office operates three shelters where “victims usually remain ... from 3 to 16 months.” “During this time, they are not permitted to work,” and the “prolonged periods of inactivity,” added to separation from family, “can lead to depression, and a sense of helplessness and frustration.”

This project seeks to teach marketable skills to shelter residents and facilitate communication with their families by offering both beginning and more advanced computer skills training. Funds from the Trust are being used to replace three old, often inoperable computers with three new laptops situated at VMWBO’s main facility.

THE GAMBIA – FAJARA. Refurbishing and equipping a day-care center and playground at a skills-development and training center for underprivileged and unskilled girls – a project proposed by Elizabeth S. Camara, Community Liaison Officer.

The Fajara Skills Development Center was established to meet “the growing needs of young Gambian women” whose age or other circumstances have prevented them from being “absorbed into ... the economy.” Because “most of the trainees have very young families to care for,” the lack of adequate child care can be a real impediment. “It affects them mentally” and can result in “poor attendance” and lack of punctuality. There are also “reportedly many instances of trainees bringing their kids to school as a last resort in order not to miss out on exams or the day’s teaching activities.” While the children “have a fun time,” their presence is distracting because the training program involves dangerous equipment and materials from which “the children need to be kept ... for safety reasons.” “A separate facility with trained day care providers and a nurse ... would help mothers concentrate in class and yet have that added peace of mind.”

To that end, this project seeks “to refurbish and equip one day care room and playground within the skills center.” A private donor has already provided cribs, mattresses and “lots of soft toys.” Trust funds are being used (1) to refinish and paint the daycare room and furnish it with tables, shelves and cabinets, playpens, a computer and video equipment, and other learning resources, and (2) to acquire a swing set and merry-go-round for playground use.

TURKEY – ANKARA. Shelf units, laptops and craft materials for a project that provides support to refugees – a project proposed by Kim DeBlauw, Management Counselor.

“Refugee reception in Turkey is very limited and highly restrictive” and “the government ... discourages permanent resettlement,” yet the country hosts an ever-increasing number of refugees, particularly from Iraq, Iran, and Somalia. In fact, the growth of the refugee population is “outpacing the availability of donated funds,” leaving private outreach efforts to fill the gap. One such project is coordinated by Meryem Ana Church, which hosts a monthly “Distribution Sunday” where refugees may receive “food vouchers, gently used clothing and pocket money.” Eligible individuals “queue up ... in the church basement” to register and be “interviewed about personal needs, with the most vulnerable taking priority.” “The wait can last an hour or more,” both because of language barriers and because registration “is performed manually on individual forms.” Applicants “are served coffee or tea and occasionally a meal” while they wait, and “children are kept busy with an organized craft project.” “Another room has small tables where the used clothing is stacked.”

A grant from the Trust is being used to purchase shelving for better display of used clothing, two laptops to promote better “data collection and tracking of refugee families in the program,” and basic craft materials for the children.

UNITED STATES – WASHINGTON, D.C. A seminar for Foreign Service teens returning to the United States – a project proposed by Melanie Newhouse, Executive Director of the Foreign Service Youth Foundation and spouse of Stephen P. Newhouse, Foreign Service Officer.

“Despite a lifetime of relocations, the most difficult move for a Foreign Service teen is moving back to the United States.” Although they have long looked forward to going “home,” returning teens often experience “reverse culture shock” characterized by “high re-entry stress, disorientation and depression,” all exacerbated by the turbulence of adolescence. Because the experience is “unanticipated and therefore unprepared for and not understood,” it too often results in loneliness, isolation and disillusionment. Experts in “cross-cultural re-entry” are increasingly coming to realize that these young “invisible immigrants” need help in integrating their new lives with their old.

The Foreign Service Youth Foundation is addressing this need through a debriefing and re-entry training” seminar that will provide “a structured environment to assist Foreign Service teens returning to the Washington D.C. area.” With the help of professional trainers, high school counselors, and other Foreign Service youth who have struggled with the transition process, participants share and “bring closure to the overseas experience,” cultivate strategies for integrating that experience with their present identity and goals for the future, and discuss ways of coping with the particular challenges presented by reverse culture shock. Funds from the Trust are being used to support course development and provide food for seminar participants.

VENEZUELA – CARACAS. Specialized electronic equipment, software, and canes for a school serving visually impaired students – a project proposed by Helping Hands, an Embassy charity action committee, through its officers Karlene Cassells Abrams, Special Projects Coordinator; Carolina Méndez, Political Assistant;

Rebecca Stultz, part-time Embassy nurse; and Mora Paiva, Foreign Service National.

La Unidad Educativa Bolivariana de Especial “Mevorah Florentin” is one of five schools in Venezuela “specializing in educating the visually impaired.” Its approximately 80 students “from preschool through 15 years of age” receive “personal skills training and many tools needed for self-sufficiency.” The school also provides support for students who go on to traditional schools (usually after sixth grade) and for parents and community volunteers. Unfortunately, “although public education is free in Venezuela, this type of education requires specialized equipment or additional school supplies,” and government assistance covers only teacher salaries, maintenance, and food for the students.

This project provides “additional specialized educational equipment essential for the students’ academic progress”: a projector that “enhances visual presentation,” speakers, a laptop, and software that translates written text into synthesized speech and provides output in Braille,” thus allowing “the visually impaired to learn to operate the computer independently.” A grant from the Trust has enabled the purchase of this equipment, and of 28 new “adaptive canes” for those students who are “severely visually impaired.”

ZAMBIA – LUSAKA. Toilets and showers for a home serving orphaned young girls – a project proposed by Nelds Villines, Office Manager Specialist, U.S. Embassy, and her spouse, Mwana Bermudes.

In Zambia, as in so much of Africa, the need resulting from the devastation of HIV/AIDS is “overwhelming.” When parents fall sick, “the children become as needy as orphans, while they watch their parents wasting away.” Many of them “nurse their parents or guardians until they die,” and then find themselves “left in the cold” without “the basic necessities of life.” If they are HIV-positive themselves, they may suffer further stigmatization and segregation.

Of this population of orphaned youngsters, perhaps the most vulnerable are the “many young girls living in the streets.” The SEKO Home offers transitional shelter for up to ten of these girls between the ages of 7 and 14, giving them “a safe, stable environment” within which they can achieve “quality of life.” The girls are “placed in local schools” and cared for by a House Mother who “provides guidance, love and support,” but their physical accommodations are modest. With support from the Trust, the Home is adding an “ablution building” containing two flush toilets and two shower units.

[The Trust is grateful for the valuable assistance of Judith Miller in the preparation of this report.]