

2004 African Children's Mission

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Early in 2004 the Outreach Program significantly expanded its operations with the formation of the African Children's Mission. The principle aims of this program are to empower the congregation of the Church of the Redeemer to improve the lives and hopes of children orphaned by AIDS in Africa while also developing an interactive, educational, and spiritual relationship with them. The African Children's Mission approach is to provide this support in the long term. Over 100 members of the congregation were involved with the African Children's Mission in 2005 and helped raise over \$33,000.

In June 2004 a group of six self-funded members of the congregation and clergy traveled to Malawi to evaluate 16 projects. Upon their return they recommended five projects for support: Open Arms Infant Home, Kauma Youth and Children's Center, Chisomo Children's Club, Chididi Parish, and Kanengo AIDS Support Organization. These projects were recommended because they all have trusted leadership, HIV/AIDS prevention and education as a central tenant, children as their focus and a holistic, long term, community oriented approach to the AIDS challenge. After receiving Vestry approval, and working through the Global Aids Interfaith Alliance, funds were distributed in late 2004.

Prior to the trip to Malawi, the African Children's Mission Children's Committee developed a curriculum to introduce Church School children and youth to the work of the African Children's Mission, life in Malawi and the AIDS challenges in Africa. The children and youth made balloon balls for the travel team to give to the children in Malawi. Similar information was also distributed to Rite 13, YAC, J2A, and the Adult Education programs. The "Great Concerts for Great Causes" series led by Dan Moriarty and Michael Stairs further informed the congregation of the plight of the people of Africa and raised additional funds.

In 2005 the African Children's Mission will continue to educate the children, youth and adults at the Church of the Redeemer on the challenges of HIV/AIDS in Africa, create opportunities for the congregation to become involved and distribute funds to

programs in Africa. Work is underway now planning informational events, fund raising events, a summer youth volunteer program in Malawi, and 2005 trip to Malawi to monitor progress of the funded programs. The African Children's Mission enters 2005 with strong leadership: Christina Corcoran will lead the Children and Youth Committee, Gordon Keen will lead the Funding Committee, Julie Williams will be the Outreach Liaison, Cecily Craighill will lead the Engagement Committee, Dave Schroeder will lead the Communications Committee, Susan Adeniyi-Jones will lead the Community Education Committee, Elizabeth Norris will lead the Malawi Trip Committee, John Wallingford will be the Vestry Liaison, Lore Yao will be the Kauma Liaison and Elizabeth Norris will be the Open Arms Liaison.