

## **J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust**

### **GRANTS AWARDED IN 2015**

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 supporters. The trustees are present or former members of the Foreign Service – State Department community and Kirby Simon's parents.

In 2015, the Trust once again invited proposals from Foreign Service personnel or members of their families, or by other U. S. Government employees employed at American diplomatic posts abroad. In response to this invitation, the Trust received a substantial number of proposals and was able to provide funding for 24 of these projects. Grants ranged from \$576 to \$4200 for a total of \$51,277. The following pages describe the projects supported by the Trust in 2015.

**BRAZIL - RECIFE**- A science and technology mentoring program for low-income high-school girls in Northeast Brazil. Proposers: Paloma Gonzalez, Political/Economic Officer and Fabiola Rios, Political/Economic Assistant.

Northeastern Brazil is the poorest region in the country with a very “machista” worldview, which makes it hard for women to break into traditionally male-dominated like the sciences. In 2012, Dr. Giovanna Machado designed a program to mentor low-income high-school girls in the sciences and encourage them to pursue careers in science and technology. Funds from the Trust will help re-initiate the program with money for lab equipment, meals and transportation for 20 participants.

**BURKINA FASO - OUAGADOUGOU** - To improve the lives of orphan girls through development of a sustainable vegetable garden and library. Proposer: Pam Lee Pow Ayong, Office Management Specialist to the Deputy Chief of Mission.

Fifty-three girls who have lost either one or both parents live and go to school at the Orphelinant Sic Gira Imana. The project plans to make small improvements in the lives of the girls to challenge them to be more self-sufficient. Funds from the Trust will be used to purchase tools, seeds and saplings for the garden and novels in English and French, encyclopedias, and other books for the library.

**ECUADOR - QUITO** - An industrial oven for Fundacion Jonathan, a community-based organization that provides food and clothing and medical services to disadvantaged children and seniors. Proposer: Erzebet Best, Community Liaison Officer.

An industrial oven will make it possible for the organization to provide children and seniors bread on a daily basis and to provide occupational therapy for adults who are eager to learn a new skill.

**EQUATORIAL GUINEA - MALABO** - Emergency medical training session for health care providers at a community clinic, school teachers and parents. Proposer: Alicia Knowles, registered nurse.

Basic emergency medical training will save lives in this country with a poor health care system. The applicants will teach the American Heart Association's Heartsaver First Aid and CPR AED Course to health care providers who treat more than 100 patients per week and to teachers and parents at a school with over 200 students. The funds will be used to purchase workbooks in Spanish and a practice manikin.

**GEORGIA - TBILISI** - Educating parents and teachers on the topic of attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Proposer: Laurie Kelleher, Eligible Family Member.

Children in the Republic of Georgia are often stigmatized on the basis of having mild or severe mental disabilities. The applicant plans to consult with local psychologists, counselors, therapists and nurses to develop culturally-sensitive material to help parents and teachers to understand ADHD and to learn effective techniques for educating children with the disorder.

**GHANA - ACCRA** - Housing and food for street children and vulnerable women in the capital. Proposer: Kelly Briden, Regional Medical Officer.

Poverty in Accra is acute. The applicant proposes to assist the St. Bakhita Foundation, which already provides basic housing for 100 women and children. The money will be used to establish an additional home and outfit it with the basic amenities including beds, chairs, tables and appliances.

**GREECE - ATHENS** - A safe and secure playground environment for adults with mental disabilities served by the Agioi Anargyrio foundation. Proposer Giovanna Missmar, Office Management Specialist.

The non-profit organization provides a home to 52 children and adults with mental disabilities. The applicant intends to purchase synthetic grass for the playground area and to purchase a straw covering to protect the area from the sun.

**HAITI - PORT AU PRINCE** - A class at an orphanage so older adolescents can learn the concrete vocational skill of sewing. Proposer: Lila Wade, Vice-Consul.

The Hands Together to Defend the Rights of Children orphanage cares for 28 children and considers vocational education a priority. The applicant intends to establish a sewing class over a six-month period for children who will be aging out of the orphanage in 3-4 years.

**INDIA - MUMBAI** - Classroom equipment, educational materials and furniture for expansion of the Grade Three of the Royal City School in Dharavi slum. Proposers: Amy Elder and Amy Sebes, Eligible Family Members.

Dharavi is the largest slum in Asia. The Royal City School currently serves 380 students in grades K - 2. The school wants to expand to the third grade, but needs money to purchase furniture and equipment, learning materials and supplies.

**INDIA - MUMBAI** - An excursion outside the city so orphaned girls at the Sharanam Center can experience nature and wildlife. Proposers Tania Romanoff, Vice-Consul and Lisa Landes, Foreign Service Health Practitioner.

The Center cares for 36 orphaned girls from the Dharavi slum. The applicants plan a trip to a hill station 3 hours outside Mumbai where the girls can spend three days and two nights in a area where they can visit a waterfall and a wildlife sanctuary as well as take hikes and experience local culture.

**INDIA - PULICAT** - The replacement, in an area with little electricity, of a sustainable, portable, economical lighting alternative to unhealthy, polluting kerosene lamps. Proposer: Merry Walker, Vice-Consul U.S. Consulate Guangzhou.

Funding will be used to manufacture the first batch of solar lamps and deliver them to the pilot village. The project will also attempt to educate women in the village in solar technology.

**KENYA - NAIROBI** - The provision of educational and developmentally age appropriate toys for children in an orphanage. Proposers: Susan Armstrong, Registered Nurse and Glenda Siegrist, Foreign Service Health Practitioner.

The Mogra Rescue Center empowers underprivileged children with an education and life skills. The applicants plan to provide a variety of toys, games and sports equipment to meet the developmental needs of the children and to teach them the concept of team strategic play.

**MEXICO - MEXICO CITY** - English language conversation classes for students at the Fundacion para la Asistencia Educative and the Caseade las Mercedes, institutions that serve underprivileged youth. Proposer: Stephen Carrig, Eligible Family Member.

The applicant plans to provide English language classes several evenings per week and will use the funding for travel expenses and snacks for the students.

**MYAMAR - SHAN STATE** - Educational and technical training to the people of the Lahu-Sui tribe by means of raising goats. Proposers: Shane Hughes and Ron Gerberson, Defense Attache Office, Embassy Bangkok.

The project will assist the village by purchasing goats, which will ensure food security, create an avenue for income generation and empower the Lahu-Sui women by providing new roles and responsibilities. The applicants will donate the livestock and supplies and hold workshops to educate the tribe on raising the goats.

**THAILAND - MU SU DAM VILLAGE** - The design and production of ethnic clothing for sale to tourists. Proposers: Kelly Dowdall-Garberson, Management Assistant, U.S. Consulate Chiang Mai and Amy Sarabi, Eligible Family Member, Embassy Bangkok.

The funds will allow the women of the village to expand and diversify an already existing sewing venture. It will provide further supplies to the women so they can generate more income from their handicraft production. It will also fund a space at a local market where the women can sell their products.

**NICARAGUA - RIVAS** - The purchase of a small integrated projector, speaker, screen and heavy-duty cord to be used in an English language community project. Proposer: Leda Chavarria, English Programs Coordinator Embassy Managua.

People from the economically disadvantaged neighborhood study English in a rudimentary structure. The applicant intends to use the projector and screen to enhance the teaching environment and expand the ability to include digital learning tools.

**NIGERIA - ABUJA** - The improvement of a free, weekly English school organized and staffed by Embassy volunteers providing instruction to 150 illiterate adult Hausa speakers and their children. Proposers: Pam Schmoll, Eligible Family Member, Althea Cawley, Staff Aide, and Dana Cunliffe, Assistant CLO.

The English school has met for two hours each weekend since March 2014 and the volunteers teach multiple classes at various levels. The funds from the Trust will be used to purchase supplies and materials.

**NIGERIA - LAGOS** - Cervical cancer and breast cancer education and screening for women of child-bearing age in the impoverished community of the Makoko slum. Proposer: Otto Dickman, Regional Medical Officer.

Makoko is an impoverished community with no government health center, clinic or hospital. The funds will be used to administer a laboratory test that will provide early detection of breast and cervical cancer for 200 women and offer treatment for about 20 women.

**PARAGUAY - AREGUA** - Kitchen and garden equipment for a children's home. Proposer: Leah Moorefield Evans, Eligible Family Member.

The home, run by nuns, provides meals, support and educational assistance for 100 children living in extreme poverty. Funds from the Trust will be used to purchase a freezer, a refrigerator and a stove as well as gardening supplies so the volunteers at the shelter will be able to prepare more healthy and nutritious meals.

**RUSSIA - MOSCOW** - New chairs for the Moscow Protestant Chaplaincy Social Service Pensioners Food and Fellowship Program. Proposers: Branka Bell and Andrea Brouillette-Rodriguez, Foreign Service Officers.

The program serves 120 pensioners who visit every week, but the chairs they use are almost all broken. This is hazardous because many of the clients are frail and have mobility limitations. The funds from the Trust will be used to purchase 70 sturdy stacking chairs.

**TUNISIA - TUNIS** - The installation of water tanks atop four residential buildings and a drip irrigation system in a garden at a social service shelter. Proposer: Joseph Yackley, Political Officer.

This proposal will enable the shelter to pump water from a well built by UNHCR in 2014 to tanks above residential buildings and irrigate a garden tended by the shelter residents. The project will significantly reduce the shelter's municipal water bill allowing the shelter to devote its scarce resources to other activities.

**TURKEY - ISTANBUL** - Volunteer support and funding to a community center that serves an economically depressed neighborhood through daily women's education and children's after-school activities. Proposers: Martin Thomen, Consular Officer and Sarah Stankey, Community Liaison Coordinator.

This shelter serves displaced Kurds, Roma and Syrian refugees. The Consulate plans to send at least 20 volunteers to assist with the after-school literacy program and weekend children's program. Financial support from the Trust will be used to pay rent on the space used for this programming.

**UKRAINE - KYIV** - A fire alarm system for the dining hall of a children's center so they can receive certification for the building and expand their intake of refugees fleeing Eastern Ukraine. Proposers: nKrisztina Meyers, Eligible Family Member and Catie Scott, Non-Immigrant Visa Assistant.

The center has been hosting internally displaced persons from Eastern Ukraine since 2014. In order to expand their capacity to assist refugees, they must install a fire alarm system to guarantee that they are not forced to suspend operations due to violating fire codes. Funds from the Trust will be used to install the fire alarm system.

**UZBEKISTAN - TASHKENT** - The provision of a caller ID phone and food to the Society for the Blind in the Mirabad-Bektemir district. Proposer: Brian Anselman, Management Counselor.

The Society serves about 215 people, most of whom are elderly, lonely and unemployed. The phone will help the Society provide better services and outreach. The food baskets for the families will consist of rice, flour, cooking oil, sugar, fruits and vegetables.

