



MERCY CENTER NEWS

Spring 2009

MERCY CENTER FOUNDATION, USA

Volume 6, Issue 1

Founders:

Sister Rose Wangui Kuria
Albert J. Forte, Sr. (In Memoria)

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Rick Rice, Vice President
& Acting Treasurer
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The Mercy Center Foundation, USA is a 501(c)(3) Organization; gifts to the Mercy Center Foundation are tax deductible to the the extent provided by law.



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Dear Friends of Mercy Center;

One year after the post-election violence, Kenya's political and economic challenges still loom large. While the turbulence within in the country has settled down, the Grand Coalition established between the rivaling political parties has failed to address the country's critical and ever growing need for infrastructure projects. Mercy Center Foundation and Mercy Center Lare are a sharp contrast to this stalemate. While some momentum was lost during the political clashes, MCF USA and MCL are back on track with a renewed energy and focus.

Staff housing was completed in March 2009. With the blessing of Fr. Evans Njogu, President of MCL, our staff is now settled into a secure compound of ten private rooms with outdoor latrines and a washing/cooking area. That same night, two women were brought to the clinic in the early hours of the morning; one woman in advanced labor, the other a victim of domestic violence. The first woman arrived at 11:00 pm, bleeding profusely and received extensive stitches and antibiotics and was escorted to a safe home within the community. The second woman arrived at 2:00am, was stabilized and then transported to the Provincial hospital in Nakuru accompanied by the nurse and night security guard. In a remote setting such as Lare, both women could easily have died had our staff been elsewhere.

Our dream of providing immunizations became a reality in August 2008. With the help of St. Anthony's Health Center in Nakuru and funds from Victims' Rights Foundation in Montgomery, MD, every Wednesday now, vaccinations are transported to the site in a portable cooler and administered by our medical director, Sr. Ester Wairimu. Children are weighed and nutritional supplements are provided for the child and their family. Over 400 children have since begun their immunization routine!

Yet another eagerly anticipated health program will soon begin. Working with the chief (mayor), the MCL Board has identified five outposts within Lare to serve as satellite clinic sites. Once final details have been worked out, three staff members will set up a mobile clinic in rotation at each location bringing basic health care to those who live too far or are too ill to visit.

Rick Rice and I continue to reflect on our trip to Kenya last October. Our most rewarding days were those spent at the site, holding babies, walking the land and imagining future possibilities for this community. Against the odds and the tenuous backdrop of its mother land, Mercy Center Lare Kenya is truly thriving. Praise God!

Thank you and God Bless,
Laura B. Hunt, RN
President



Audits and Skype: The Finance Committee in Action

For fiscal year 7/31/08, we contracted with a new accounting firm, Gold, Leins & Adoff, LLP, to conduct our audit and prepare the IRS Form 990. The audit is complete and Mercy Center's financial report received an unqualified opinion.

In addition, we have contracted with Intercapital Consultants, CPAs in Kenya and have received audited financial statements for Mercy Center Lare for the past three fiscal years and are awaiting the same for this year. These reports also received an unqualified opinion from the Kenyan auditor. All audits should be available shortly on our website.

The Finance Committee is working closely with the Development and Program Committees as well as the Mercy Center Lare Board to identify and prioritize needs in connection with creating a joint strategic plan. In addition, Rick Rice, Vice President of MCF USA, conducts weekly phone calls (Skype) with Father Evans, President of the MCL Board. These calls have been critical to our

understanding of the current issues facing the project and our ability to react with necessary advice and funding when needed. Look for summaries of these calls on the home page of our website in the near future as well.

The Finance Committee is always looking for volunteers to help manage this important work. If you are interested in serving on the Finance Committee, please contact Rick Rice at rick-rice1@gmail.com.

*Mercy Center Foundation USA, Inc.
would like to thank
Washington Home & Garden
for their collaborative partnership
with our organization.*

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Thank You, Newman's Own Foundation

For a remote setting such as ours in Kenya, it is an appropriate model for staff to live on-site. Lack of reliable transportation and inability of patients to phone ahead for appointments suggests that our clinic be open six days a week with emergency care during off-hours so that no patient who finds themselves at our threshold will be turned away. Committed to their work, our medical staff of five has lived on site since 2006, when we first opened the clinic. However, they have lived in difficult conditions, squeezed into shared rooms with little or no privacy which left them uncomfortable and disheartened at times.

The staff of Mercy Center Lare is our most precious asset. They are the ones who interact directly with the villagers are the reason that Mercy Center has become a trusted, reliable and available source of basic health care for this vulnerable community. And with the help of Newman's Own Foundation, we have just completed the construction of modest housing for our staff. These rooms represent a sweet reward for their patience and endurance.

Thank You to Newman's Own Foundation!

The Albert Forte Memorial Award By Laura Hunt, Vice-President

Albert J. Forte was an iconic figure in the Washington community, a decorated World War II veteran who founded a successful real estate company and raised a family of seven. Renowned for his philanthropic spirit as well as his business acumen, Mr. Forte set his sights high and knew how to get things done. In 1999, Sr. Rose told him about the severe drought, poverty and disease that stalked the village of Lare. Until his death in 2005, Albert Forte actively maintained his role of co-founder and benefactor of the Mercy Center Foundation.

At our annual Gala, the *Albert Forte Memorial Award* is bestowed on an individual who best exemplifies the spirit of a man who inspired others to follow his example, that of a generous, selfless volunteer.

Mary Hamm was a founding member of the Mercy Center Foundation, our first president and member of the Board of Directors from 2002 – 2007.

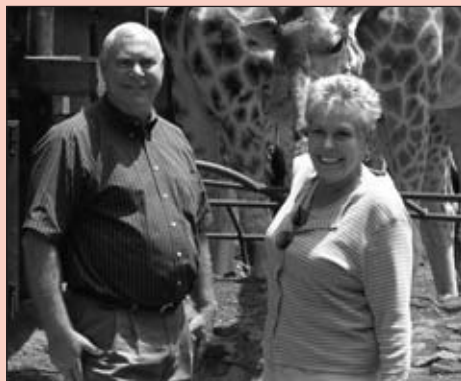
Award Recipient 2008



Mrs. Mary Suarez Hamm, with Mr. Rick Rice, Mercy Center Vice President.

Gary and Susan Hess have advanced the progress of MCF in the Washington area and in Kenya.

Award Recipients 2005



Mr. Gary Hess and Mrs. Susan Hess, in Kenya.

Gregory Wims is the founder of *Victim's Rights Foundation*, an organization that has supported famine relief and site development in Lare.

Award Recipient 2006



Mrs. Mary Githae, Mr. Gregory Wims, with Sr. Rose in Mercy Center Lare.

Odette Forte-Smith and **Arlene Richards** have been generous donors; they traveled to Lare and volunteered their services as a dental or medical volunteer.

Award Recipients 2007



Mrs. Odette-Smith Forte, DDS, with Sr. Rose Wangui, in Kenya.



Ms. Arlene Richards, MD, with Sr. Rose Wangui, in Kenya.

2004 Forte Family: The Forte family was honored to accept the *Alfred Forte Memorial Award* in its inaugural year.

Bound for Kenya by Carol Blee

On Tuesday, February 3, representatives from the Mercy Center Board of Directors watched in amazement as medical supplies and equipment were rolled from the spacious Crosslink International warehouse, onto the loading dock, up the ramp and expertly packed into a 20-foot metal container. Dedicated Crosslink volunteers demonstrated strength, ingenuity and the willingness to ignore frigid weather. Teamwork and respect were much in evidence, too. Within 90 minutes, the container was filled to capacity with thousands of life-sustaining items, such as:

Wheelchairs
Centrifuges for laboratory studies
IV Equipment
Hospital beds and baby bassinets
Exam tables and cabinets
Thousands of sterile surgical supplies

The loading of these precious resources is the culmination of a sustained effort and serves to unite Mercy Center Foundation with two other humanitarian organizations that share a common vision. Crosslink International is a non-profit ministry that provides humanitarian aid by supplying pharmaceuticals, equipment and medical supplies to medical teams, clinics and hospitals. This is the fifth time that they have provided such assistance, thus helping us fulfill our mission of providing clean water, medical assistance, and access to education and micro-enterprise initiatives to residents of Lare, Kenya. Mercy Center was able to secure the shipment of these donated medical supplies for a fraction of their true value.

Upon arrival at the port of Mombassa, Kenya, in mid-April, the supplies will be unloaded under the supervision of the Little Sisters of St. Francis. The LSOSF serve needy populations in Kenya through a network of schools, hospitals and orphanages.

But on this frigid evening, more than medical supplies were loaded. The promise of a healthier tomorrow is also bound for Kenya. Each item rolled into place symbolizes a faith that travels 9,000 miles, across two oceans and two seas in our "priceless", albeit battered, metal container.



Volunteers from Crosslink International packed a shipment of medical supplies into a 20-foot container bound for Kenya. L-R: MCF-USA Board members, Brian Doherty and Eileen Rice with CrossLink International Melinda Matzen, Project Manager and Peter Sparber, Board member.

Cyber-Sister-in-Law

Eileen M. Rice

It was time for a facelift and a Technology Specialist and former *Technology Teacher of the Year* stepped forward to do the heavy lifting. Mel McNamara, MCF volunteer and cyber-sister-in-law, threw her considerable talent into the mighty task of redesigning our website. Working within our timeline and exceeding our expectations, Mel created a website that will inform and inspire visitors to our site at www.mercyproject.org.

At the click of a mouse, bold colors, our distinctive logo, drop-down menus, photo collages, permanent and time-sensitive text will transport visitors to the oasis we are creating in Lare, Kenya. Four little words say it all, "Check us out online!"

Partnership with Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School

Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School has a long tradition of graduating women of faith, vision and purpose since 1799. Mercy Center Foundation USA, Inc. (MCF-USA) and its Kenyan partner, Mercy Center Lare (MCL), are excited to be a small part of Visitation's mission to bring cultural awareness and global issues to the student community. MCF-USA Founder, Sister Rose Wangui, and MCF-USA board members will interact with Visitation's school's Rafiki Club as a platform to highlight God's love to Africa, by sharing in the work of the village of Lare, Kenya.

As part of this new collaboration, Mercy Center Foundation USA Inc. will celebrate its 7th Annual Gala on the campus of Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School, Saturday, October 3, 2009, at 6:30 pm.

Esprit De Noel

Georgetown Visitation hosted its Annual Christmas Bazaar, on November 6 & 7 of 2008—a Not to Be Missed event for alumnae, family and friends of the Washington area community. Each year, Mercy Center Foundation hosts a table to highlight our work in the Mercy Center Lare Clinic and site in Lare, Kenya. Mercy Center Foundation provides funds for health care, pre & post natal care, health education, medicines, and clean water. This year, Visitation Alumnae, Jenna Bell, Eliza Bell Palmer, Mercy Board Members, Eileen Rice, Nancy Tanner and Founder, Sister Rose Wangui, hosted an informative table that included a spectacular Christmas Raffle Basket.

Volunteers to bring a renewed focus to Mercy Center Lare: Promoting the well being of women and children!

Since August 2006, MCL has treated over 8,000 patients. Despite best efforts on both sides of the ocean, the data generated from these patient visits had been incomplete preventing us from making any valid generalizations about the underlying health concerns for the community and thus how best to utilize our assets. But there is one statistic that stands out and speaks for itself. Of these 8,000 patients, 25% are children under the age of five and 25% are women of child bearing age. Furthermore, if you add in all children under the age of ten, they represent 35% of our total. All females regardless of age represent 59% of our patient base. And finally, all women and all children under the age of ten represent 76% of our patients. This provides the most compelling justification for existence of MCF USA and its partner, MCL: to

promote the well being of the women and children of Lare, Kenya.

This year, MCF USA hopes to send three unique volunteers to Lare. These volunteers have extensive experience working with organizations similar to ours in developing countries all around the world. Their most important tasks will be to perform an overall assessment of the project, capacity building of the staff, leveraging current resources and setting up a system for more relevant data collection. Our goal then will be to develop a comprehensive plan to focus on the overall health, safety and welfare of women and children. Look for news and updates on these volunteers and their trip on our website during the upcoming months.



Where compassion transforms life!

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Mercy Center Foundation USA is an organization of volunteers dedicated to serving the needs of the people of Lare, an isolated community of 40,000 people in the Great Rift Valley of Kenya. Our mission is to bring hope to the people of Lare by providing sustainable, affordable, medical, and educational assistance regardless of religion, politics, ethnicity, or nationality.

Mark Your Calendars

Mercy Center's 7th Annual Gala,

Saturday, October 3, 2009

Dinner, Silent & Live Auction

Featuring Song Artist Michael Bethea

with Guest Speaker

Fr. Evans, Njogu

President of Mercy Center Lare, Kenya

Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School

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