

African Talking Drum

The Official Newsletter of the African Association of Madison, Inc.

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Solar Lamps a Big Hit in Rural Rwanda!

By David Strait

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It's second nature to us, we don't even think about it ... as the sun goes down we flip on the lights and continue with our work or our meal, our study or our play. Yet, what is so ordinary to us is beyond the reach of the vast majority in rural Rwanda where only 1-2 percent of the households have access to electricity. That means when evening descends at 6 p.m., these families are left in the dark. Their only sources of light are candles or small kerosene lamps — dim, smoky, a serious burn and fire hazard, and a significant drain on the family budget. Without adequate light for evening homework, it's no wonder so many of the children struggle in school.

Many members of Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC), Madison, sponsor children in Nyamagabe Rwanda through World Vision. They have seen this problem first hand in visits to the area. In 2010 CPC had a suggestion for World Vision to address the problem: initiate a project to make solar powered study lamps available to the school children in Nyamagabe. World Vision liked the idea and in June of last year kicked off the project. Over 2,000 lamps were made available to families in 2011, in partnership with several local primary schools. Overall cost per lamp is about \$15. Families are able to buy them for \$7, with monthly payments set to be in line with each family's income. \$7 represents what an average family would spend on kerosene in 3

months. These high efficiency lamps are designed to last 5-10 years, provided the rechargeable batteries are replaced every 1-1/2 years (at a cost of \$1-\$2).

This past June several CPC sponsors traveled to Nyamagabe to visit their sponsored children, to see the progress in World Vision's development program ... and especially to find out if the solar lamps project was working out as hoped.



A mother receives a solar lamp for her family in rural Rawanda.

On Saturday afternoon we drove to a rural school where last year, families had received the first batch of solar lamps. World Vision had arranged for parents to meet us, solar lights in hand, ready to share their stories. We explained that we wanted to learn from their experience to make the project better. One by one they come forward. They described the happiness of finally having enough light for their kids to study, and of their pride in seeing their children jump way ahead in class rank (like from 27 to 2nd in class)! We asked if there were other benefits. They told of the welcome relief from kerosene smoke that had always bothered their eyes and nose and lungs. "Yes," they replied, the solar lamp repayment schedule is manageable, aided by savings from not having to buy kerosene. Here are some of the other answers they gave to our questions: "No, we never run out of light in the evening." (The light lasts about 4 hours.) "No, our children don't complain about the

See Solar Lamps on Page 3

Harambee!* Let's Pull Together to Support the Jirani Project

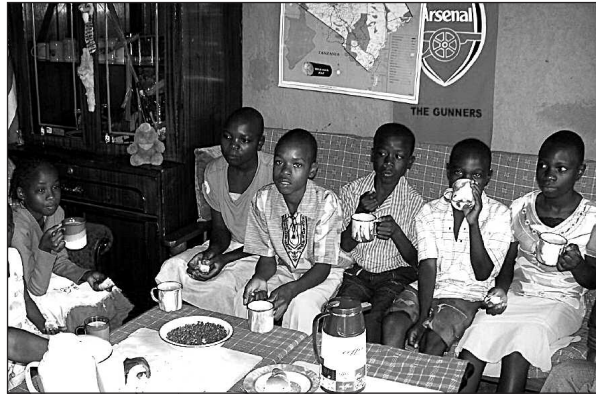
By Jennifer Kendagor, AAM Member

When Cliff and I came to the U.S. with our son Rogers, we settled in Madison without knowing much about the city. We never imagined that we would meet, get to know, and become a part of this great community of Africans and friends of Africa. In time, we came to know how wonderful Madison is, as you can all attest. I could write much more about this intertwined fabric that each of us is so blessed to be part of, but that would be a digression from the article I set out to write for this issue of the AAM newsletter.

A few years ago, just before the holidays, we received a marketing magazine in the mail. Before I could toss it out as junk, I decided to give justice to the editor and see what it was all about. Hmm ... it had pictures of children from third world countries holding chickens, goats, and rabbits. There was a form to fill in asking us to buy an animal for the holidays for a child. I asked myself, a chicken as a gift? All wrapped up for a child in Africa or whatever third world country? This time they have really done it! I researched the project further and discovered the animals were special gifts to help the recipients work toward and sustain a better life by providing food or monetary support.

This leads me to a special event to be held here in Madison by Bert and Diane Adams, Madison residents who had the chance to live and work in Kenya for several years. They have been great champions for The Jirani Project in Kenya, and together with other great volunteers from various parts of the U.S., they have continued to make Jirani Project a success. Last October, they reached out to several Kenyans to help with their second annual fundraiser, where Diane graciously prepared her favorite Kenyan recipe, kuku na mchele (Swahili for "chicken and rice"), along with other traditional Kenyan dishes made by friends.

The Jirani Project will hold its third annual event on October 19 at Diane and Bert's home. My sincere wish is that, should you have any desire to buy a chicken, goat, rabbit or other animal for a child in need, you will come to this event and lend your support in some way.



Children eat lunch in Kipkarren, Kenya

The Jirani Project is a grass-roots nonprofit organization dedicated to the education and support of vulnerable Kenyan children. Run entirely by volunteers in the United States and one full-time staff member in Kenya, The Jirani Project provides homeless and orphaned children with the support needed to become healthy, educated adults.

Thanks largely to the generosity of the Jirani Sponsors, they are able to move vulnerable Kenyan children (who have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS, are refugees or are in other difficult circumstances), from intolerable conditions to boarding schools or day schools, living in guardians' homes in which they can learn and thrive. The children are provided with food, clothing, schooling, basic medical care and counseling.

In addition to providing for all costs related to the children's education, The Jirani Project provides other material and social support to every foster family or guardian, so each sponsored child can be properly cared for. The Project Coordinator, Mark Okello, facilitates this process —from finding guardians for orphans to locating appropriate services for children and families.

You can donate, volunteer or simply attend Jirani events. Please visit jiraniproject.org to learn more and let us know you plan to attend. The Jirani Project is a

501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and all donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Your gift of any amount will be received with gratitude. Asante sana!

* Harambee, the official motto of Kenya, means "let's pull together." The Kenyan tradition of harambee brings people together to celebrate one another's accomplishments and support everyone's pursuits and future successes. Harambee not only raises hope and pays trib-

ute to life's many endeavors but also offers an opportunity for family, friends, neighbors and community members to work together to raise funds and provide the monetary support needed to fulfill people's goals and ambitions. Visit <http://www.jiraniproject.org/about.html> for more information about the project.



Diane and Bert Adams outside a guest house in Uganda



MACON Calendar of Events

July-December 2012

OCTOBER

- 19 Jinari Project Fundraiser, 6 p.m. - 8 p.m., Home of Diane and Bert Adams, 5706 Anchorage Avenue
- 20 AWA Monthly Meeting, 5 p.m., TBA
- 27 UNIMA Executrive Meeting, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m., Neighborhood House
- 29 MACON Meeting, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m., TBA

NOVEMBER

- 2 Free Immigration Consulting, 2 p.m. - 5 p.m., Christ Presbyterian Church
- 3 AAM Annual General Meeting (Elections), 6 p.m. - 9 p.m., Urban League of Greater Madison
- 4 SeneGambia Executive Meeting, 3:30 p.m. - 6 p.m., TBA
- 10 UNIMA Women's Meeting, 2 p.m. - 4 p.m., Neighborhood House
- 10 UNIMA General Meeting, 4 p.m. - 7 p.m., Neighborhood House
- 10 GhaMa Second Biannual Meeting (Ghana), 4 p.m. - 7 p.m., Neighborhood House
- 10 AAM Board Meeting, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m., Centro Hispano
- 17 AWA Monthly Meeting, 5 p.m., TBA

DECEMBER

- 8 UNIMA Women's Holiday Party, 5 p.m. - 1 a.m., Neighborhood House
- 31 AAM New Years Eve Gala, 7 p.m. - 1 p.m., Shetaton Hotel, 706 John Nolen Drive, Call Lilian/Kally Kahite, 608-616-0742, Mariama Lebbie, 608-469-5484 or Christopher Barber-Thomas, 608-438-5974 to reserve your \$35 tickets.

Solar Lamps From Page 1 -----

extra study time." "Yes, the lamps have been reliable." "Theft has been a problem. We've learned we need to take them with us while they recharge during the day, even out to the fields when we work." "Yes, we would absolutely recommend the lamps to other parents who are considering buying them!"

A participating school reported the number of the students who passed into secondary school had jumped from 56 percent to 72 percent. It was all we had hoped to hear and more! World Vision is now expanding the program to several other areas in Rwanda, and has received requests to bring the program to neighboring countries as well.

This Christmas season, we make the gift of lights available to the children of Rwanda. Anyone can make a difference in the life of these children by donating a solar lamp (\$15). To learn more, or to contribute to this program, contact Christ Presbyterian Church (<http://CPCMAdison.org>) or visit the Lights for Learning website (<http://lights-for-learning.com>) or Jean-Rene Watchou at jeanrene@cpc-madison.org or call 608 257 4845.

**It Isn't Community
Without You!!**

SAVE THE DATE

**The African Association
of Madison
Annual General
Meeting and Elections
November 3, 2012
6-9 p.m.
Urban League of
Greater Madison**



African Proverb



Marriage is like a groundnut: you have to crack them to see what is inside.
— Akan (The Republic of Ghana) Proverb

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Looking Back at the Accomplishments of 2012

By Ray Kumapayi, AAM President

My appreciation to all AAM members for supporting AAM programs within the past year. With your support, AAM programs have brought you the following events:

- Fundraising
- Community & Membership Outreach
- Membership Appreciation Night
- July Picnic
- Education and Scholarship Awards Night
- AAM 2013 Calendar
- Africa Fest 2012

While I applaud the elected Board for the coordination and arrangement for the successful programs, I appreciate the efforts of AAM membership who ultimately brought the programs to fruition with your dues payments and volunteer efforts. The AAM Board could not ask for a better membership that continues to support its elected officials. For this, I say thank you.

While the year 2012 is trailing slowly to its end, we still have AAM's Annual General Meeting and the New Year's Eve Gala for our remaining major programs.

AAM's Annual General Meeting

AAM's Annual General Meeting is scheduled for November 3, 2012 at 6: 00 pm at the Urban League of Greater Madison, 2222 S. Park Street Center in Madison. I invite you all to attend this very important General meeting.

This annual meeting provides you the opportunity to learn more about your association and its plans for moving forward when your elected Board chairs present their programs. We must all remember that our ideas, suggestions and input drive the goals and successes of the asso-

ciation.

Secondly, we will be conducting elections to fill two Board positions that will be vacated at the end of the year. It is imperative that these two positions are filled to move AAM forward. I encourage you all to make yourself available to the process by ascending to be elected and/or voting and participation. Electoral Officer

Abiodun Lesi has announced the election, nomination and voting processes; you will be reminded.

Thirdly, we will be discussing AAM's long range plans for acquiring a community center; a physical place which AAM will call its own. The center shall be called The African Center (African Center for Community Development). The plan is for this center to house all our activities, including offices, conference rooms, recreation/party

rooms and outreach.

To achieve this, our Planning Committee has outlined a Five-Year Development Plan that will bring the process into fruition. Your knowledge of the step-by-step plan for each year of the development phase is essential in supporting the actualization. As an association, we have been blessed with a membership that has unlimited capacity to achieve. We must now all connect and converge in this effort to chart our way forward. We know that acquiring such a feat is not an easy one but we are assured we can accomplish this. To do this, we must put together all the resources that we have available to us to lay this foundation, support the plans and eventual acquisition. The planning committee will be needing input from us all as the development unfolds. Let us be prepared in



Ray Kumapayi

Scenes from Africa Fest 2012



providing valuable support.

New Year's Eve Gala

AAM's New Year's Gala is set for December 31, 2012 at 7:00 pm at the Sheraton Hotel in Madison. The cover charge is \$35.00 per individual. For those who had the chance to attend last year's gala, they were very much impressed with the activities the organizing committee (Special Events Committee) planned. Spending New Year's Eve together as a family is what it's all about. We were together when we were besieged with sadness; loss of loved ones at home, loss of loved ones here. We were

together at moments of joy; births, graduations, wellness and birthdays. Let's once again come together to celebrate and usher in the new year for all of our individual and combined efforts of 2012. Tickets are now available; purchase yours. For more information, please contact the Special Events Chair, Kally Kahite at: kallykahite@hotmail.com. And remember that last year's event was sold out, so get your tickets early!

I thank you all for your support and encourage you to keep flying that flag that personifies the positive African experience.

Meet Your Board Member



Frank Kooistra has been a member of AAM since coming back to Madison after 5 years in The Gambia. He was in Africa initially working on a USAID funded UW project. When that ended in 1992, he was asked to stay on working for the World Bank. Since joining AAM he has served on the board as the Treasurer twice. Under the new By-Laws he will be serving his final year on the board this coming year.

Frank retired from his position as an Associate Dean in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences in 2010. Since that time he has been working in the new Office of Sustainability as the Coordinator for Operations and as part of the campus' We Conserve Program. He continues to do some international consulting and has had short-term assignments in Viet Nam, Bangladesh, as well as several African countries.

He is married to Zainabu Kooistra and they have Laity Loum, Ousman Mbye and Abdul Kooistra as their sons. He enjoys African parties and going to watch the boys play soccer.

The African Association of Madison is only as good as the active participation of its members!!

Meet Your Board Member



Jonathan Gramling, the publisher and editor of The Capital City Hues, has been involved in civil rights and other issues for the past 35 years. As a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Gramling made dozens of trips to rural Mississippi through Project Self-Help and Awareness, working with local residents to install plumbing in houses and harvest food crops. He also volunteered with the United Farm Workers in Madison, helping to raise funds and staff informational pickets at local stores.

From 1975-1977, Gramling attended Alcorn State University, a Historic Black College located in Lorman, Mississippi. After attending the UW-Madison for a year, Gramling returned to Mississippi in 1978 to work on the congressional campaign of Evan Doss, an independent African American candidate. Since 1982, Gramling has been deeply involved in Madison's civil rights movement. He worked at the Urban League of Greater Madison for 12 years, was the treasurer for the NAACP-Madison Branch for six years, and assisted the WisDOT Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program develop a strategic plan. Gramling has also been a financial consultant to many area non-profits including the Lussier Community Education Center and Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center.



DID YOU KNOW?



The median age in Africa is about 19 years old as opposed to North America where it is around 37 years old.

— United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Second Chance for an African Green Revolution

By Sabina Zaccaro

ROME, Sep. 21, 2012 (IPS/GIN) - As the world searches desperately for ways to boost food production by at least 70 percent by 2050 to feed an increasingly hungry planet, many are looking to Africa as the place where a large part of this potential can be realized, mainly for its huge portion of arable land.

At the recent G8 Summit, global leaders including 21 African countries and 27 private sector companies committed \$3 billion to a new alliance for food security and nutrition.

Their goal is to raise 50 million people out of poverty over the next 10 years. African Green Revolution Forum is designed to encourage African leaders' commitments by promoting ad hoc investments and policy support to increase agricultural productivity and income growth for African farmers — primarily through environmentally sustainable methods and innovative agricultural finance models.

Tanzania's recent agricultural growth represents a case study of what is possible. In the Kilombero district of Morogoro, the yields for maize have recently increased for some smallholder farmers from 1.5 to 4.5 tons per hectare; the yields for rice have increased from 2.5 to 6.5 tons per hectare.

According to Carlos Seré, chief development strategist of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), increasing agricultural investments is a key factor. "We haven't invested in agriculture since the green revolution as much as we should have, because it was basically felt that this was something that the market would take care of."

"Now we realize that we have small stocks. The big stocks, for example of cereals, kept by the government agencies in the past have now been reduced significantly. So when drought in the United States or in Australia, or problems in Russia hit these markets, then prices go up rapidly because there isn't a big buffer of these stocks like the ones of the past."

Agricultural investments have a huge direct impact on the lives of smallholders, who manage a large proportion of the land in the developing world.

"They need more public goods in terms of research,

extension and a conducive policy environment," Seré told IPS.

"IFAD is fully involved in helping governments to do that. Our work is about increasing the supply of food, and helping build the resilience of smallholders and their organizations to become more efficient, using land more efficiently, sharing knowledge, getting better organized, and increasing their production in a more cost effective manner, getting food to the cities and markets without incurring high transaction costs."

Many of the world's poorest people spend more than half their income on food, making them vulnerable when food prices rise.

The FAO food price index, which measures monthly price changes for a food basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar, averaged 213 points in August, unchanged from July. Although still high, the FAO index currently stands 25 points below its peak of 238 points in February 2011 and 18 points below its August 2011 level.

According to FAO, the index is reassuring and, although vigilance is needed, current prices "do not justify talk of a world food crisis".

"This is a very different situation from what we had a couple of years back," Seré told IPS. "We do realize that this situation has to be monitored carefully, but we clearly don't see it as being as serious as what we had before."

Food security experts believe that the international community is now better prepared to deal with global food price shocks than it was in 2007 and 2008. "We have stronger mechanisms for coordination, analysis, and information sharing," according to Seré.

Many challenges still remain. "There is need for productivity growth, particularly in smallholder agriculture systems, better climate-adapted farming, better functioning and integrated markets, and higher and more stable incomes for women and men living in poverty," Seré said.

All these issues should be part of a continuing agenda, which goes beyond specific instances of global price spikes.

Only a holistic analysis of the food system can lead to concrete, global solutions.



African Association of Madison, Inc.
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VOLUNTEER INTERESTS (Please Check All that Apply)

YOUTH MENTORING/TUTORING: _____
 Primary _____ Middle _____ High _____
 African History/Culture School/Group Presentations _____

SOCIAL EVENTS

Africa Fest _____ Annual Picnic _____ End-of-Year Party _____
 Graduation Celebration _____ Juneteenth Celebration _____
 Newsletter/Publications _____ Telephone Tree _____
 Other Volunteer Interests: _____
 Other African Organization Affiliations: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

E-MAIL: _____

SPOUSE NAME: _____

CHILDREN (UNDER 21 YEARS OLD)

NAME _____ SEX _____ AGE _____

NAME _____ SEX _____ AGE _____

NAME _____ SEX _____ AGE _____

Send this form and \$25 for single membership, \$50 for Non-Profit or Government or \$100 for Corporate Membership to:
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