

Helping Orphans in Tanzania

The **Mailisita Foundation** was created to develop a financially self-sustaining Education Center to serve the needs of a growing orphan population in rural Tanzania. The proposed educational center (including a revenue generating guesthouse) sits at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro. While an area of great natural beauty, the Kilimanjaro region is seeing the early stages of a major AIDS epidemic. Our objective is to provide hope and a future for the area's children orphaned by this growing crisis.

The Problem

The emerging and worsening AIDS crisis in the town of Moshi, Tanzania and its rural surrounding area is creating an expanding group of orphans with little hope and dim prospects for a brighter future. Moshi is a relatively tranquil, fertile and beautiful area situated on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, but much like most areas of Tanzania and sub-Saharan Africa, its largely agrarian economy is stagnant and produces little more than the minimal food the areas' residents require. By and large, the 200,000 people of this area have been able to get by – it's a simple life, but enough. The emergence of AIDS within the area in the past 10 years has changed that balance. As of 2008 the adult population infection rate is approaching 12%. We've met a number of the orphans this looming crisis is producing and save for some unexpected miracle; they will be joined by hundreds more.

What happens to these orphans? Some are taken in by extended families, some of which have the resources to provide them adequate care and education. Others become street children, surviving off handouts and petty crime. In Moshi the number of street children has doubled to 1,000 in the past 2 years. The future for these children is very bleak.

Fr. Augustine Kawishe, a Catholic priest of the Mailisita district of Moshi works to provide free education and a simple daily meal to Kindergarten age orphans lucky enough to be taken in by extended family, but too poor to afford the additional cost of their care. For some, the only meal they will receive today is the simple corn mush lunch the local residents donate and Fr. Kawishe's parish workers prepare. These families would not be able to provide a home for these children were it not for the education and food Fr. Augustine and his parishioners give and would thus add to the growing street population. His two room school house is currently serving 80 Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten children between the ages of 5 and 7.

The importance of education for these children cannot be overstated. As orphans, they have no family to fall back upon or to help them get a start in life. Nor does the government have resources or programs to address the problem. These children will absolutely need to have sufficient education to become successful in a difficult job market.



The Kilimanjaro area public primary schools are currently overcrowded. The average classroom size for public schools was over 90 students in 2006. The shortage of secondary schools (grades 7-12) is even more acute. Typically



only one in five students is able to progress from primary to secondary school due to the limited secondary school capacity. The shortage of secondary schools creates a vicious competition for entry and only students who attend the best English-medium primary schools (overwhelmingly private) stand a chance to progress. Interestingly, secondary schools in Tanzania screen applicants and teach in English rather than the native Swahili language, further disadvantaging these children.

The children from the Mailisita Kindergarten program that Fr. Augustine currently runs progress to the local public primary schools. In ten years, not one alumni of the Mailisita Kindergarten program has gained entry into secondary school. This track record underscores the importance of improving the education these children are receiving and adopting English as the medium of instruction in primary school.

Our Approach – To develop the Mailisita School as a financially self-sustaining **English-medium** primary school for AIDS orphans. Teaching the children in English from the 1st grade will give them a meaningful advantage as they compete for public supported secondary school entry or for the local job market.

The Kilimanjaro area is popular with tourists seeking to climb the continent's tallest mountain or embark on safaris in the area's world class animal reserves including the Serengeti and the Ngorongoro crater. There are no major hotel chains operating in the area and most tourism accommodation is provided by small private guest house or bed and breakfast style operations typically having no more than 10-20 rooms. The proposed accompanying fourteen (14) room Mailisita Guesthouse will be able to generate enough income to operate the 300 pupil primary school on an ongoing basis.



The Mailisita center sits on an excellent parcel of land for developing a tourism guesthouse. The site has 200' of frontage along the roadway connecting the major towns of Moshi and Arusha and has an unobstructed view of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Travelers using nearby Kilimanjaro International Airport must pass directly in front of the Center on their way to nearby Kilimanjaro trek starting points.

The Team



Fr. Augustine Kawishe is the Mailisita parish priest within the Catholic Diocese of Moshi, Tanzania. He was born and raised in the Kilimanjaro region, left to further his education in the US and UK, and returned to work in a number of roles for the Moshi Diocese. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Walsh College in Akron, Ohio and studied law at Kings College in London. He has served as the Director of Education for the Diocese as well as legal advisor.

Fr. Kawishe has managed past construction projects for the Diocese and with the assistance of his Board of Directors, oversees all local aspects of the Mailisita Education Center construction. He is further assisted and supported in overseeing the work by Fr. Daniel Amani, head of construction projects for the Diocese of Moshi and Fr. Paul Uria, a long time colleague and diocesan counselor.

Help from U.S.



Fr. Augustine's brother, **Rev. Valerian Laini**, Ph.D. is the associate pastor at St. Joseph's church in Libertyville, Illinois (www.stjoseph-libertyville.org). He grew up in and around the Moshi, Tanzania area and continued his education in Rome, received his Masters from Concordia University in Montreal, and his Doctorate in Communications from Northwestern University.

Under his direction, St. Joseph's parish launched its International Sharing Ministry in 2005 to focus on care for the vulnerable in the community of Moshi, Tanzania. The parish continues to raise awareness and funds for the project.



The **Mailisita Foundation** (www.mailisita.org) was created in 2007 specifically for this project in order to expand the circle of involvement to those who might otherwise be restricted from giving to faith-based organizations. Further, the objectives of the foundation and the project are not religious in nature, but more accurately humanitarian. For example, the Moshi orphan population served is comprised of children from a variety of religious backgrounds.

The Mailisita Foundation is an IRS designated 501(c)(3) charity (EIN: 20-8174181). As such, all contributions are eligible for exemption from US federal taxes. **100%** of all donations to the foundation have gone, and will continue to go directly to the purchasing of building materials and labor for the construction of the Mailisita Education Center. All administrative and fund raising costs have been covered by separate personal donations designated for such purposes.

Accomplishments

2006 Although long a dream of Fr. Kawishe and his colleagues in Mailisita, the project started in earnest with a scouting trip in July 2006. A group of twenty (20) from the Libertyville area including an attorney, pediatrician, construction contractor and management consultant, studied the situation and determined that yes, it was feasible to help. Key findings included: the orphans are healthy enough to be educated; the area is politically and economically stable enough to support development, and the tourism trade brings enough money into the area that a small school and guesthouse combination could be financially self-sufficient.

A business plan outlining operating budgets and required capital "investment" was produced and continues to provide direction to the team. Land was acquired and the Diocesan architect created preliminary drawings and estimates. With money raised from the Libertyville community, initial building materials were purchased or donated by local Mailisita residents.

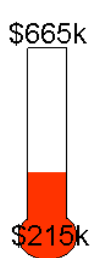
2007 Another group of twelve (12) Libertyville area residents returned to the site in July 2007 to review progress and work on construction activities. They dug foundations shoulder to shoulder with locals and lay roughly thirty (30) tons of concrete blocks. The end result was five classrooms ready to be roofed.

Fund raising was accelerated and the Mailisita Foundation (US 501c3) and its sister organization, the Mailisita Education Foundation (Tanzanian NGO) were created and recognized by their respective governments.

2008 Two of the twelve returned to Tanzania six months later in January to assess progress and refine estimates and assumptions used in the business case.

A group of thirty (30) area residents will be traveling to Tanzania in July 2008 to continue work on the school and guesthouse.

Estimate to Complete



The total estimated cost of building the ~300 pupil school, 14 room guesthouse, and the school operating deficit until the guesthouse is completed is \$665,000 of which \$215,000 has been raised as of 3-31-2008. Of the \$215,000 raised, \$105,000 is being held in the Foundation's US bank account to be dispersed as construction funds in Tanzania are required. Funds are transferred internationally to our Tanzanian NGO entity on an "as needed" basis rather than managing a cash balance in Tanzania.

It is expected that the remaining **\$450,000** will be raised primarily through private donations. As yet, no willing government or non-governmental entities whose funding profiles and requirements match the project have been identified.

The project is designed such that if additional funds can be secured, the capacity of the guesthouse and school can be expanded to twice the original design and thus able to serve the needs of nearly 600 children.

As of 3-31-2008, the school building is approximately 45% complete with five of nine classrooms under roof. The guesthouse building is 10% complete. The guesthouse building foundation is finished and a portion of the first floor block and steel work is complete.

The actual costs for work completed to-date are inline with and slightly better than original estimates.

Next Steps

The first class of 1st graders will begin classes in January of 2009, consistent with customary local school year scheduling. The process of accrediting the school with the Tanzanian education authorities has already begun. Two classrooms will be finished for January 2009 with the remaining being finished as needed through 2013.

The economics of the project demand that the guesthouse construction be pursued aggressively and completed within three years (2011), and the guesthouse begin limited operation late in 2011. The guesthouse revenues are essential to funding the teachers' salaries and purchasing food for the students.



Project Risks

- **Kenya impact.** Election violence in Kenya continues to remain contained within Kenyan borders. However, some construction materials have become scarce or more expensive due to Kenyan supplier disruptions. Key construction materials such as cement have risen by 40% since the project began.
- **Weakening US dollar.** The US dollar has lost nearly 10% of its value with respect to the Tanzanian Shilling since the project began. Better than estimated construction performance has kept the work completed on the original budget, but estimates to complete the project have risen to reflect the change in exchange rate.
- **Fund raising pace.** Completing construction and beginning limited operation of the guesthouse by 2011 will require we raise funds at a 50% faster pace than we have in 2006 and 2007. If a lack of timely funds leads to construction delays, needed revenues from the guesthouse operation will be lost, thus adding to the total project cost to donors.

A very direct opportunity to help the truly less fortunate



A really great bunch of kids!

Fr. Kawishe has been and continues to provide whatever help and assistance he can to these wonderful children who live in such fragile conditions. It is easy to be fooled by their smiles and happy dispositions into thinking that all is well. But many of these children are living under very difficult circumstances.

The purpose of the Mailisita Foundation is to enable Fr. Kawishe and his likeminded colleagues to really make a difference in the lives, hopes, and realities of these children's futures through improving their educational opportunities.

The successful development of the Mailisita Education Center as a financially self-sustaining campus to serve the health and educational needs of the growing orphan population in rural Tanzania will improve the lives of many and serve as an example of how people a world apart can work together to bring about positive change.

Asante sana na mungu akubariki

(Thank you very much and God bless)

Orphans of Mailisita



Making the Building Blocks

School Construction Progress



July 2006



July 2007



January 2008

Guesthouse Construction Progress



Guesthouse January 2008



Kilimanjaro view from Guesthouse



Children near Guesthouse site