

Church of the Redeemer - African Children's Mission 2007 Annual Report

Each year the African Children's Mission (ACM) seems to grow stronger for different reasons. In 2007 the ACM was blessed with many new volunteers. This year new participants included children and young adults who bring fresh ideas and new energy to the table. This further enabled us to respond to God's call for each of us, in our own way, to improve the lives and hopes of children in Malawi affected by HIV/AIDS.

Children, both near and far, are the obvious priority for the ACM. This year we worked with the children and youth in All Things New, Rite 13 and J2A to develop empathy and awareness of the plight of Malawian children. Class room themes included the 2007 Travel Team's experiences in Malawi, the power of generosity through the support of the ACM, the goals and details of the "Got Goat" program, and about the crisis of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Two Malawi donation boxes were created and passed around in the classrooms in November and December to emphasize these themes and to allow children to participate personally in the joyful act of giving.

Publications and educational events focused on raising awareness and sharing new understand on the situation in Africa with the congregation. Adult Education events were held in the spring and fall where the congregation was able to meet and hear from our Malawian guests (The Honorable Margorie Ngaunje, Malawi's Minister of Health and Richard Yohane, Director of Malawi's Kenengo AIDS Support Organization) and hear from the travelers who went to Malawi in 2007. The ACM published an article in The Voice on the Millennium Development Goals; a travelers journal was published that chronicled this years' Malawi trip; a new ACM tri-fold was created and distributed widely to summarize the ACM's mission; and "Malawi Moments" were available in the weekly handout. The ACM also displayed our message and educational material prominently at Redeemer events (i.e. church picnics and the Christmas Bazaar).

This year the Episcopal Campus Ministry (ECM), led by Ruth Goodlaxson, at Bryn Mawr and Haverford colleges teamed with the ACM to raise awareness of the situation in Africa and to generate funds by selling of goats to students and faculty. The ECM worked vigorously to advertise the "Got Goat" Campaign with posters, attendance at college functions and by placing information and order forms in student mailboxes. In all, the ECM raised approximately \$1,600 for goats as well as significantly increasing knowledge on both campuses.

During 2007 the ACM qualified to become a recipient of the Medical Assistance Program (MAP) medicines. MAP acts as the consolidator of donated medications from various pharmaceutical companies that have been designated for impoverished regions. Qualification was a time consuming process that involved cross checking of our history, reviewing programs we support, confirming our medical knowledge, and validating our understanding of conditions in Africa. The qualification allows the ACM to obtain, transport and deliver medication to Malawi and was first utilized by this years' travel team who transported 6 large cartons of much needed medication to Malawi.

In July 2007, three self funded travelers (Mr. Thomas Ramsey and the Revs. Stephen Billings and Peter Sipple) journeyed to Malawi on behalf of the ACM. They returned healthy and exhilarated by the experience, with spirits lifted by the wonderful group of Malawians who received them warmly at every stop. Travel to Malawi places physical, emotional and financial demands on those who go. The question has been raised: Why not use those thousands of dollars as direct aid instead? As in previous years, this year's travelers returned convinced that their presence among our programs' beneficiaries put a face on the outsider and made concrete the caregiver, just as many people in villages around Malawi have become real to one another as dispensers of care. During their stay, our representatives

shared in a ministry of presence that, over time, may have as salutary an effect on the children and patients they met as more tangible gifts are having. They learned the value of the assistance that the ACM is providing. They witnessed positive results of recent initiatives in health care and animal husbandry and saw what a few hundred dollars can accomplish through the agency of micro-financing. They spoke with villagers in remote areas who are creating micro-economic systems that can ultimately help them raise money to benefit children and patients in their village. Stephen, Peter and Tom returned convinced that such visits, and the work we are doing here in Bryn Mawr, are definitely worth the time and effort. Above all, they learned a great deal and hope that sharing their experiences there will inform and inspire others within our congregation, some of whom will be future travelers.

While in Malawi, this year's travelers carried books and medications, which they disbursed where such items were most needed. In addition, the ACM sent direct aid to the following programs in 2007:

- \$9,000 to Churches Action in Relief and Development goat project to provide goats and capacity building in animal husbandry to 200 families.
- \$8,123 for Kanego AIDS Service Organization (KASO) to train 21 village women to learn to become home-based caregivers in addition to supporting the orphan feeding program.
- \$5,853 to Chididi Parish Orphan Care to buy 4 ambulance bicycles and 2 pushbikes in addition to nutritional supplementation to 60 children.
- \$4,800 to support 4 nursing scholars for one academic year in the GAIA Nursing Scholarship program.
- \$3,581 for the GAIA Grandmother Fund to help support 280 grandmothers in the 20 Adjacent GAIA Villages.
- \$10,000 to Open Arms Orphanage to fund ongoing support for the orphanage for toddler house, "phase 3" homes, and village nursery/feeding stations for one year
- \$3,000 to Salima AIDS Support Organization to help fund medications for a clinic that cares for orphaned and HIV+ children
- \$2,000 to help fund Mvera AIDS Support Organization to support gardens and farm inputs to feed orphans as well as provide orphan care supplies.

The ACM continues to partner successfully with The Global AIDS Interfaith Alliance (GAIA) to ensure that funds are applied appropriately to local needs and that there is on-the-ground follow up with all these programs through out the year.

Outreach beyond the immediate Redeemer community continues to be an important aspect of ACM's work. In 2007 the ACM team presented information about Malawi to the children at the Blankenburg School in West Philadelphia, where members of the ACM volunteer as librarians. After a special presentation by Roy Nantoka (a PhD candidate at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, and a citizen of Malawi) about village life in Malawi, the children in 2nd through 4th grades read books about African villages and wrote letters to children in Malawi for Mr. Nantoka and his wife, Martha, to deliver on their next visit home. The ACM interlocks with local papers to have ACM events covered, which resulted in two articles in the Main Line Times on 04/19/07 and 10/04/07. The ACM presented at St. Thomas Whitemarsh in March to share our insights and inspire them to action. During the past year we have significantly developed our presence on the Redeemer website (www.theredeemer.org) to ensure that anyone with internet access can learn about the ACM. Information available through the website includes the daily log from the 2007 trip, videos from earlier trips, newspaper articles, brochures, information about fund-raising, presentations on ACM, information about GAIA as well as links to other related programs. The ACM established a relationship with the Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) program in 2007 for the first time and we are establishing ourselves formally in their ERD Network as the Parish Representative for the Redeemer.

As of the December 31, 2007 the ACM Fund had a balance of \$29,873 on hand. Total contributions since the beginning of the program are \$188,625 with \$158,752 of that amount dispersed to date. The ACM continues to operate with 0% overhead - all funds received from contributions are donated to support programs in line with our mission. In addition during 2007, the Redeemer received a restricted grant of \$10,000 which is to be use for the purpose of facilitating travel or participation in ACM by Redeemer parishioners and clergy. This restricted grant is administered separately and is not accounted for within the ACM Fund. The ACM raised funds from three main programs, the Got Goat program, the Gift From the Heart Campaign and Great Concert for Great Causes.

The ACM “Got Goat” team, led by 6th grader Emily Weigel, increased the number of donations for goats to Malawi while maintaining the 2006 goat donation at \$20 each. Emily prepared a new and exciting poster about the GAIA goat program, including photos from the summer 2007 Travel Team’s visits to several villages with their new goats in their raised shelters. Goat “jewelry” was designed to include necklaces, bracelets, and key-rings, to complement the 2006 goat Christmas tree ornaments. The team organized and coordinated the donation table throughout December. The “Got Goat” campaign has raised about \$8,000 during 2007, including the contribution by the ECM.

In 2007, the “Gift from the Heart” team designed and sent out 800 cards around Valentine’s Day to let the parish know about the ACM and its goals to help the people of Malawi with the feeding, educating and caring for children in that country. The cards asked for parishioners to open their hearts and consider contributing to the ACM. The “Gift from the Heart” generated over \$10,000 in contributions.

Great Concerts for Great Causes, which were presented throughout the year, promoted the ACM message while contributing approximately \$5,000 from the proceeds to the ACM cause.

			<u>Year End Balance</u>
2004	Receipts	\$ 33,987	
	Program support	\$ 30,000	
	Gain/(Loss)	\$ 3,987	\$ 3,987
2005	Receipts	\$ 66,377	
	Program support	\$ 37,155	
	Gain/(Loss)	\$ 29,222	\$ 33,209
2006	Receipts	\$ 49,400	
	Program support	\$ 45,240	
	Gain/(Loss)	\$ 4,160	\$ 37,369
2007	Receipts	\$ 38,861	
	Program support	\$ 46,357	
	Gain/(Loss)	\$ (7,496)	\$ 29,873

An exciting year is in store for the ACM in 2008. The dates are already agreed for the 2008 trip to Malawi. In April 2008 we will be visited by Sister Gertrude Chipungu who runs programs the ACM has funded in Malawi. Children will continue to be a focus in 2008. The ACM will educate the Church School children about the ongoing challenges of life in Malawi and to increase awareness about AIDS and other health issues throughout Africa and within our own community. We will continue to build on the successful “Got Goat” program by informing the congregation about the experiences of the 2008 Travel Team and the value of the goats to each community in Malawi. The goat “jewelry” will be refreshed to encourage adults and children to make the goat donation a special

gift to family and friends at Christmas time. These and other activities will be led by our dynamic 2008 leadership team, as follow:

- Carol Chew Children's Program
- Dave Schroeder Communications
- Emily Weigel Got Goat Program
- John Wallingford Medical Assistance Program
- Judy Sullivan Adult Education
- Marda Schropp / Julie Williams Great Concerts for Great Cause
- Margaret Sipple Web Master
- Margaret Welsh / Carol Chew / Margaret Sipple Have A Heart Campaign
- Rick Sperry Finance
- Ruth Goodlaxson Episcopal Campus Ministry
- Stephen Billings Publicity, Promotion, Artwork
- Tom Ramsey Malawi 2008 Mission Trip
- Tom Ramsey Episcopal Relief and Development

In 2008 the ACM will continue to look for new ways to help children in Africa, and thereby grow in our understanding of God's plan for each of us. In line with this the ACM will remain a "variable involvement" committee that encourages participation by anyone who is moved to join, for even a brief period, but does not ask for more participation than can be comfortably offered.

Respectfully submitted,



Grant Norris,
Chairman, African Children's Mission