**J. KIRBY SIMON FOREIGN SERVICE TRUST**

***GRANTS AWARDED IN 1998***

In the Fall of 1997, following the pattern established the year before, 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 30 proposals. The very modest size of the Trust permitted funding of only 18 of the proposals -- and, in most cases, at less than the requested levels. The grants ranged in amount from $400 to $3,000, for a total of $24,800.

The following projects, arranged alphabetically by the country from which the proposal originated, are receiving grants from the Trust in 1998. (Material in quotation marks comes from the texts of the proposals received by the Trust.)

**Bolivia - La Paz**: Activities in support of the Virgen de Fátima orphanage -- serving 80 abandoned Bolivian children, mainly under the age of 6 -- organized by two Embassy family members, Molly G. Boyett and Katherine Marshall.

Working through Para los Niños, a nonprofit organization founded by Embassy spouses to assist the orphanage, Ms. Boyett and Ms. Marshall are leading efforts to meet some of the orphanage's most urgent needs: school supplies and uniforms for the pre-school, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes, an after-school teacher, and the remodeling of a non-hygienic and inefficient kitchen. The Trust will help to defray the costs of these supplies and services.

**Botswana - Gaborone**: Environmental educational program for children of the Embassy's Foreign Service National (FSN) staff, organized by Ambassador Robert Krueger and assisted by Foreign Service Officers (FSO's) and other volunteers from the Embassy staff.

The majority of FSN's who work in the Embassy -- and their children as well -- have never seen a lion, giraffe or elephant, despite the huge animal population in the great game parks of Botswana. "[V]ery many local children grow up without knowing the natural heritage of their own nation...[and] may fail to learn the importance of environmental preservation." To introduce FSN children to their "national treasures" (and also to enhance Embassy morale and goodwill), Ambassador Krueger has arranged for a two-day educational program at the Mokolodi game reserve. The parents do not have the resources to pay for the expedition; the Trust will provide funds for this purpose.

**Brazil - Recife**: Educational-recreational parties for abandoned and orphaned children living in a Recife orphanage, hosted and organized by Lisa S. Kierans, Vice Consul, and taking place on American holidays.

When Ms. Kierans invited some of the orphanage children to her house for a Thanksgiving meal, with a turkey and take-home toys, a talk by a Brazilian about the history and meaning of Thanksgiving, and a musical performance by a Brazilian employee of the Consulate and a singer friend, the response was so enthusiastic that Ms. Kierans decided to schedule a number of such parties on American holidays, with repeat performances from the adult volunteers. The project has two goals: "to educate foreign children in a positive fashion about (North) American history and to give underprivileged children an evening of wholesome food, fellowship and fun." The Trust will defray the costs of food, drinks, gifts, party favors, and catering help.

**Burkina Faso - Ouagadougou**: Support for a women's softball team, the "Gazelles of Burkina," organized by Elizabeth Lavergne, the Ambassador's Secretary.

Noticing the absence of women on the local Burkina softball team and finding that women were interested in the sport but had no one to teach them, Ms. Lavergne organized a team (which is now self-run) and recruited four coaches for the players. The team has 20-25 players, has mounted several exhibition games, and recently played in its first tournament. What prompted Ms. Lavergne to launch this effort was "the fact that the African ladies work very hard, are strong, but do not appear to be very happy. I wanted to to be able to put a little sparkle in their lives." Through monthly meetings the participants have also developed organizational and financial skills; they have made friendships with women "from different walks of life and ages"; and they have found new avenues to jobs. Ms. Lavergne hopes that the Gazelles will advance "the concept that women, who have very difficult lives here in Africa, can...achieve a new level of self-confidence, fun and teamwork." What the Gazelles lack -- and cannot afford -- are softball gloves and tennis shoes; the Trust will provide these items.

**Congo - Kinshasa**: A Saturday-Sunday educational and recreational activity center for Congolese deaf persons, staffed on a volunteer basis by professional deaf instructors and organized by Betsy Williamson, the Self-Help and Democracy and Human Rights Coordinator at the American Embassy and a Foreign Service spouse.

In Kinshasa, a city of 5 million people with a large deaf population (60% of whom became deaf because of poor malaria treatment), there are only two, small programs serving the deaf. Moreover, deafness is traditionally viewed as the result of wickedness or sorcery. Reversing the lack of resources and the social opprobrium confronting deaf persons is a task for another day, but the Saturday-Sunday activity center seeks to provide some support to approximately 300 deaf children and adults -- a weekend program of "sports, field trips, pre-reading sequencing, games, arts and crafts, and basic skills. Beside the objective of preparing deaf children and adults for interactions with the hearing world, there is an additional hope to involve the parents and siblings of the deaf so that they, in turn, will want to learn to communicate with the children." While Ms. Williamson has recruited two skilled volunteers for weekend duty, Mary Kay Koerner and Bienvenu Myuezolo Vozo, the activity center needs funding for a year's rent of the center's facility and for arts, sports and building supplies; the Trust will provide funds for these items.

**Ethiopia - Addis Ababa**: An audio library for the visually impaired students at Addis Ababa University, organized by Maura Bracken, a Foreign Service family member.

During the course of volunteer reading for blind students at Addis Ababa University, Ms. Bracken found that there was a severe shortage of educational facilities and materials available to the 115 visually impaired students. (For example, there are only 10 functioning Braillers.) Ms. Bracken's response was to organize a cassette library of standard textbooks, with the help of volunteer readers like herself. But the University was unable to finance the purchase of the audiocassette players upon which this system would depend. The Trust has appropriated funds for this purpose.

**Honduras - Tegucigalpa**: An intercultural exchange partnership between an international school attended by Embassy children and a local school -- a program in which Debbie Schultz, an Embassy family member, has played an organizing role as parent coordinator.

The Discovery School is a bilingual K-7 school that educates about 40% of American Mission children in these grades. Escuela Agustin Alonza is a rural Honduran grade 1-6 school with one teacher and very limited school supplies. In the Fall of 1997 the two schools began some cooperative activities, including a jump-rope marathon to raise money for the rural school. Ms. Schultz and the Discovery School staff, working with the Honduran school, are now planning a variety of cooperative activities: class visitation exchanges, sports events and environmental projects, including educational hikes, tree-planting and an adopt-a-zoo animal project. The goals are to encourage children from both schools to learn about other cultures through first-hand experience (and, in the process, to assist the Escuela Agustin Alonza to obtain new resources) and, through brochures and workshops, to offer this partnership "as as pilot program that can be duplicated or modified by other Foreign Service families as they move on to other posts." The Trust is providing funds for arts and sports resources, a typewriter and office supplies, and phone, copying and transportation expenses.

**Japan - Naha, Okinawa**: A monthly "English Corner," involving informal English-language interchange between American guest speakers and Okinawan college students and recent graduates, organized by Richard W. Nelson, Administrative and Consular Chief, Consulate General Okinawa.

Despite the presence of more than 50,000 U. S. military personnel and their families on the small isdland of Kinawa, "the average resident has little if any actual contact with Americans," and despite an intense desire to learn English, "surprisingly few have much English speaking ability." Mr. Nelson's "English Corner" is intended to offer students and recent graduates an opportunity to use English with native speakers and, in the process, "meet Americans in a non-threatening environment and get some exposure to a variety of American cultural attitudes through discussion of the experiences of our guest speakers." Serving light food and refreshments is thought to be important for creating the right ambiance for these monthly sessions, but United States Information Service funds cannot be used for this purpose. The Trust will defray these expenses.

**Jordan - Amman**: A science laboratory at the Holy Land Deaf School in Salt, Jordan, to be organized by Patrick McGee, Security Engineering Officer at the American Embassy, in cooperation with Jabber Fakhory, Head of Laboratory Sciences, Jordan Ministry of Education.

The Holy Land Deaf School is a private school housing approximately 200 children (grades 1 - 12), most of whom are orphaned or abandoned. The school does not have resources to provide laboratory equipment in support of its science curriculum. A grant from the Trust will equip a laboratory with a telescope and electrical, chemical and biological materials. Messrs. McGee and Fakhory, experienced science teachers, have volunteered to train the school teachers in the use of this equipment, and Mr. Fakhory will translate the instruction manuals into Arabic.

**Malaysia - Kuala Lumpur**: Training of Malaysian elementary school music teachers in the Orff-Schulwerk participatory method of music education, to be provided by Elizabeth C. Peterson, spouse of a Foreign Service Officer.

Although "the Malaysian government has identified music education as a priority area for its schools..., elementary school music pedagogy is not well developed...." In particular, Malaysian teachers have not been exposed to the Orff-Schulwerk method, "the accepted standard in most states of the U.S. and...widespread overseas...." This method "uses a variety of participatory activities -- song, speech, movement, the playing of instruments and listening -- to develop each child's maximum musical potential..., in marked contrast to the purely song book/theory based approach utilised in most Malaysian schools today." Ms. Peterson, highly experienced in the Orff-Schulwerk approach and a music educator for 13 years, will initiate instruction in this method, on a voluntary basis, by offering a workshop for approximately 100 teachers; she is prepared to provide follow-up consultations and workshops. The Trust will support this project with a grant for teaching materials, workshop space rental and other expenses.

**Mexico - Merida**: Improvement of the Merida English Library, serving both the American and Mexican communities -- a project staffed by the Foreign Service community in Merida and organized by Marlene Desmond, a Foreign Service spouse and U.S. Governmnet employee.

In 1995 staff members and their families at the Consulate in Merida, a post that was "isolated and lacking all the traditional support offered to foreign service officers at larger posts," joined forces to create the Merida English Library, as a source of learning and information, as a common meeting ground for the American community, and as a place to meet and get to know resdients of Merida and introduce them to American culture. "The Merida English Library can broaden the horizon of everyone who walks through the door." The library is staffed wholly by volunteers, and its books are either contributed or purchased with modest membership fee income. Upgrading of the library requires acquisition of a computer, for record-keeping and access to the Internet, and some basic reference books. The library has no funds for these purposes; the Trust's grant will defray some of these expenses.

**New Zealand - Wellington**: Field trips to the Te Papa Museum in Wellington for children attending the Pomare School, a primary school serving very low-income Maori/Pacific Island children, arranged by Mary M. Kroder, spouse of a Foreign Service Officer at the Embassy.

The children of the Pomare School, "ranked at the very lowest of the level of New Zealand's socio-economic scale [and]...often the victims of neglect, hunger and abuse," have "almost no exposure to a world outside their neighborhoods and thus are unable to imagine a life without beatings, gang violence, drugs and the dole." As one modest but helpful step toward greater exposure, Ms. Kroder, who is the librarian of the Pomare School, has organized visits for all the children to the new national museum of New Zealand, which focuses on New Zealand and Pacific Island culture. Ms. Kroder sees this as a way to allow "the children of Pomare to explore the aspects of their heritage that stand in such strong contrast to the...despair of their daily lives." Parents will be expected to contribute $2 per child for these visits, which will cover the cost of exhibit fees but will cover none of the bus costs; these will be substantially defrayed by the Trust.

**Niger - Niamey**: A refrigerator for medicine, baby formula and food provided to local children in a program operated by the Fraternity of Notre Dame orphanage and receiving assistance from an American voluntary support network headed by Francis Geake, State Department Nurse Practitioner, Pallie Wallace, Embassy Budget and Finance Officer, and her spouse, Gaston Wallace.

"The Republic of Niger presently ranks as the world's third worst country for human development, moving in late 1997 from the worst ranking when two other countries were devastated by...civil conflict." In 1997 two members of the religious order, the Fraternity of Notre Dame, arrived in Niamey, Niger from France to establish an orphanage, a program to feed children in a government-designated village, a program to dispense baby formula at the local hospital, and a program to dispense medical supplies, especially pediatric vaccines, continually unavailable at the Niamey pharmacies. The Fraternity's activities have received financial support, locally purchased food and medical supplies from Ms. Geake, Ms. Wallace and Mr. Wallace, who have also recruited help -- both goods and services -- from other Americans in Niamey. These efforts are hampered by the lack of a refrigerator large enough to store seasonally available food, to take advantage of volume discounts, and, perhaps most important, to freeze medical supplies for later use. Neither the Fraternity nor the government can provide funding for such a refrigerator. The Trust is purchasing this equipment in New York for shipment to Niger.

**Peru - Lima**: A library for the first school built in Lima's best-known "informal neighborhood," Villa El Salvador -- a library initiated by the school's parent association with the volunteered participation and support of John Dickson, the United States Information Service Director at the Embassy.

Originating as a squatters' community, Villa El Salvador and its 300,000 residents are now known for independence (they "stood up against the terrorists," even though some community leaders died in the process) and for self-sufficiency (they built their first school with parental labor and no government help). Partly as a result of the voluntary efforts of Mr. Dickson in support of the school (providing personal funds and various services, including painting), the school has played a part in reversing Villa El Salvador's earlier anti-Americanism; indeed, the school has sought permission to change its name from Colegio 6062 to Collegio Peru-Estado Unidos. Although the school has managed to "produce some of the best students in the nation," the only books in the current "library" are "a handful of paperbacks with ripped pages" (the government provides teacher salaries and nothing else); "a child could go through an entire school career without access to a book." The parent association and teachers, with Mr. Dickson's participation, seek to establish "a library with reading materials"; such a library "would be the only site with reading materials available to adults and students in the community." The Trust is funding the purchase of books for the library (with emphasis on English-language books and books in any language about the United States).

**Senegal - Dakar**: "A temporary shelter for Senegalese girls in danger of family abuse and for pregnant teenagers expelled by their families," founded by Judith A. Smith, spouse of the American Ambassador, with the collaboration of an American missionary and Espoir Sans Frontiéres, an African group that works with women and children.

The recent population explosion in Dakar (now a city of two million) has caused "a breakdown in the family structure and a proliferation of young, unemployed youth on the streets of Dakar, many of them far from their families. Some girls are forced into prostitution simply in order to eat, sometimes become pregnant out of wedlock, and are ostracized by their strict Muslim families." On the other hand, some families are far from strict: "Some girls as young as nine have been placed in the women's prison, simply to protect them from sexual or other abuse from the male members of their families." Responding to the absence of any shelter facility for women or girls, Ms. Smith and her colleagues have made arrangements for a house that will accomodate up to ten girls, aged 8 to 18, for up to six months. In addition to sanctuary, the girls will receive counseling, literacy classes, employment training, classes in health and nutrition and assistance in working out safe post-shelter living arrangements (with continuing contact for two years). In addition to a small paid staff, the shelter will be assisted by Ms. Smith and her missionary colleague, Espoir Sans Frontiéres personnel, neighborhood women, college girls, and, Ms. Smith hopes, many members of the American community. The Trust is providing funding for the salaries of the trained Senegalese women who will be the shelter's manager, social worker and house mother.

**South Africa - Pretoria**: Expansion of the Chariotters Basketball Club -- a youth association in Mamelodi township assisted on a voluntary basis by Bamba Ndiaye, spouse of a USAID officer -- so as to include 60 girls and boys at a younger age (7 to 10) than the current membership.

Mamelodi township lacks social services and has a level of violence that "exceeds the national standards." A community service project, coordinated by Mr. Ndiaye, has entered into a partnership with the Chariotters club, founded by local residents in 1984 to "provide local youth with appropriate leisure and a supportive environment free of drugs and violence." The club carries out its mission through after-school basketball and other activities, such as counseling and support for in-school programs. In 1997, 55 youths, aged 10 to 22, participated in the Chariotters, playing a total of 120 basketball games, training for 160 days and attending a day camp. The Chariotters, with Ms. Ndiaye's assistance, are seeking to add younger children -- 30 girls and 30 boys -- to the membership and also to improve the quality of training provided. For these purposes, the Chariotters seek to acquire additional basketball equipment, first aid kits and uniforms, and to pay for transportation to games outside Mamelodi. The Trust's grant will defray some of these costs.

**Ukraine - Kiev**: An educational day summer camp for children of the Embassy community (both American and Foreign Service National families) and, space permitting, to other members of the extended international community, initiated by the co-Community Liaison Coordinators, Mary Bowen, spouse of a USAID officer, and Miriam Kaiser, spouse of an FSO -- the camp to be organized and planned by Marcia Bagley, daughter of an FSO.

"The summer in Kiev is long and many families are looking for more structured activities [for their children] as an alternative to hanging out in the apartments" -- activities the parents themselves, both of whom work in many cases, cannot effectively provide. Another goal of the camp is "to provide interesting employment opportunties for returning senior high school and college age students of the mission community." The camp will offer a wide range of educational, cultural and athletic activities, as well as Ukrainian, Russian and English conversation classes. Space and facilities will be available at the Kiev International School, the Marine Detachment House and the Ambassador's Residence. While modest parent fees should cover counselor salaries and transportation costs, these revenues will not cover the various supplies the camp needs. The Trust will defray most of these costs, with emphasis on non-expendable supplies, such as sports equipment.

**Uzbekistan - Tashkent**: Educational supplies for the Sunshine International Pre-School, an English-language school attended by children from the U.S., four other countries and the local community -- a provisioning project administered by Lori Neal, Community Liaison Coordinator and spouse of the military attache.

Twenty-seven children, aged 2 to 5, attend the Sunshine school, "the only pre-school in Tashkent that teaches only English." The parents "strongly want their children to learn English and to have a large vocabulary before they enter kindergarten." While the parents defray the costs of teacher salaries and rent, funding has not been available for educational supplies; thus, only 20 books are available at the school, and there are only a few developmental toys, donated a few years ago. Ms. Neal has volunteered her services to help the Sunshine school purchase more of these items, as well as writing materials, posters and other supplies, especially those that will assist socio-emotional, cognitive, language and other forms of development. A Trust grant will fund such purchases.