**J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST**

***GRANTS AWARDED IN 1997***

In the Fall of 1996 the Trust invited proposals for the support 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 18 requests prior to the March 1, 1997 deadline. The very modest size of the Trust permitted funding of only seven of the proposals -- and, in most cases, at substantially less than the requested levels. The grants ranged in amount from $500 to $4,000, for a total of $14,750.

The following projects, arranged alphabetically by the post from which the proposal originated (and followed by one project which is not post-oriented), are receiving grants from the Trust in 1997:

**Caracas, Venezuela**: A summer day camp for children (aged 4-12) of direct hire employees at the American Embassy, organized on a voluntary basis by Martha Netherton, a Foreign Service family member, and supervised by adult volunteers.

This day camp initiative arose from the lack of opportunities for organized play in non-school months; the absence of play areas in apartment buildings where Embassy personnel live; a lack of public swimming pools; the need for tight security precautions in a high-crime environment; and the inability of Embassy personnel to afford private recreational facilities. The Trust will support the purchase of athletic equipment and art supplies for the camp.

**Djibouti, Djibouti**: A writing contest for young people producing prose or poetry, in English or French, organized by Rowena Cross-Najafi, a Foreign Service Officer (FSO).

The contest is meant to "encourage the development of a written tradition in this society " -- which is dauntingly impoverished and offers little economic hope -- and "to give Djiboutian young people a reason to continue their studies, a new means to communicate with each other, and a way to produce something that is truly 'made in Djibouti.'" Contest plans call for a public reading of the winning entries, followed by publication in some form. The Trust will provide the funds for approximately 10 prizes in various age, language and format categories.

**Guatemala City, Guatemala**: Installation of an alternative energy system using ocean waves -- developed on his own time by Clifford H. Brown, an FSO in the regional office of the U.S. Agency for International Development -- that will provide lighting for Guatemalan fishermen and have other applications for village power generation.

At an abandoned pier in San Jose, Guatemala, the lights powered by this new electrical source will extend the hours of fishing and public use and reduce the safety hazards facing fishermen in the twilight hours. The apparatus being developed generates electric current with each ocean wave and is a "simple, durable and cost effective" -- and environmentally benign -- system that could be widely replicated in the third world. The Trust will provide funds for purchase of component parts and for manual labor to help Mr. Brown install the generator in the ocean.

**Krakow, Poland**: Education of Roma (gypsy) children living in the Maskowice settlement -- a support program organized by two FSO's, JoAnne Wagner and Paula S. Thiede.

The Roma children, living in extraordinary poverty, fail to attend school (or do so sporadically) because they lack school supplies (parents must provide them), warm winter clothing, bus tickets, shoes in which to walk to school in lieu of bus transport, and nourishing meals to get through the school day. The Trust will provide funds, through the Wagner-Thiede program, to bring these essential resources to the Roma children. The King Baudouin Foundation of Belgium will participate with the Trust in this effort.

**St. Petersburg, Russia**: A summer educational day camp for children (aged 4-12) of staff of the U.S. Consulate General, organized by Foreign Service family volunteers, led by Sadia Adams, Community Liaison Officer, and Linda Kiemel.

No U.S. recreational facilities are available to Consulate personnel; public facilities (including pools and art schools) close for the summer; staff housing -- apartments -- have no outdoor area where children can play safely; and both parents work in the case of five out of six Consulate families. Responding to the need for a day camp opportunity, this program will use the facilities of the Anglo-American School (whose students will also attend the camp). Funding from the Trust will permit the camp to employ one of the two college students who will serve as camp counselors, as well as the cost of a guard.

**Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, Israel**: A variety of educational activities -- conducted by 15 U.S. Foreign Service, Defense and other volunteers organized by two FSO's, Margaret G. Mitchell (Embassy - Tel Aviv) and Kathleen A. Riley (Consulate General - Jerusalem) -- at the Al-Amal (Hope Flowers) School in Bethlehem, the only non-sectarian, co-ed, multi-language (Arabic, Hebrew, English) school in the West Bank.

Organized by Hussein Issan, a Palestinian educator who witnessed the impact of "fear and hatred" on his own education in a refugee camp, the Hope Flowers School (grades K-12) seeks to create an "atmosphere of tolerance for others and better understanding of one's neighbors" with an "educational philosophy of peace and democracy." The program is demanding: all students are expected to go on to college, and all 12th graders attend school seven days a week to prepare for the entrance exam. The school's educational philosophy and academic requirements have disqualified it for Palestinian Authority funding; its co-ed, nonsectarian composition rules out other Islamic sources of support. As a result, the school operates on a bare-bones budget -- and without running water, heating or air conditioning. The American volunteers seek to bolster the school's programs in the sciences, arts, languages, American studies, and sports, as well as the library. The Trust will fund the purchase of educational and recreational supplies needed to implement these efforts.

**The SUN -- The Spouse's Underground Newsletter**: Expansion of the circulation of this publication, founded in 1991 and published on a nonprofit basis by two Foreign Service spouses, Francesca Kelly and Fritz Galt.

The SUN is a "grass roots publication written by and for Foreign Service spouses." Published three times a year, it provides an unofficial forum "in which to share and make sense of our truly unique experience, discuss concerns exclusive to the Foreign Service lifestyle, contribute and read thoughtful articles, poetry and humor." The SUN now reaches 275 paid subscribers (and many more non-paying readers); its publishers wish greatly to expand its circulation and improve its informational services. In support of this effort, the Trust will fund promotional mailings and advertisements, improved software and the creation of an Internet presence.