

J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST

GRANTS AWARDED IN 2009

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 2008, the Trust once again invited proposals for the support, in 2009, 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 60 proposals from 46 countries. With its modest resources, the Trust was able to provide funding for 44 of these projects representing 35 countries and, in one case, using the transnational reach of the Internet. Grants ranged in amount from \$550 to \$4500, for a total of \$109,642.

The following pages describe the projects supported by the Trust in 2009. (Material in quotation marks is taken from the proposals describing the projects.)

ARGENTINA – BUENOS AIRES. For a children's soup kitchen, a minimal salary for the caretaker and chief volunteer, and two computers – a project proposed by Rachel Martinez, Office Management Specialist.

The primary mission of El Hornerito, the children's soup kitchen near Buenos Aires' airport, is to feed approximately 130 children every weekend, when they would otherwise have no access to a meal because school isn't in session. The project, which "was founded and remains managed solely by volunteers," has also sought to "take advantage of the existing structure to generate income" for its own support, as well as to engage the parents of its young patrons and to offer "a means of earning additional income." To that end, the Trust provided funds in 2008 for the purchase of two sewing machines, which "have enabled numerous girls and women to acquire new skills." This development, in turn, has led to "substantial donations of slightly defective clothing (including school uniforms), which benefit the children in the area."

"Although the sewing machines have contributed to progress and improvements at El Hornerito, they have not yet generated funds [to support] what the project needs to remain functional." These basic necessities include food (because donated food supplies are still insufficient) and firewood (because there is still no gas line). Of the soup kitchen's unmet needs, the most urgent is financial support for the sole staff member, Pedro. He is President of El Hornerito and is responsible for its construction and

continuing operation; he lives on the premises and thus deters theft and vandalism; and he shoulders the chief responsibility for cooking, gardening, cleaning, acquiring supplies, and overseeing other activities. Yet, although his “continued presence at the soup kitchen is essential,” Pedro serves without pay and must subsist on only “a meager unemployment/retirement pension.”

The project organizer seeks to pay Pedro a stipend of \$100 per month in order to ensure that “he does not need to take on jobs outside...to make ends meet,” and to purchase two computers as part of a nascent after-school tutoring program. A grant from the Trust is being used to fund Pedro’s stipend and to purchase computer equipment.

BOLIVIA – LA PAZ. Intravenous infusion pumps for newborns – a project proposed by Patricia Baxer, a Foreign Service Nurse Practitioner.

“Bolivia is the poorest country in South America,” and many children, from infants to adolescents, find themselves on the streets. Arco Iris Hospital, founded in 2001, is a non-profit foundation serving youngsters who “live or work on the streets of La Paz,” the capital city, “and surrounding areas.” Because the city “has only three neonatal units serving approximately 1,500,000 primarily indigenous citizens,” the hospital has been an especially important source of neonatal care. Last year, it served 1,500 newborns, almost a third of whom were “hospitalized in the newly completed neonatology unit.” That unit also provides care for “post-surgical neonates with congenital malformations.” These tiny patients are especially vulnerable to even slight errors in the delivery of fluids and medications, and the unit needs “high-quality intravenous infusion pumps for delivering precise doses of medication.” Funds from the Trust are being used to acquire two such infusion pumps and tubing.

BOSNIA -- PAHLJEVICI. Building materials and construction tools for two greenhouses -- a project proposed by Shelby Labanz, daughter of John Labanz, Foreign Service Specialist; Joshua McDow, son of Bethany McDow, Information Security Officer; and Kaitlyn Tuiasosopo, daughter of Matthew Tuiasosopo, Defense Attaché Organization.

Although it has been almost fifteen years since Bosnia began to emerge from the terrible ravages of war, its recovery is far from complete. Rural areas and villages “are still suffering a lot,” and this is especially true for the eastern part of the country bordering on Serbia. The small village of Pahljevici, high in the mountains, is a case in point. Many members of its five families were killed, and those who remain are “survivors of the war trying to make a living ... after returning to their original homeland.” The Federal government has donated bricks for rebuilding, but although “their houses may be reconstructed, their life is still destroyed.” “Employment, other than agriculture, is not available; their children attend school by walking 5km down the mountain and back up by foot; many of the adults are elderly and others have chronic illnesses and cannot work; [and] food is scarce except from their own gardens, which have a short growing season, and from a few farm animals.”

“Following a visit to the village by some teachers and students,” the students of QSI International School in Sarajevo decided to help. Because winter was quickly approaching, they first organized an “Emergency Relief Team” to collect and deliver non-perishable food. Ultimately, though, they wanted to help the villagers “produce food to feed their families and ... to sell...for a source of much-needed income.” To that end, they organized themselves into two teams with the goal of “planning, designing, and constructing two green houses.” The leaders approached the task as a “service learning project,” developing job descriptions, interviewing potential team members, and eventually enlisting 37 students from grades 7-12 representing fourteen countries. These students engaged architects, researched building materials, analyzed costs, planned fund-raising events, and undertook off-site preconstruction. When everything was ready, “the greenhouse parts and students [were] transported to the village with the help of parents and embassy volunteers, and the student construction team complete[d] construction on-site.” Trust funds have been used to purchase building materials and construction tools.

BURKINA FASO – YAKO. Materials, supplies and training in support of weaving, gardening, and animal husbandry projects – all proposed by Pamela Hamblett, Economic/Commercial Officer; Cheryl Breedlove, Junior Management Officer; and Keith Breedlove, GSO Specialist.

Established in 2000, Les Ailes de Refuge [LAR] is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping orphans and vulnerable children in the town of Yako. LAR operates on several fronts: its orphanage houses “46 children ranging in age from 3 months to 20 years”; its primary school serves “130 children enrolled in five classes”; its sponsorship program “sends 150 children to school each year”; and its small clinic, “operated by two nurses who were previously children at the orphanage,” provides care for all of the children involved in these programs, as well as for 75 additional children from the community.

As a full-time environment, the orphanage presents particular needs and opportunities for obtaining food, generating income, and teaching “valuable life skills.” This proposal comprises three projects: weaving, raising animals, and gardening. The first will build on an existing program undertaken by “a widow and two girls who are trained and experienced weavers.” These women produce small items and some special-order traditional weavings that are sold “to finance orphanage activities,” and “the orphanage plans to develop a nine-month training program and open this project to five new students.” The gardening project, meanwhile, will focus on the orphanage courtyard, where water is now available from a new well. This means that produce can be grown there during the dry season as well as the rainy season. During the dry season, the orphanage “currently spends about \$8 per day on perishables like tomatoes, onions, and eggplant,” so that the courtyard alternative will both “teach the children responsibility” and “supplement the orphanage expenses” by saving money and even generating some income through the sale of surplus produce. Finally, the courtyard will also be the site of the third project, which will expand the orphanage’s stock of animals by adding several laying hens; “the children’s diet is lacking in protein, and this will be one solution to the problem.” As with the vegetable garden, surplus eggs could also generate additional income.

Funds from the Trust have been used to acquire a variety of items and underwrite activities related to these three projects: for the first, looms, thread, dye, a table, chairs, and stools; for the second, seeds, fertilizer, and gardening tools; and for the third, 25 laying hens, chicken feed, materials to build and equip a henhouse and fence, veterinary care and initial training.

BURMA – CHAUNG MYA GYI. Labor and materials to dig eight wells – a project proposed by Amy E. Robinson, Consular Associate and spouse of Kerry D. Robinson, an Information Technical Officer.

The ethnic Karen village of Chaung Mya Gyi suffered extensive damage, “financially as well as physically,” when cyclone Nargis passed through Burma (now known as Myanmar) in May 2008. “90 out of 140 huts were damaged,” and the school was destroyed. In addition, “the village lost all its stored seeds, most livestock, and most of its stored supplies of food.” Yet “because the majority of the villagers are Christian, they did not receive any of the aid the Burmese government supposedly distributed” after the cyclone hit. A group from the Embassy in Rangoon organized an immediate relief effort to deliver food and supplies. Since then, they have sought to help villagers “improve their standard of living so that they are not living day to day.” To this end, the group has also supplied seeds, boats and equipment for fishing and shrimp trapping. And in order to help build “a precursor to civil society” in the village, the group has organized “a committee of eight village members (including two women – which is highly unusual)” to allocate the seeds and fishing gear. Teachers have also been hired, and a dentist and nutrition and water specialists visit regularly.

The greatest challenge now facing the village is access to clean water. “Chaung Mya Gyi is located on a water channel off the Yangon River,” and its 611 residents, of whom 187 are children, “use this channel” not only as a source of drinking water but as a place to bathe, wash clothes and dishes, fish, and eliminate personal waste. “The water is brown in color,” “very brackish,” and known to harbor “metals, chemicals from farming, and the leptospiral bacteria organism known to cause hepatitis.” Not surprisingly, especially in view of the fact that most newborns “are categorized as low birth-weight” and “malnourishment is a way of life,” “there is a high incidence of hepatitis and stomach issues in the village.” “Access to cleaner water would be the first step towards improving the villagers’ medical needs,” and a grant from the Trust is being used to cover the cost of labor and materials to dig eight new wells.

CHINA – BEIJING. Hard drives and memory to refurbish 50 deaccessioned Embassy computers – a project proposed by MaryKay Loss Carlson, Transformational Diplomacy Coordinator; Robert Raines, Assistant Information Officer, Electronic Media; and Michael Graham, General Services Officer.

When Embassy Beijing moved to new quarters in October 2008, the “computers from its former facilities” were not “shifted to the new building (since it has all new equipment).” As a result, “a large number of computers ... in excellent condition” are no longer needed

by the United States Government. At the same time, “there are no ready buyers” for these computers despite their “relatively new condition” because Chinese law severely limits the pool of those who may purchase USG items, and few diplomats have need of used computers.

This circumstance presents “an unprecedented opportunity” to support nonprofit and charitable activities throughout China by donating much-needed computers to appropriate organizations. “For security reasons,” however, “the hard drives and memory of these computers must be dismantled before they leave USG custody,” and project organizers propose to replace these components at a cost of \$50 per machine. “Once refurbished, these computers would then be donated to charitable organizations in China that desperately need them.” Trusts funds are being used to purchase hard drives and memory for the first 50 of these computers, and “volunteers from the Embassy community, including Boy Scouts whose den leaders are Embassy officers, [will] install the new drives.” A volunteer committee will then “solicit ideas for placement,” “review all requests,” allocate the equipment “based on greatest need and best plans for placement,” and coordinate delivery.

C HINA – QUJIANG DISTRICT, SHAOGUAN MUNICIPALITY. Transportation, meals, tools and materials to build homes – a project proposed by Robert Goldberg, Consul General; Sally Werner, Consultant and spouse of Consul General Goldberg; Vice Consuls Rachel Y. Hawkins, Thanh C. Kim, and Matthew Packer; Bin (Fion) Huang, Non-Immigrant Visa Assistant; Esmeeh Fouss, American Charity Group Co-Chair; Rachel Mazotta, American Charity Group Co-Chair and Community Liaison Coordinator; Gennie Waters, Community Liaison Officer; and Edward Waters, Fraud Prevention Unit Chief.

In the poor villages of Qujiang district (population 300,000), most people “earn a living by cultivating rice.” “The per-capita net income for a farmer,” however, comes to only \$350 per year, and many try to “supplement their income through working additional jobs in local factories and shops.” Even so, “more than 15,800 families in the district are living in unsanitary, unsafe, and temporary mud brick or earthen wall houses” with no sanitation or ventilation and in close proximity to livestock. In addition to being “uncomfortable and unhygienic,” these homes are “vulnerable to floods and typhoons,” and a number of them “have collapsed during annual storms and floods and have caused death and injury to the people and animals living in them.”

A group of roughly 25 Consulate volunteers is working with Habitat for Humanity China to “provide permanent, structurally sound and sanitary housing” for some of the neediest families in the region. These “safe and stable shelters will “dramatically improve” the villagers’ quality of life. Perhaps even more importantly, they will have “a significant public health impact” because their design and planning “will lead to a greater separation of people and livestock,” thus “curbing diseases such as SARS and avian flu.” In this phase, project participants will spend two days in Shaoguan, working side-by-side with the family for whom they are building the house. “While Consulate employees will provide the bulk of the labor,” HHC will “arrange the transportation from the site,

provide meals for the volunteers, select a partner family..., locally procure all of the necessary tools and building materials, and provide construction expertise and oversight.” A grant from the Trust is being used to pay for the transportation, lodging and meals of the volunteers, and to provide the \$350 contribution per volunteer requested by HHC to “cover the cost of skilled workers, quality building materials, and – most importantly – housing loans” for recipient families, as the revolving loan concept is an essential part of HHC’s strategy for long-term sustainability.

CHINA – SHANGHAI. Personal hygiene items for a homeless shelter – a project proposed by Vice Consul Andrea Corey.

“As China continues on the wave of economic development, the gap between rich and poor continues to widen,” especially in places like Shanghai, where the “struggle for resources” leaves the homeless and disabled literally and figuratively out in the cold. For the past ten years, Home Sweet Home “has been working to address the needs” of this “increasingly large” community by offering shelter facilities as well as job and literacy training and employment services. In 2008 HSH “provided meals for upwards of 2,000 homeless and disadvantaged men, women, and children,” as well as facilities for clients to “shower, rest, and have their clothes washed” – one of the only places in the city where these services are available.

While HSH receives “many food donations from various local vendors,” it lacks towels, wash cloths, soap, and other toiletry items, as well as laundry detergent. Trust funds have enabled the purchase of a substantial supply of these items.

CÔTE D’IVOIRE – ABIDJAN. Lights and security measures for a basketball and study program – a project proposed by Emily McCarthy, Regional Affairs Officer; Kendall Moss, Economic Officer; and Pamela LaFontaine, Chief, Open Source Center, Abidjan Bureau.

Although it was “once the most prosperous state in West Africa,” Côte d’Ivoire “now ranks 166 out of 177 countries ... according to the 2007-2008 Human Development Report.” Like its fellow sub-Saharan countries, it struggles with “poverty, income inequality, neglected infrastructure, and lack of access to basic services,” all problems that have grown even worse “during the last five years of political instability.” Indeed, the statistics are staggering. “The poverty rate has increased from 10% in 1985 to 38.4% in 2002 to 48.9% in 2008,” and “nearly 18% of children under the age of 5” in the north part of the country “are acutely malnourished, with 4% severely wasted and 13.5% moderately malnourished.” Nor can those who survive count on education as a reliable path to a better future, because the national education system is “consistently plagued” with strikes. All of these facts are disturbing not only in themselves, but as “indicators of the toll the political crisis has taken. Corruption and mismanagement of public funds have ballooned, leading to a severe lack of confidence in the government’s ability to set things right.”

In such an environment, disadvantaged youth are especially vulnerable to the lure of the streets, and the Olympic Basketball Center seeks to provide a positive alternative. OBC offers “regular involvement in basketball” while also encouraging students to continue their studies by offering homework assistance. At present, the program boasts almost 250 participants, 88 of them female, ranging in age from 4 to 22. Many are orphans or come from homes broken by poverty and internal displacement. “The OBC is the greatest source of structure” in their lives, and participation can be the key to a better future. Unfortunately, however, the organization’s hours of operation have been limited by the fact that “there are no functioning lights for nighttime basketball practice.” The coordinators of this project seek to remedy the situation as part of a “Books and Basketball” program that will further “encourage regular study, with basketball serving as an incentive.” One night a week, “embassy volunteers will tutor Ivorian children for an hour and then play basketball with them for an hour.” Since the program can take place only after dark, when the volunteers are available, functioning outdoor lighting is essential. A grant from the Trust is being used to purchase the needed electrical equipment and install a small shed to house it, to connect the lights to the city grid, and to “repair the facility’s fence and gate so access to the courts can be better controlled.”

CROATIA – VUKOVAR. Musical education materials for multi-ethnic elementary school students – a project proposed by Todd Bullock, Vice Consul; Foreign Service Officers Sara Litke, Daniel Meges, Christopher Rhoton, and Patrick Wingate; Matthew Kelley, Diplomatic Security Special Agent; and Terri Pitts, Information Management Specialist.

The city of Vukovar, in eastern Croatia, “was the site of some of the worst combat during the Homeland War” of 1991-95. Both Croat and Serb families – including many whose children now attend the Jagodnjak Elementary School – were displaced and “are still engaged in the painful process of reintegration.” At the same time, the Croatian government has limited resources to invest in “this economically depressed section” of the country. “The city still shows visible signs of damage,” and “many school programs such as sports and music lack sufficient funding.”

Still, the Jagodnjak school is fortunate in having a dedicated music teacher who offers what is believed to be “the only integrated Croat-Serb music education class in the country.” In her own powerful words, “Our music class is the only opportunity for the children of this community to work together on an activity after school. They are already seeing their other classmates not as Serb or Croat but as fellow musicians. This is a small step but an important one in healing the wounds from the war and bringing this community together.” By providing “essential music education equipment,” this project will allow 85 children to develop an appreciation of music and promote the further integration of Croat and Serb students. The organizers hope that it will “lead eventually to a public performance by the students for the community that would use music as a tool to promote harmony and reconciliation.” Funds from the Trust are being used to purchase a musical instruction board, medium- and large-sized pedagogical keyboards, and a projector.

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

The Trust in 2009 renewed its support of the Elikia Hope Center, which provides “food, clothing, and shelter” for 15 to 20 boys who “have been kicked out of their homes or abandoned by their families.” Because “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 will “provide financial assistance to cover the school fees for all the children” and “to help supplement” their “nutritional needs.” A grant from the Trust is being used for this purpose.

ECUADOR – QUITO. Equipment for a center supporting young, underprivileged pregnant women – a project proposed by the embassy volunteer group Quito Cares through its representatives Meghan Cunha, spouse of Justin Cunha, Office of Regional Affairs; Leah Evans, spouse of Vice Consul Arthur Evans; Grace Heim, spouse of Matt Heim, Foreign Area Officer; and Mary Carmen Miller, spouse of Christopher Miller, U.S. State Department.

The Centro de Ayuda Para la Mujer (CAM) was established to aid at-risk pregnant women (who are usually young and underprivileged) by providing free medical care and nutritional support as well as counseling, training, and education “for the first year of their babies’ lives.” In 2008 CAM assisted almost 2,000 clients, providing “obstetric care throughout pregnancy” as well as food, shelter, and life skills assistance. Among the items used by the organization in its work are audiovisual equipment to share “videos and other educational materials” and “ultrasounds and dopplers...to monitor the babies’ well-being and educate the mothers on their babies’ development so that they will stay healthy and refrain from drug and alcohol use.”

Now that it is well-established in Quito, CAM seeks to open three new offices in other parts of the country. In order to do so, it needs a corresponding number of fetal heart tone dopplers, blood pressure monitors, TVs with DVD players, and examination tables, as well as 12 gallons of ultrasound gel. Trust funds have enabled the acquisition of these items.

ECUADOR – MOROCHOS. Playground equipment for a primary school and toothbrushes, toothpaste and food supplies for the community – a project proposed by Cristin J. Middaugh in cooperation with her parents Crist D. Middaugh (INC) and Denise G. Middaugh.

In this “small indigenous community” of “family owned and operated farms,” people “rarely if ever travel outside” the village. As the only source of education, the Pichincha 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. The children of the community need a playground to use not only during the school day, but after hours as well. In addition, both children and adults “have terrible oral hygiene,” which

can lead to serious health problems, and the village suffers from chronic food shortages. A grant from the Trust is being used to purchase a three-piece playground set, 300 toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste, and sufficient rice, flour, sugar, beans, and noodles to provide a substantial “care package” for each family.

ECUADOR – PUYO, PASTAZA. Medical equipment and nursery supplies for a newly constructed “baby house” – a project proposed by Becky Allshouse Skillin, spouse of Cultural Affairs Officer Kevin Daniel Skillin.

“Foster or orphan care in Ecuador is meager at best,” and the plight of children with birth defects and congenital disorders is especially dire “in the jungle region of the country,” where “parents simply cannot care for handicapped children” because there is no “rehabilitation system” to which they can turn for help. Instead, in keeping with “traditional customs,” “children are abandoned and secretly dropped off, with no means of support.” Some have been sexually abused, and “even more have been physically abused for having been born with handicaps.”

For these children, the Casa de Fe orphanage is “the last hope of survival.” There, in “an environment of growth and care,” they are encouraged to “become their personal best – much more than just survival.” They receive not only physical care but education, with an on-site school that offers instruction in English, in the hope that English-language skills will later help them obtain “satisfying and dignified jobs.” The orphanage has been operating in rented premises, but is in the process of moving to a new location. Part of the plan calls for the creation of a special “baby house” with “quarantine and intensive care rooms” for the many newborns who are regularly taken in. Trust funds have enabled the acquisition of oxygen and air purification equipment, a humidifier bubble, and nursery supplies.

EGYPT – CAIRO. Large-sized books for a preschool for Sudanese refugee children – a project proposed by Roberta Miller, spouse of Lloyd Miller, Regional Inspector General for USAID.

The Happy Child Preschool was established under the aegis of “the Egyptian Anglican/Episcopal Church” to serve Sudanese refugee children in Cairo. The 66 children who attend range from ages 3 to 6, and “many of them would be left unsupervised if they were not in school” because they “come from poor families with working parents.” Although families are charged a nominal tuition of \$10 per month, at least a dozen children are subsidized and the school is supported largely by private donations. “The funding covers rent, teacher and staff salaries and training, school lunches, and basic materials.” As a volunteer at the school, Ms. Miller has borrowed books from her own children’s school library to read to the Sudanese children, and has “witnessed the enrichment that the borrowed books bring.” With support from the Trust, she is selecting and ordering 21 titles “which present simple concepts and story lines and fit well in a preschool curriculum.” These books will be presented to the school so that they can “become a permanent resource.”

EGYPT – CAIRO. New equipment and furniture for a boys’ home – a project proposed by Esther Y. Park, Auditor, Regional Inspector General, USAID.

For many Egyptians, life is hard indeed. The World Bank estimates that “23% of the population lives below the poverty line,” and – as everywhere – it is the oldest and the youngest who are most vulnerable. Families unable to care for their children “often leave them on the street or in an orphanage.” Yet in the midst of “the utter poverty that engulfs Egypt,” the Helwan Evangelical Boys Orphanage “is a jewel.” The 45 boys fortunate enough to find themselves there, ranging in age from 6 to 23, are “well-cared for by a handful of caretakers.” In addition to “basic shelter, food, and clothing,” they receive something equally important: attention and caring. One of the supervisors lived in the orphanage himself as a boy, and other alumni “return to play soccer with the younger boys on the weekends,” evidence of “the strong bonds” formed here.

The physical plant, however, is in need of attention. All 45 residents must share only four bathrooms, which have only intermittent hot water, and many of the boys “have no choice but to leave their clothes in piles” because they have no place to store them. A grant from the Trust has enabled the purchase, transport, and installation of a water motor pump (to increase pressure to the upper floors) and four water heaters, as well as thirty new dressers.

GUATEMALA – CHIMALTENANGO. Wiring repairs, a water pump, and improvements to the security fence for an orphanage serving special-needs children – a project proposed by Vice Consul Maria Alvarado.

In Guatemala, children with disabilities have few options. The over-crowded public school system is ill-equipped to address their needs, they are often abandoned by families who cannot take care of them, and they may even be rejected by other orphanages serving their non-disabled peers. Los Gozosos, a faith-based nonprofit, seeks to fill the gap by offering shelter and schooling to these otherwise-unwanted youngsters. Its residents, currently 14 in number, struggle with a broad array of disabilities ranging from “severe hearing or vision deficits [to] microcephaly, learning disabilities, hydrocephaly, cerebral palsy, autism, muscular dystrophy, Down syndrome, attention disorders and sensory integration difficulties.”

Crucial as its services are, Los Gozosos “was recently evicted from the home it was renting and forced to purchase a new home in a less secure part of town.” Although ownership is in many ways preferable to renting, the new quarters have presented two substantial difficulties: the faulty wiring and an inefficient water pump “make for exorbitant monthly utility bills,” and the low perimeter fence has made the orphanage vulnerable to burglary, vandalism and harassment by a local gang and by beggars bearing firearms. Embassy volunteers are working with the orphanage staff to repair the electrical wiring and replace the broken water pump to reduce utility costs, and to raise the height of the perimeter wall to deter intruders. Trust funds are being used to purchase the necessary equipment and supplies, and to defray the costs of expert labor when needed.

HAITI – PORT-AU-PRINCE. Improvements and expansion to create three enclosed all-weather classrooms for an orphanage – a project proposed by Cecilia L. Oetgen, spouse of Public Affairs Officer Jerome J. Oetgen.

The Rose Mina de Diège Center, founded and largely funded by a Haitian-Argentine family, “cares for and educates 75 abandoned children” ranging in age from six months to 18 years. For the roughly 60 who are of school age, two paid teachers, together with volunteers and some of the older orphans, present a curriculum focused on “reading, writing, and basic math” in the earlier years and “basic skills training” in such areas as cooking, sewing, gardening later on. Their efforts are notably successful. Although the school receives no government support (and while Haitian educational standards are admittedly “very low”), the school has “consistently scored above average on standardized tests.”

At present, classes are held in two rooms. One, formerly a garage, has a roof and is enclosed on three sides, but floods during the rainy season. The second, “a small covered space with two walls and a roof supported by cement pillars,” is equally vulnerable to the elements. The net result is that heavy rains effectively shut down the school. This project seeks to provide adequate all-weather classroom space by fully enclosing and rain-proofing the two structures currently in use and building an additional walled classroom. A local builder has volunteered his services, and a grant from the Trust is being used to cover the cost of materials and any labor the builder is unable to provide.

HONDURAS – COMAYAGUA. Materials to repair and refurbish quarters used by a center for abandoned women and their children – a project proposed by Foreign Service Officers Nathan Macklin, Patricia Aguilo, Mike Gorman, Mary LoFrisco-McClure, Rachel Schofer, and Curt Whittaker; Nora Maresh, USAID/Peace Corps Health Intern; Anthony McClure, Foreign Service Family Member; and Alexis Morozan, Staff Member, Diplomatic Post Office.

The Asociacion de Pueblos Franciscanos de Muchachos y Muchachas (APUFRAM) “is an important provider of basic education and support to some of the poorest” people in Honduras. As part of its core commitment, the organization not only offers immediate support but teaches “long-lasting skills” that will enable self-sufficiency and leadership in the community. Indeed, “the first generations of APUFRAM alumni are now in charge of the day-to-day operations.”

Of the several programs operated by APUFRAM within the country, one of the most urgently needed is the Margarita Cook Center for Abandoned Women and Their Children. Also known as The Moms Project, the Center was built “in response to the problem ...of single mothers being alone with children and nowhere to live due to domestic violence [or] abandonment by their spouse or family of origin.” Prospective residents, who must be at least 21 years old and not currently pregnant, are referred by local aid workers. “There is no time limit on how long the needy mother and children can stay,” but children are required to attend school while their mothers “are encouraged

to learn to read and write or learn vocational skills.” The Moms Project consists of eleven homes, most of them “duplex structures...comprising one room and outdoor bathrooms.” Seven of these homes and three outhouses are badly in need of re-plastering and re-painting, and the community center also needs a new coat of paint. Most of this work will be completed by Embassy volunteers and APUFRAM staff; funds from the Trust are being used to pay for the necessary materials and a modest amount of non-volunteer labor as needed.

INDONESIA – JAKARTA. Gardening equipment and seeds, goats and goat pens for facilities serving mentally and physically handicapped children – a project proposed by Percy Hawkes, APHIS Attache, and his spouse Luisa Hawkes; 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; “Angel,” from USAID; and “Monika,” associated with the health unit.

Yayasan Bhakti Luhur, a Catholic-oriented “foundation helping mentally and physically handicapped children and adults,” provides “homes for many mentally and/or physically disabled children” as well as “outreach support to disabled children in Jakarta slums” and “schools for the disabled.” The 300 children cared for by the dedicated staff of 69 nurses and caretakers are challenged by disabilities ranging from mental retardation, autism and Down’s syndrome to cerebral palsy, blindness, deafness, and delayed development.

Last year, the Trust was pleased to help the yayasan obtain “occupational and physical therapy training for nurses and caretakers” and furnish a physical and occupational therapy room. This project seeks to “improve the nutritional status” of Bhakti Luhur’s clientele while helping the adult men and teenage boys among its population acquire “gardening techniques and methods.” It is hoped that they will not only produce vegetables and milk for yayasan residents but take what they have learned “back to other parts of Indonesia ... to improve the diets of children ... and transfer the new skills to others.” Trust funds are being used to purchase seeds, fertilizer and gardening equipment, as well as six milk goats, feed grain, and the materials needed to build a goat pen.

INDONESIA – JAKARTA, TANGARANG DISTRICT. A new well for families living within the confines of a trash dump – a project proposed by Wade C. Martin, Information Systems Officer; Eka Yosida, USAID Administrative Assistant; and Dewi Ayuning Kraton Permadi, Naval Medical Research Unit Administrative Assistant.

The “dumping location” known as TPA Sewan is not only the final destination of the Tangerang district’s garbage; it is also home to roughly 300 families, including over 150 children, who live there because it is one place where they don’t have to pay rent. They “live as scavengers,” earning income from “glass, plastic, and cardboard” that they collect on the premises, and they are often “relegated to eating used food found within the dump.” The living conditions of these “desperate families” are not only wretched but hazardous. Rubbish scavengers in Jakarta have perished under landslides of garbage, and

the accumulated “trash and waste” pollute the air and the landscape. And at TPA Sewan, the water situation is especially dire because “the well ... currently being used was not constructed properly, [so] it is not deep enough to filter” percolating surface water. The residents can’t afford to buy clean water and the well water “is brown and polluted,” so they are caught in “an unbreakable cycle” of toxic water and poor health.

Embassy volunteers have been working with this community to provide some schooling for the children and free medical and dental care. Not surprisingly, they have concluded that “the unhealthy conditions” at TPA Sewan have given rise to a variety of ills. “Many children and adults have skin problems, rotten teeth and stomach problems,” most of them resulting from the “brown dirty water” used for drinking, brushing teeth, bathing, washing clothes, and cooking food. This project aims to break “the cycle of disease and malnourishment” by “building a proper well,” which must in this case be at least 60 feet deep and has therefore been far too expensive for the families to undertake themselves. A grant from the Trust is being used for this purpose.

ISRAEL – JERUSALEM. School supplies and transportation for a shelter for underprivileged girls – a project proposed by Mary Kortbawi Marchese, spouse of Deputy Principal Officer Gregory Marchese.

Operated by the nuns of Saint Vincent de Paul, Maison d’Enfants provides shelter for 25 underprivileged girls, most of them from “troubled families.” Ranging in age from 5 to 15, they receive “school tuition, school supplies, clothing, room and meals,” as well as language tutoring (from the project coordinator), play time, and weekend outings when possible. Because the girls attend different schools, depending on age, the nun in charge must drive two shifts in the morning and three in the afternoon to accommodate them all.

Maison d’Enfants depends significantly on volunteers, and on the income it generates as “a guest house where pilgrims and tourists from around the world” can find lodging and meals. Unfortunately, this source of income has diminished dramatically in recent months “due to the political and security unrest in the country as well as the global economic slowdown.” At the same time, “the availability of volunteers can vary.” This project aims to ensure that the girls will enjoy “an uninterrupted education” by providing school supplies and underwriting the cost of fuel for transportation. Trust funds are being used for both purposes.

MADAGASCAR -- AMBOHIDRATRIMO. A summer program for orphaned and destitute children – a project proposed by Laura S. Rumpf, spouse of a Foreign Service Specialist serving as Overseas Building Operations Project Director.

Situated in a small town “in one of the world’s poorest countries,” Akany Avoko is home to over 150 “orphans, abandoned babies, street kids, children from broken families and young people with disabilities” up to 18 years of age. In its drive to help prepare these “disadvantaged young people ...” for “positive and productive lives as adults,” the home “places a major emphasis on education.” “Those children who are capable of attending local public school do so,” while Akany Avoko provides vocational training or basic

education as appropriate for the others. At present, however, this “educationally enriched environment” does not continue through the summer. While “foreign volunteers have sporadically contributed time/skills to summer academic and traditional art lessons” in the past, “the current political instability and civil unrest” has resulted in “a significant drop in volunteerism that is unlikely to improve anytime soon.” At the same time, the school’s operating budget has gone down by almost a third because donations have been adversely affected by “the global economic crisis and unfavorable exchange rate fluctuations,” so that internal resources are unavailable for summer offerings.

This project seeks to “provide a worthy alternative ... during the non-school months” by establishing an official summer program that will “help reduce the risk of returning back to broken homes or the negative influences found on the streets.” The program will include “art, music, foreign languages, and computer skills” as well as “soccer, swimming, volleyball, and traditional dance,” culminating in the “highlight” of the summer: a week-long bus trip to Madagascar’s northwest coast, where “many of the children [will] see the sea for the first time (and possibly only time) in their lives.” A grant from the Trust is being used to defray the costs of supplies and teaching fees for instruction in art, music, computers and languages, and for sports equipment, supplies, field rentals, and transportation.

MEXICO – TIJUANA. Dental care for children at a shelter for the children of prisoners – a project proposed by Vice Consuls Mary Vargas, Susan Keyack, and Ellen Peterson.

Tijuana’s La Mesa prison, built in 1956 to house 600 inmates, “soon became home to over 6700 prisoners and their families.” Although it was (and remains) a federal facility, it received very little by way of resources and attention from the Mexican government; instead, “it soon came to be run by the prisoners themselves, who quickly built homes for their families as well as thriving businesses within the prison’s walls.” In the late 1990s, however, the authorities began to expel prisoners’ relatives, who “were forced immediately to assimilate to life on the streets of Tijuana.” “Many of these people had not been exposed to the outside world in years; hundreds of children, in fact, were born inside the jail.” Casa Hogar Vida Joven, which had been established earlier in the decade “to address the needs of spouses and children of inmates,” faced a rapid expansion of the need for its services, a need that became even more acute in 2002 when prison reform “finalized the expulsion of prisoners’ family members.” From “providing meals and assistance,” the center grew to become “a full-fledged shelter facility to children” whose parents are both incarcerated, or who have one parent in prison while the other “struggles to begin a new life.” (The latter parents “are also offered psychological treatment and family and employment counseling while their children are sheltered” at the center.)

At present, the center houses roughly 44 youngsters, both children of prisoners and other “troubled children who have been taken away from their families for reasons of poor care and abuse.” They are given a clean, safe, and comfortable space where they are provided with food, tutoring, recreational activities, psychological treatment, and access to health care in a faith- and community service-oriented environment. One of their most

immediately pressing needs is dental care. Life in the La Mesa prison “stunted the growth” of the children who lived there, and many of the center’s charges have never seen a dentist. This project will create an opportunity for volunteer dentists to “assess the most pressing needs of 35 of the shelter’s children,” and to provide the necessary services at a reduced cost. Even that cost, however, may prove to be too much for the shelter’s budget, so a grant from the Trust is being used to pay for the children’s dental care, including cavity filling, crowns, root canals, and pulp amputation.

MEXICO – HERMOSILLO, SONORA. Mattresses, mattress covers, and curtains for a home for abused and abandoned children – a project proposed by Vice Consul David Lewis.

La Ciudad de Los Niños is a non-profit “children’s home that provides refuge and assistance to the abused and neglected children of Hermosillo.” Here, as in other parts of Sonora, “the government is reluctant” to do what is necessary to “protect victims of family-based child abuse” because of the “social stigma” attached to the issue in “a society that is centered on the importance of family ties.” “Often, victimized children feel that their only option is to abandon their unsafe home environment and take refuge on the streets.”

Fortunately, there are groups like La Ciudad de Los Niños to fill the gap. The group “has always opened their doors to any child who needs their assistance,” offering “a safe, clean, and loving place to live and grow.” At present, the shelter houses 24 children in “eight modest two-bedroom housing units” and facilities including “a library, recreation room, classroom, and non-denominational church.” Live-in caretakers provide “round-the-clock care,” while “volunteer teachers provide tutoring and supplemental instruction” and a retired psychiatrist offers “free therapy sessions and conflict resolution services.” Although it receives “a modest government utility stipend,” “the organization is heavily dependent on donated items,” including food and clothing. Indeed, “most of the support they receive comes from in-kind donated items instead of financial contributions.” And, “while the staff...has done a wonderful job” ensuring that “the children receive everything they need,” household items have been a particular challenge. The home is working to “acquire housing amenities” to make the individual homes “more comfortable for kids and their caretakers.” The most immediate of these needs is bedding. There is not enough to accommodate all of the children, and what there is as “been worn as a result of decades of use,” so that “the sight of kids now doubling up in bunk beds is now common.” As part of a Consulate volunteer drive to procure a variety of needed household items, funds from the Trust are being used to acquire “brand new twin beds and bed covers for the four housing units with the greatest bedding needs,” as well as curtains for those houses.

MEXICO -- CUAUHTEMOC. Materials and supplies to improve a temporary shelter for indigenous people who come to the city for medical care – a project proposed by Foreign Service Officers Neal Murata and Elizabeth J. Pokela.

The Tarahumara are an indigenous people who reside in the Sierra Madre region of Chihuahua. They are very poor, and have few options for housing when they must come to the city “from their mountain homes to seek medical care.” La Casa Del Tarahumara, operated by the Assembly of God Church, “provides refuge and food” for these patients and their families “at no charge.” While “the number of people served varies greatly,” the shelter hosts an average of 50 people a month, and the premises are much in need of refurbishing and improvements. Through this project, Consulate volunteers will work with the non-profit organization Banco de Alimentos de Cuauhtemoc (BAC) to “clean and paint the interior”; purchase and install a stove, water heater, and toilets; and acquire ten single mattresses together with an appropriate number of pillows, sheets, and pillow cases. Trust funds are being used to purchase the mentioned items and to reimburse BAC for the costs of coordination and supervision.

MEXICO -- GUADALAJARA. Sewing machines and supplies, tables, training and other assistance for a women’s cooperative – a project proposed by Meghan Collins Sullivan, spouse of Vice Consul Liam Sullivan; Marcela Benavides Candadai, spouse of Vice Consul Ravi Candadai; Alfa Cecena, Foreign Service National; and Mignon Renee Turner, Foreign Service Officer.

In 2008, “a group of Otomí indigenous women ... began meeting in the hopes of finding a better way to earn a living and to support their children.” Most were “illiterate migrants” earning less than \$2 a day selling items like potato chips on the streets of Guadalajara. They formed a cooperative, known as MNINI, to help each other “establish skills” that could ultimately allow them to “get off the streets” by creating items that could generate income while allowing them to “maintain their heritage.” Meeting every other week, “the group has begun making crafts from the traditions of their indigenous village,” including “embroidered bags and blouses, table linens and woven jewelry.” But it is difficult to make headway when everything must be hand-sewn and all of the materials must be paid for out of a general fund to which each woman contributes a peso a day. Although the cooperative receives some support from the staff of another non-profit organization, it is funded only by the contributions of its own members. This project will enable the group to acquire sewing machines, supplies, and some additional training so that they can “produce more unique crafts at a faster rate.” With that additional capacity, and the “possible deals with vendors” that it might make possible, the women will be in a position “to really grow and expand their options.” A grant from the Trust has enabled the purchase of four sewing machines and tables, as well as thread, needles, fabric, and other supplies.

MEXICO – MEXICO CITY. Post-operative burn care supplies for young, rural burn victims – a project proposed by Vice Consuls Roberta Burns and Emily Fleckner.

Founded in 1998 by a woman who lost her only daughter and grandson to injuries sustained in a house fire, La Fundación Michao y Mau “is a nonprofit organization which has transformed burn care in Mexico.” At the time, “Mexican hospitals were ill-equipped to handle even minor injuries resulting from fire; third degree burns went untreated and

patients regularly perished from infections.” Since then, the foundation has strived “to create hope for young burn victims and their families.” In this work, the U.S. Embassy plays an essential role, arranging for emergency nonimmigrant visas – more than 200 last year – for children who cannot obtain adequate care in Mexico. When these children return home, the foundation provides “access to skin grafting therapies and regional burn clinics.” Since its resources are limited, however, it cannot completely cover all of the costs involved, and this creates a particular hardship for “poor, rural families who...cannot afford the post-operative burn care supplies. The coordinators of this project are negotiating with American medical supply firms to obtain “a discounted, bulk rate” for such basic items as dressings, medical tape, and ointment, which will then be purchased with funds from the Trust. The supplies will be sorted into packages for approximately 250 children, to be distributed *gratis* by the Embassy’s nonimmigrant visa unit officers so that they can “directly engage with the children their Consular work supports.”

MEXICO – TEKIT, YUCATAN. Video and computer equipment for a video project targeted at Mayan youth – a project proposed by Daniel Taylor, Foreign Service Family Member and Community Liaison Office Coordinator, and Paul Ghiotto, Vice Consul.

The Yucatan is the second poorest state in Mexico, and its indigenous Mayan population “remains the most marginalized and impoverished” people of this poverty-ridden area. “Prospects for Mayan youth are constrained by low education levels, few opportunities to develop self-esteem and realize potential, and limited options for gainful employment.” With families surviving on a subsistence income, parents must “juggle” the immediate need for their children’s labor with the long-term advantages of education. Almost always, the immediate need wins out – in this small town, for example, “approximately 85% of all students leave school by grade 6.” In an effort to “intervene in the cycle of poverty,” Project Yucatan (PY) offers “high-potential Mayan youth” opportunities to “continue their education beyond middle school” through a range of programs and support resources. The Weaving My Worlds project is the fourth phase of this “ongoing effort to facilitate the personal development and education of underserved rural Mayan youth.” The preceding three phases involve intensive counseling, scholarships to attend high school, preparation for the national university-entrance exam, and enrollment at “higher education institutions” in an urban environment far removed from home and family. Students emerging from these experiences have experienced profound shifts in perspective. Yet while they are making the transition into a new world, “they also need to maintain their connection to their community of origin, give back to that community, and continue learning from the wisdom of their elders.” Weaving My Worlds offers a framework for doing so by means of an oral history project in which participating young people will interview selected elders in keeping with a pre-determined protocol focused on stories and life experiences, and will then transcribe the video. The ultimate products will be “a booklet and a composite video” for later distribution and viewing “in a variety of settings.” Project coordinators are using funds from the Trust to procure a microphone, ten video cameras and tripods, and a projector, television, and laptop with USB cords for later presentations of the finished work.

MONGOLIA -- ULAANBAATAR. Professional services, space rental, and transportation for a fitness program for disabled young adults – a project proposed by Eileen Drummond, Foreign Service Health Practitioner.

Mongolia's disabled population – comprising roughly 100,000 people, or 3.8 percent of the total population – must cope not only with poverty but with a starkly inhospitable infrastructure. “There are no special roads, elevators” or other provisions “designed for physically challenged people,” especially those in wheelchairs, so that traveling to work or school is “extremely expensive and difficult.” And physical well-being is further compromised by real and perceived barriers to appropriate exercise programs. Many disabled people do not understand that exercise is an important part of “promoting good health,” or they believe that their disability or lack of access to a gym prevents them from exercising. As a result, many “suffer from pain syndromes” or have “trouble with weight management and/or mood concerns.” “Regular strength conditioning” adapted to specific disabilities “can combat these issues, improve the quality of life and help to prevent chronic illness,” but “there are currently no programs available to assist disabled individuals in developing” such exercise routines.

Ambassadors for Development, an “alumni association” of people who “have been to the United States on US Government scholarship programs” and “want to give back to society,” has been working with a group of disabled young adults. Their first venture, a three-week “camp” focusing on English-language skills, was highly successful, offering not only training but “a social outlet” for people who are otherwise often isolated. This project will follow up and expand upon participants’ expressed interest in pursuing better health through exercise. The coordinator will engage a trained physical therapist, who will meet with 34 disabled young adults in small groups to evaluate individual disabilities and design exercise programs suited to individual needs. “Ideally, after six sessions, [all] individuals would have learned to perform an exercise program they will be able to continue on their own.” A grant from the Trust is being used to compensate the therapist, rent gym space, and transport the disabled participants.

MOZAMBIQUE -- MACHAVA. Teacher training to prepare for after-school book clubs for primary school children – a project proposed by Mary Jo Amani, spouse of USAID Mission Director Todd Amani.

Acting on the premise that “children learn to read by reading,” the Machava Book Club Project has tackled a challenge at the core of Mozambique’s educational system: “the critical lack of non-text reading materials in classrooms.” “Since literacy is a basic foundation for educational development, low levels of reading achievement” constitute a substantial barrier to improved education and long-term national development.

This project comprises two interrelated activities. First, “two mini-mobile libraries of 200” carefully selected books are made available to schools that are able to provide secure storage and accommodate after-school book clubs, thus inculcating the idea that reading is a matter of individual pleasure and personal growth rather than school work.

Second, the coordinator works with “the local teacher preparatory college” to enlist and train student teachers “to lead the book clubs.” They “learn [how] to read stories aloud and how to converse about books and plan book extension activities around selected themes.” This approach pays off handsomely for all participants. For the kids, “these programs can provide a significant boost to reading achievement and corollary improvements in writing, listening, grammar, and spelling skills.” At the same time, the teachers-in-training gain “skills to incorporate successful reading programs” into their own classrooms after they graduate. Trust funds are being used to acquire 400 books and two mobile book units for the mini-libraries.

NIGERIA – LAGOS. Dining room and dormitory renovations for a home for girls – a project proposed by Erin Sweeney, Foreign Service Officer, Vice Consul; Sanders Aitchedji, Foreign Service Family Member and Community Liaison Officer; Olufunmilayo Aluko, Locally Engaged Staff; Mary Hess, Foreign Service Family Member and Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Coordinator; and Libbie Wride, Foreign Service Specialist and Office Management Specialist.

“Nowhere is Nigeria’s dichotomy of rich and poor more pronounced than in its business and commercial capital” of Lagos, home to an estimated 18 million people. As “one of the biggest mega-cities in the world,” Lagos comprises a few wealthy neighborhoods – which are literally and figuratively islands – and many neighborhoods on the mainland that struggle to provide “basic necessities such as clean water, dependable electricity, and good education” to the millions of new residents who arrive every year. One such struggling area is the “formerly affluent” neighborhood of Surulere. “Every square inch of land has been developed,” mostly into apartments that are often poorly constructed, stiflingly hot, and without electricity. The unemployment rate is high, and the schools are “overwhelmed.” Not surprisingly, in this environment, “children and youth” all too often find themselves on the streets, and “orphanages throughout the city ... are filled with babies and young children with nowhere to go.”

Against this backdrop, the Children’s Correctional Center for Girls is part of a complex “dedicated to the development of girls who have been abandoned or are in need of behavioral rehabilitation.” As one of three companion facilities, the Center concentrates on the needs of older girls, teaching them trade skills and preparing them “for reintegration into the community.” The government funding that supports its activities, however, has become increasingly inadequate as overall resources have been strained by Lagos’ swelling population. Although the staff takes pride in its work, keeping the premises neat and the girls clean and well-clothed, the Center’s physical plant is in grave disrepair. “Electrical wires and boxes are exposed” and “the bathrooms are flooded” and only partially functional. Paint is peeling, stairs are broken, floors are “torn up,” and “walls, windows and doors” in the dormitory “all have holes.” “Mattresses are old and tattered,” and food must be prepared over a fire pit. This project will begin to remedy these problems by removing walls, creating shelving units and repairing flooring and stairs in the dormitory; and by repainting the main public spaces and caregiver’s suite. A grant from the Trust is being used to purchase painting supplies, tools, and flooring.

PAKISTAN -- KARACHI. Window screens and mattresses for a home for girls – a project proposed by Karie L. Ennis, Office Management Specialist.

Brenton Carey Hostel, managed by the Methodist Church, is a full-time home for 110 girls “between the ages of four and 24.” A few are orphans, but most are the children of single parents who are drug addicts, in prison, or otherwise unable to care for their offspring. Although parents or guardians pay only a “nominal fee,” Brenton Carey does well by its charges. The younger girls attend “the nearby Brenton Carey Girls Secondary School or the Trinity High School,” while four others are enrolled in college and one is studying for her master’s degree. With support from the Trust, this project will provide window screening and 90 new mattresses for the hostel facility.

PANAMA - LAS GARZAS-PACORA, PANAMA CITY. Baking and cooking equipment and supplies for an income-generating project for impoverished mothers – a project proposed by Ana Alarcon, spouse of Tomas Alarcon, USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

This community of almost 9,000 people, located outside of Panama City, "consists mainly of transients and immigrants who have come closer to the city seeking a better life," including an opportunity for their children to attend school. "Plagued with a lack of educational opportunities, infrastructure and jobs," residents subsist "well below Panama’s economic poverty line," and "many children do not receive proper meals at home." The Nutritional Foundation Teresa de Jesus (Fundación Nutricional Teresa de Jesus) is a non-governmental organization that has stepped in to fill this gap. The Foundation has historically provided meals at the local schools, which are for many children the only source of adequate nutrition, but it is now launching a more extensive program in Las Garzas-Pacora. The new program will offer "not only food distribution" but English and computer classes and job skills training. The "cooking and baking entrepreneur classes" that are focus of this project will be "offered to the mothers of the children on the food assistance program who are single, unemployed and between the ages of 16-40." Approximately 50 eligible unemployed mothers will be trained in "cooking, baking and storing food properly before sale"; they will also learn "skills of entrepreneurship, budgeting and self-income generation" so that they can develop the confidence and experience necessary to begin their own business when they "return to their villages and hometowns." Trust funds are being used to purchase a refrigerator, a freezer, a stove and oven, and pans, bowls, and cooking supplies.

PANAMA – PANAMA CITY. Ballet shoes for girls living in orphanages and group homes – a project proposed by Julia May Boland, daughter of Vice Consul Matthew H. Boland.

At age 11 years and 6 months, Julia May Boland is working with the non-profit Fundacion ProEd on a project called “Time and Talent,” which seeks to “encourage young people who have special talents to share them with others by teaching and volunteering their time.” A dancer herself, Ms. Boland has served as an assistant teacher for ballet classes designed to give “girls who are currently living in orphanages or group

homes” “the opportunity to participate in classes and a performance, which they would never be able to do otherwise.” While Fundacion ProEd is able to provide costumes, however, “they never have enough funding left over to buy ballet shoes.” Yet if the girls were to receive shoes, they would be “encouraged...to keep dancing, even when the project is over,” and “when you dance, it is possible to forget about other bad things in your life, even if it is just for a little while.” The Trust has underwritten the purchase of 100 pairs of ballet shoes because “sometimes kids my age do not think that they can make a difference, [but] if this project works, I can show them that they can.”

PARAGUAY – ASUNCION. A new roof and outdoor bathrooms for a school for indigenous children – a project proposed by Mario Cano, Community Liaison Officer and spouse of Mona Kuntz, Management Officer; Lourdes Chaplin, spouse of Bruce Chaplin, Information Management Officer; Vicky Silaghi, spouse of Peter Silaghi, Chief, Tactical Analysis Team; and Patricia Fernandez de Urquidi, spouse of Luis Alberto Urquidi, a DEA administrative employee.

In a small settlement at the edge of “the greater Asuncion metropolitan area,” the Maka (Toba Qom) indigenous group lives “in abject poverty.” Most are “unemployed or underemployed,” generating minimal income by selling handicrafts or working as farm laborers. Their numbers have dwindled to “fewer than 300,” including 180 children, and they are crowded together in “wooden shanties with dirt floors housing as many as sixteen family members at a time.” Their chief has courageously “worked for many years to keep a school available,” but difficulties abound. “The current roof is made of palm fronds and rusty corrugated tin,” which both leaks and harbors scorpions, tarantulas, and other bugs, and the structure lacks sufficient windows to “allow natural sunlight and fresh air into the classroom.” In addition, there are now “too many children to fit within the school walls” so that “many classes are held outside...in an area littered with trash and excrement,” because the school also lacks bathrooms. At the request of the chief, this project will replace the roof and build boys’ and girls’ bathrooms, largely through the work of tribal members under the guidance of a construction supervisor, who will “teach basic construction methods and manage the more technical tasks.” Funds from the Trust are being used to purchase lumber and construction materials, shingles, plumbing and electrical supplies, and to compensate the construction supervisor.

PERU – LIMA. Part-time teacher for patients at cancer treatment center – a project proposed by Katherine Nealon, daughter of Deputy Chief of Mission James D. Nealon.

For impoverished rural patients and their families, the process of obtaining needed treatment can be daunting. They must deal not only with the condition itself, but with the demands of traveling to a distant place and somehow surviving there. In Peru, for example, adequate cancer treatment can be found only in the capital city of Lima, yet many patients are subsistence farmers from “the marginalized regions of the country” “who cannot afford to stay in a hostel or rent an apartment” and are entirely without “friends and family they can turn to.” The Asociación Albergue para Enfermos de Cáncer Señor de la Divina Misericordia (ALDIMI) was founded by former volunteers “at

hospitals and clinics” who “kept seeing persons spending their nights in the waiting rooms.” The shelter provides “free room and board, as well as emotional support,” to these rural patients, each of whom may also bring one companion.

Although ALDIMI provides for “basic needs and a safe environment, there is one thing it cannot supply: education. “The children are left without any sort of academic stimulation or structure” during the often-lengthy duration of their treatment, and “the majority of them struggle in school when they eventually return to their villages.” “Some are forced to drop out, or do so of their own accord after being held back repeatedly.” As a result, they are even further disadvantaged, relative to their peers, in places that are already among “the poorest regions of the country.” This project will bring a part-time teacher to ALDIMI to pursue a three-part agenda. First, “generalized group lessons” will be geared to various skill levels, running from “basic lessons in the fundamentals” to preparation for “high school equivalent classes or even university entry exams.” Second, the teacher will “also assess each child’s individual situation and organize a personal lesson plan.” Third, the adults in residence will be offered literacy training, “focusing on materials pertaining to the health care system,” so that they can both improve their Spanish-language skills and acquire a better understanding of “the complicated Peruvian healthcare system.” A grant from the Trust is being used to compensate the teacher for time devoted to preparation and student contact.

PHILIPPINES – MULTIPLE CITIES. High-speed sewing machines and computers for a program to rehabilitate former prostitutes and victims of sex trafficking – a project proposed by Fatima Verzosa, Development Assistance Specialist, USAID.

The sexual abuse of women through prostitution and human trafficking is sadly one of the oldest and most pervasive problems in the world. It is especially acute in the Philippines, where “constant poverty and joblessness” in the country’s “far-flung and depressed areas” drive women and young girls to seek work so that their families can survive. Some choose to “come to the metropolis,” where they are “lured into odd jobs” that involve sexual services (and may also involve substantial abuse); others “are recruited from the provinces and forced” into involuntary prostitution.

For almost thirty years, the Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women (TW-MAE-W) “has distinguished itself nationally as well as internationally” by tackling the problem at its roots, including sex tourism, military prostitution, and “the lack of opportunities” that force women into voluntary or involuntary prostitution. For almost as long, it has also offered “direct services for girls and women in prostitution, survivors of the sex trade, and victims of trafficking, incest, rape or domestic violence.” To date, “over 90,000 sexually exploited women and girls” have benefited – a figure that is especially significant because most Filipino organizations dealing with these issues focus on prevention and prosecution, while “only a few” offer rehabilitation. TW-MAE-W’s nationwide program comprises an integrated series of facilities. Seven drop-in centers offer outreach, counseling, skills training and mobilization; because they serve as “the first entry points,” they are very much in need of computers to build databases and monitoring systems. At the same time, three growth homes focus on “healing and

renewal," while two transition homes offer "livelihood training and income generation," with a particular emphasis on sewing. Trust funds are being used to acquire seven desktop computers for the drop-in centers and four high-speed sewing machines for the transition homes.

SLOVAKIA - PLAVECKY STVRTOK. Food, sports and camping equipment, and related materials for a summer camp for Roma children - a project proposed by Susan Ball, Political-Economic Counselor; John Brandolino, Senior International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Advisor, State Department; Evan Brandolino, son of Ms. Ball and Mr. Brandolino; Katharine Beamer, Political Officer; and Aaron Chase, Fascell Fellow.

As "a member of the European Union which until recently enjoyed one of Europe's fastest-growing economies," Slovakia "has made enormous economic and political progress since the fall of communism." Ironically, however, the opportunities resulting from the end of the Cold War have "created new challenges" for the country's "large Roma population." "As obsolete state enterprises collapsed, Roma were the first employees to be let go," and "the Roma population was increasingly marginalized" "as the country went through the difficult transition to a market economy." Today, the conditions in which most Roma live are "hard to imagine." "The attitude of the majority population is overwhelmingly negative": there is little support for efforts "to integrate Roma into mainstream society," and most Slovaks are "content" to leave them in "isolated in settlements." Within the Roma community, unemployment "is estimated to be over 80 percent," compared to 10 percent for the general population, and the life expectancy for men in some areas is less than 50 years. Not surprisingly, this state of affairs has bred such problems as "high rates of alcoholism, truancy, petty crime and lack of respect for property," which have in turn "created a perception among the rest of the population that Roma are 'uneducable'." The "isolation and poverty" of the Roma community is further exacerbated by the practice of confining Roma children to "so-called Special Schools for students who are mentally or physically challenged," notwithstanding a recent decision by the European Court of Human Rights condemning "a similar practice in neighboring Czech Republic."

In order to "help Roma children develop some of the skills they need to be successful in school," the embassy community in Bratislava has set out to "develop longer-term relationships with Roma communities and with the organizations that support them." While much of the Roma population lives in the eastern part of the country, the small town of Plavecky Stvrtok, less than an hour from the capital, includes a Roma settlement of roughly 600 residents. Project participants have begun to work with the children of the community, providing "English tutoring, arts and crafts activities and lessons in basic hygiene." These preliminary contacts have been designed to lead up to a five-day summer camp for 30-40 children, both Roma and non-Roma, to be co-sponsored with Slovak Scouts, a national NGO. The young campers, ranging from 8 to 15 years of age, will receive "a positive experience that includes typical sports and outdoor games and skill building, but also activities designed to increase tolerance and mutual understanding." "Elements of Roma culture, songs, and language will be taught to

increase awareness on the part of the majority participants and to instill pride in the Roma campers." These experiences will then form the basis for follow-up tutoring and other activities as part of a long-term relationship with the community. A grant from the Trust is being used to cover the costs of food, sports equipment, basic camping attire, first aid and other supplies, and the printing of simplified scouting guides.

TAIWAN – TAIPEI. Hospital beds for HIV/AIDS adult patients – a project proposed by Mark T. Curry, spouse of Foreign Service Officer Katherine Farrell.

Many HIV-positive Taiwanese struggle with a double burden: their health, and the prevailing culture that causes them to be “ostracized within their communities and families.” These same attitudes deter the creation of service facilities, so that care is hard to find. For some people, the non-profit Harmony Home Association, Taiwan (HHAT) is the only option. At present, HHAT provides “shelter, care, support and education” to 105 patients – including 70 adults and 35 newborns and children – at five facilities located in three cities.

Among adult HIV/AIDS patients, those who are non-ambulatory or comatose require special attention “such as full-time assistance during meals, exercise, [and] treatment with antiretroviral drugs,” and “hospital beds with adjustable features and arm rails” are an essential part of that care. Unfortunately, HHAT’s capacity to offer such services has been limited by its lack of appropriate beds, and many families “cannot afford the high cost of long-term hospital care” elsewhere. With support from the Trust, the organization is therefore purchasing three hospital beds “to accommodate more...patients who are in need of medical assistance and palliative care.”

THAILAND – NO LAE VILLAGE, DOI ANG KHANG. Construction of a partially completed pre-school and a public hygiene station, together with educational toys and books – a project proposed by Marisa Novobilski, Reader Assistant, U.S. Consulate General, and Randy Novobilski, Technical Sergeant, U.S. Air Force.

Located in the hills “close to the Burmese border,” the Doi Ang Khang area is extremely poor. Children in particular lack not only immediate necessities but access to “proper schooling,” even though “education may be the only path to a better way of life.” Some are not able to go to school at all, while others who do attend must “trek up a steep mountain road ... to study ... in cold, bare classrooms.” No Lae village, as is typical for the area, is populated by Burmese refugees and members of the indigenous Palaung hill-tribe who manage as best they can with low incomes and limited educational opportunities. The village does have a pre-school, but the classroom building “is extremely run down” and lacks such basics as “ample power, warm water, adequate desks, learning materials,” and “adequate personal hygiene facilities.” “Caregivers struggle with children who come to school dirty, poorly dressed for the cold mountain weather, malnourished, [and] nutritionally lacking,” and who must ultimately return home to families who don’t know how to address these deficits.

Engineers Without Borders, a group of U.S.-based volunteers, recently sought to address some of these problems by building “a new, 3-room, red brick schoolhouse,” but the high costs of materials and labor used up the allotted funding before the project was completed. A grant from the Trust is being used (1) to cover the costs of completing the ceiling, floor, and electrical wiring of the pre-school building; (2) to create a “hygiene/health station” stocked with first-aid and oral hygiene supplies, informational materials, and vitamin supplements; and (3) to purchase “educational toys, blocks, and classroom supplies.”

TOGO -- LOMÉ. Medical and lab equipment, furniture, medical supplies, and health promotion materials for a clinic – a project proposed by Michael Farrier, Spouse of Public Affairs Officer Belinda Jackson Farrier, and Helena Asiedu-Ofei, a nurse at the U.S. Embassy.

In Togo, “the cost of obtaining medical care at a local hospital is close to a day’s salary,” making it unaffordable for many poor residents of “the Djidjole and surrounding neighborhoods of Lomé.” When the pastor of the local Assemblies of God church became aware that many members of his congregation were in this situation, he established the Centre Medical Social Ebenezer (CMS), which “provides basic medical care for those in the community regardless of their ability to pay.” “Patrons are asked to pay the equivalent of 60 cents for a general consultation in addition to the wholesale cost of the medications they receive.” In the beginning, the clinic’s staff of five served roughly 100 people per month, but the stream of patients rapidly increased as word spread, and within three years the facility “had gained a large enough clientele to become self-sufficient.” CMS now has a staff of 24 and remains open around the clock, serving from 300 to 600 people per month (with the number typically rising during the rainy season due to malaria, diarrhea and typhoid fever). With space for consultations, lab work, a birthing room, some hospital beds, and a dispensary, “the clinic has the capacity to care for many diseases” and assist about 200 pregnant women per year. For patients requiring more extensive treatment, “the clinic will provide enough money to cover transportation, hospital admission and other basic needs.”

While CMS is able to sustain its day-to-day operations, its financial condition is strained and its capacity to “cover the cost of charity care” correspondingly limited. “There are times when the paid staff ... may go a few weeks without pay,” and the physical plant is showing the wear and tear of constant use. Furniture is falling into disrepair, equipment and supplies need replacing, and air conditioning, working sinks, and fresh paint are in short supply. This project will include both exterior painting and the acquisition of high-priority furniture, equipment, and supplies. Funds from the Trust are being used to purchase painting supplies, bed frames and mattresses, medical equipment and supplies, laboratory equipment, and materials that will provide patients with important “information about disease treatment and prevention.”

UKRAINE – SOFIIV’SKA-BORSHAHIVSKA. Camping equipment for an outdoor program for former street children – a project proposed by Nancy VanHorn,

AGSO; David Allen, Consular Officer; and Traci Mellor, spouse of Political Officer David Mellor.

“At least 129,000 children in Ukraine are homeless” according to officials, “although the actual figure is probably much higher.” “Most of these children live out their lives on the margins of Ukrainian society,” and those who become wards of the state find themselves trapped in a “Dickensian” system. In the face of these dismal alternatives, the independently operated orphanage of Otchiy Dim is showing a better way, and in so doing is “pioneering the creation of a foster family system in Ukraine.” Homeless children who are rescued from the streets of Kyiv are “introduced to normal family relationships and structures” in “a group home characterized by ... cheerful décor, ample play areas and a family atmosphere.” Whenever possible, they are then placed with foster and adoptive families. Those who do not find homes instead move next door to a building containing “apartments where foster families live on-site,” with access to a network of experts and the support of a full-time staff.

One of the important elements of Otchiy Dim’s approach is a “wilderness program,” in which groups of children go on camping trips in the Carpathian Mountains during school holidays. For “many of these children [who] have never been outside an urban environment,” these trips represent their first acquaintance with the natural world, as well as an opportunity “to develop self-confidence and the ability to work as part of a team” in difficult situations. Those who have participated have stressed “how important an experience the trips were for them.” Unfortunately, however, the home lacks appropriate outdoor equipment, so that last year some participants “became ill because of exposure to the elements.” Administrators have therefore reluctantly decided “that without the proper equipment, no more trips can be made.” The coordinators of this project are helping the orphanage to acquire the equipment it needs to continue the program, and funds from the Trust are being used to purchase tents, sleeping bags, insulating mats, and rucksacks sufficient to equip 15 campers.

TALES FROM A SMALL PLANET – A WEBSITE. On-line information regarding overseas schools for Foreign Service families – a project proposed by Susan Shirley, a management consultant for nonprofit organizations and USAID-funded programs; Patricia Linderman, spouse of Phillip Linderman, Consular Chief in Guayaquil; Terry Anderson, partner of David Ponsar, Senior Commercial Officer in Bratislava; and Mike Schwefler, spouse of Liz Schwefler, who is posted at the U.S. Consulate in Halifax.

The website Tales From a Small Planet was launched in 1999 to provide “a real-world perspective for Foreign Service Officers and their families as they move from post to post,” offering “personal essays and other literature about overseas life, as well as practical information about living abroad.” The “cornerstone” of the latter service is “Real Post Reports, a feature used by many ... during bidding season to assess prospective posts and evaluate their choices, finding the best fit for them and their families.” Covering 300 countries, “Real Post Reports” is read by over 17,300 registered users, including over 8,500 Foreign Service employees or family members and many others in

the expatriate community. (The earlier print version of Tales From a Small Planet was supported by the Trust in 1997.)

Tales From a Small Planet now means to add a new feature to its website, called Real School Reports, because the staff believes that none of the current sources of information on overseas schools “is detailed enough or candid enough to give families a good feeling for how well a specific child may fare at a particular school.” Too often, “the available information...is very basic, inconsistent, and provided mainly by the schools themselves.” Real School Reports, in contrast, will “offer detailed, candid information about schools from parents of current and former students, as well as teachers who work in the schools.” As with Real Post Reports, the mechanism for gathering information will be a voluntary survey sent to Foreign Service employees and family members regarding the schools attended by their children. The survey (in slightly different form for elementary, middle, and high schools) will elicit not only “the standard information” but consistently framed information about “school activities, social interaction, discipline, [and] grade policies,” as well as details on “special education, accommodation for students with disabilities, and gifted and talented student services.” The survey responses will then be posted, and project coordinators “estimate that 4000 Foreign Service family members will access this free service on a regular basis.” A grant from the Trust is being used to cover the costs of bulk e-mails associated with designing and distributing the surveys, and announcing the posting of responses; limited advertising on expatriate websites and in the Foreign Service Journal; and the design and printing of “peripheral materials.”

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