



CIRCLE OF PEACE INTERNATIONAL

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends of Circle of Peace International and Circle of Peace School,

It's humbling to work with a group of people with great desire and determination to make a difference. It is a pleasure to report that the Spring Fundraiser on March 28 was a big success! We had a very good turn out, the food was good and the entertainment delightful!

We earned \$2,900.00 from ticket sales, donations, cake walk, raffle, and the auction! In addition, people who were unable to attend the event donated to our Crowdrise campaign, so the total money raised for these combined efforts is \$5,050! Thanks to **Kathleen Creasey** and **Liz Jordan** for all their work in organizing this fundraiser.

Thanks to all our supporters, we are able to proceed with establishing a new dormitory for 25 girls at Circle of Peace School. You can still make a donation through Crowdrise (crowdrise.com/copsgirlsdormitory/fundraiser) or PayPal.

Thanks to Susan Higgins, MJ Ebenhack and Seth Caskey, COPI now has updated publicity pieces. A new brochure about the school and a Fact Sheet about COPI can be downloaded from the COPI website, www.circleofpeaceintl.org. Or contact me at 804-247-1177, circleofpeaceintl@gmail.com to order either publication in bulk.

And don't forget that I am available to speak to church, school and community groups.

Thank you for all that you do to make Circle of Peace School such a special place.

Kindest regards, *Joanita Senoga*

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UPDATES FROM THE CIRCLE OF PEACE SCHOOL

By MaryLove Bbaale

First let me begin by thanking all friends of Circle of Peace School -- supporters and donors - for your generosity. Your support is one of the key reasons Circle of Peace School has experienced its recent growth. It has been rewarding to see how Cir-

cle of Peace School is progressing with the little resources we have.

I am delighted to report that this year we enrolled 120 new students, bringing our total enrollment to about 300. During the holidays we expanded some classrooms, which gave us room for more students.

We were blessed to have a

successful Speech Day at the end of the 2014 school year. Our students marched around the community. Many people who didn't know about our school were pleased by the performance and as a result we had

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Highlights of what is happening at COPS



COPS Basketball School Team



COPS Soccer School Team



COPS students lining up for the competition



On the left in white T-shirt is Isaac from COPS

about 400 people come to celebrate Speech Day with us. This is how we were able to increase enrollments this year.

Student teachers

Circle of Peace School partners with the YMCA Institute for our student teachers. These students assist in the classroom as teaching aides while getting experience. On 23 March 2015 the Education Department from the YMCA Institute sent two faculty to the school to inspect and observe their students as they were teaching.

Debates

Recently the school held debates. There were a variety of topics for students to discuss. We're hoping to start competing on the division level.

Athletics

The School is now participating in the Makindye Division Athletics Competition. This is the first year of competing with other schools. There are a total of 17 schools in the division and many games played such as high jump, long jump, high discus, fruit picking, soccer, basketball etc.

I am happy to report that at a recent meet we came in sec-

ond in the long distance run (600m). Two students -- Yiga Zubairi and Trudie Nakaweesi -- have been selected to represent Circle of Peace School at the Division level in this event.

Arts and Crafts

Teacher Nakirijja Sarah Rebecca and Mama Amina are teaching the students how make different crafts such as basket, mats, and bracelets.

Ms. MaryLove Bbaale is a Principal at Circle of Peace School

JOANITA SENOGA RECEIVES COMMUNITY BUILDERS AWARD FROM MASONS

By Tom Wright

At its Annual Awards Banquet November 8, 2014 the St. Johns Masonic Lodge No. 36 recognized Joanita Senoga for her contributions to the Richmond Community. COPI board members Betty Allen, Iria Jones and Tom Wright also attended ceremony.

Donald Tracy, Lodge Secretary, presented the Community Builders Award, which is given annually to a person "who does good and important things in the community."

Joanita was nominated by David Williams who noted that Joanita had come to America in 1996 and immediately became involved in the community. In 2010, she was granted US Citizenship, graduated from University of Richmond with a bachelor's degree and was gainfully employed. By

carefully allocating her resources she has financially supported her family in Makindye, Uganda and the school that she had founded there.

In presenting the award, Mr. Tracy read from the certificate: "With our heartfelt gratitude for your outstanding service to our community." The certificate was signed by Alan Adkins, Wayne S. Forum, Lodge Officers.

In accepting the award, Joanita noted that she "felt blessed to be standing here before you." She recounted that her family had very little as she was growing up. As a girl she never had a bicycle and her grandparents bought a single doll to be shared among her and her four sisters.

She stressed that her family highly valued education. They fully supported her ef-

forts to attend school up through college. She is very grateful for the education they made possible for her.

The importance of education has been communicated to Joanita's two daughters, one of which is in graduate school and the other in college in the U.S.A.

Joanita often speaks about the value of education to organization such as school children, Rotary Clubs, college fraternities, and Girl Scout troops.

After the presentation, members and guests viewed a video of Circle of Peace School. The St. Johns Lodge provided a dinner and musical entertainment.

Tom Wright a member of the COPI Board of Directors

ST. ANDREW'S AND CIRCLE OF PEACE—PEN PALS AND MORE

By Kathy Tappen

During the summer of 2012, the Head of St. Andrew's School in Richmond, Virginia, Dr. Cynthia Weldon-Lassiter travelled to Uganda to visit Circle of Peace School. Since then, the second grade class has made eastern Africa and Uganda its cultural study focal point.

Each year, for the past three years, the second grade students have not only learned about a different culture through literature and multi-media resources, but also, and more importantly, they have learned about another culture first-hand from children their own age, through a pen pal program with the students at Circle of Peace School.

The pen pal experience provides a lasting bond between the students at both schools, and it brings social and learning advantages to all.

Having a pen pal helps students learn more about the world around them and helps them appreciate, understand and respect cultures other than their own.

Corresponding with a student from another country triggers curiosity. How does my friend go to school? What foods does he eat? What games does she play? Having curiosity is an important factor in ALL learning.

Being friends with a similarly aged student in another country helps students realize that though they may live

in very different environments, they have many things in common including what they are learning, what they enjoy playing, and more.

Having a pen pal half way around the world helps students learn patience. It takes time to write, send and then receive a letter from a pen pal. In today's world of text messages and e-mail, being able to wait patiently for a response is a virtue.

The second grade class at St. Andrew's School looks forward to maintaining relationship with Circle of Peace School through both the pen pal program and our annual service project for years to come. This year, it will be leading a school-wide initiative to collect the basic school supplies that our friends at Circle of Peace School greatly need.

As I have shared in the past, it is a blessing and a tribute to the founders of both schools to witness the power that academic, social, and spiritual education provides to the children as they value, respect, and love one another across the thousands of miles that separate Richmond, Virginia from Kampala, Uganda.

Mrs. Kathy Tappen is a Second Grade Teacher at St. Andrew's School



Mrs. Tappen with her students at St. Andrew's School

NY SCHOOL CONTINUES SUPPORT FOR COPS

Circle of Peace School has recently received soccer shirts and other soccer equipment from Prime Time Early Learning Center, Farmingdale, NY. The donation was made possible thanks to Director Michelle Friedman and soccer coach Alex Gallego.

Michelle, a close family friend of Joanita Senoga and MaryLove Bbaale, organized the donation and delivery of supplies to Circle of Peace School. Michelle met Joanita at a Circle of Peace art show in New York City several years ago and has been a proud supporter of Circle of Peace School ever since. Previously her school has sent books and supplies to Peace School. She was instrumental in getting a full set of encyclopedias and many other reference materials to the school for their new library.

Michelle and Alex are proud supporters of children and want each child have an opportunity for early enrichment

programs with the correct supplies. "We were so happy to see a few photos of the Boys Soccer Team at Circle of Peace School," said Michelle.

Prime Time Early Learning Center is a full-day childcare facility that enrolls students from six weeks to 10 years old. The school offers many enrichment opportunities for the students in their care, therefore the connection with Mr. Gallego of Soccer Shots.

Alex Gallego has worked with Prime Time Early Learning Center for over five years. His staff offers three soccer clinics weekly. The staff at Soccer Shots interacts and engages all students to help them understand the fundamentals of soccer. The children love the class and playing soccer with their friends. Alex organizes and oversees an annual summer camp program. His goal is for the children in the camp to learn about soccer, enjoy being outside with friends, and to **have fun!**

UPDATING AMINA'S KITCHEN

Now that COPI has met its goal of raising \$7000 to purchase, upgrade, and furnish a facility to serve as a new Girls Dormitory, we are gearing up for our next project -- to provide Mrs. Amina Bbaale with a workable kitchen.

Mama Amina's kitchen is the heart of the school and in serious need of renovation. Currently, she cooks for the students over a small coal burning brazier set on the floor while sitting on a low stool. There is no sink, nor any countertop space, and there is only one small storage cabinet. The majority of the foodstuffs are stored inside her house or stacked on pallets on the kitchen floor.

The orphans in her care take their meals in this kitchen while sitting on mats or cardboard on the floor. During school hours, student lunches are served out of this kitchen, which is fundamental to school operations.



Please watch for our upcoming events on our website.
<http://circleofpeaceintl.org>

STUDENT SPONSORS LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO CHANGE A LIFE

By Susan Higgins

Forty-Five of the children who attend Circle of Peace School are underprivileged. They are among the 1.1 million Ugandan children devastated by the AIDS epidemic in their homeland.

To these young people the school means more than an education. It means a place to call home, three healthy meals a day, clothes to wear, medical care and family. All at a cost of \$395 per child per year, made possible by generous sponsors. Where else can so much be had for so little?

Writing a sponsorship check was only the beginning for board member Betty Allen. "When I visited the school and had a chance to meet Faith, the child I sponsor, it became real. I saw how much it meant to Faith to be a part of a family.

Watching her interact with the other children, laughing, playing seeing her dressed for school, in her classroom, and realizing how much she want-

ed to learn. Knowing that I could help make a difference in someone else's life, show her that someone loves her." That was the true expression of Betty's gift.

COPI board member Iria Jones does not have children of her own. But the relationships she has with her nieces and Godchildren have taught her how meaningful a bond with a child can be.

"The experience of watching the child I sponsor at Peace School grow up and corresponding with her through letters, photos, and drawings gives me great satisfaction that I have a true relationship with this child.

We have bonded in a way that we will never forget. Getting reports of her grades and knowing she is excited to tell me about them heightens my life because I feel my encouragement has helped her succeed."

But 28 children remain without sponsors. Our goal this year is to expand the sponsor-

ship program so that every orphan at the school is supported.

Each board member has committed to enlisting one new sponsor. And we will be asking every current sponsor to recruit a like-minded friend with a generous spirit, who is willing to make the dream of an education and the promise of prosperity come true for a child.

Consider providing for an orphaned child at Circle of Peace School in 2015. Your Sunday school class, book club or co-workers can donate as a group. Or, you can simply give as much as you are able towards a sponsorship.

Visit the Support a Child page on the COPI website at circleofpeaceintl.org and learn what it means to change a life.

Mrs. Susan Higgins is COPI's Student Sponsorship Program Manager



OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

By MJ Ebenhack

In order to better carry out COPI's mission, the board has recently embarked on a leadership development process. Over the next few months the board will be searching out volunteers to assist with **editing the newsletter, grant writing, social media market-**

ing, database management, Annual Dinner organizing, and program coordination. In addition, **new members of the Board of Directors** will be elected in January 2016. If you or someone you know has the needed skills and a desire to change a child's life for

the better, please contact Leadership Development Director MJ Ebenhack at 740-434-5638 or ebenhack@gmail.com. Job descriptions for each position will soon be posted on the COPI website

MJ Ebenhack is Secretary for COPI

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Sunday, May 31 – Volunteer Day

Come spend a couple of hours sorting supplies to be sent to Circle of Peace School. Sorters will meet at 3:00 p.m. at Joanita Senoga's house, 2402 Prestwick Rd., Henrico, VA.

SENIOR HIGHS CONDUCTING BACKPACK DRIVE FOR CIRCLE OF PEACE SCHOOL

By Han Gu and Sahana Ramani

Encouraging Empowerment through Education is a high school volunteer run organization that is centered on the idea that education is the most important long-term factor for increasing individual empowerment. We aim to work with organizations internationally to provide a quality education for children by hosting various fundraisers and drives.

In order to connect with students on a personal level, we establish pen pals with many of our partner schools. We are passionate about making a difference and firmly believe that our young age has no correlation with the impact we can make

One of the key projects we conducted last year was our book drive. Reaching out to our local community, we were able to collect over 900 books ranging from elementary reading guides to high school novels. We distributed these books to various learning centers including the Countryside Orphanage in Bawjaise, Ghana, and the Sankalp Learning Center in Chennai, India.

An additional project we completed last year was the calculator drive. We realized that at the end of the school year, many calculators are left behind



Members of the Encouraging Empowerment through Education Club

in the lost and found. These calculators are neither returned to the students nor distributed for other purposes.

We contacted our school administration, collected scientific calculators worth over \$1000, and sent them to Tech High School in Somalia. We are planning to expand this project this year by contacting more local high schools and expanding our outreach.

We are most excited about our new partnership with the Circle of Peace School. We're currently in the process of conducting our Backpack Drive, through which we are fundrais-

ing money to buy backpacks and school supplies. In addition, we have conducted drives in many areas nearby and collected these items.

By the end of the year, we would like to put together backpacks filled with an assortment of supplies and books and give them to students at the Circle of Peace School. One other project we are also delighted to continue for the rest of the school year is the Pen Pal project. We are very grateful for this opportunity as it has brought new perspectives to our club members and increased our awareness.

We are looking forward to the successful completion of our Backpack Drive and increasing correspondence with the students, building strong relationships in the process. We hope that our contributions will not only aid the Circle of Peace School in fulfilling their mission, but also build a long lasting relationship for future projects and activities.

Thank you, Circle of Peace School, for giving us these opportunities; we hope that you are just as excited as we are for the endless possibilities and events to come!

Ms. Han Gu and Ms. Sahana Ramani are students at the School of Science and Technology



Circle of Peace International

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Circle of Peace School website
www.circleofpeace.org

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COPI Board of Directors

Joanita Senoga – President
and Board Chair

Betty Allen – Vice Chair
MJ Ebenhack — Secretary

Iria Jones — Treasurer
Elizabeth Jordan

Tom Wright

Susan Higgins -- Student
Sponsorship Pro
gram Manager
Steven Lowrie -- Webmaster

Circle of Peace International is a voluntary, non-profit organization established to promote access to formal and informal education, greater social understanding, and cultural exchanges through outreach and relationship building between Americans and Ugandans

COPI is a 501(c)(3) certified non-profit organization. All donations go to the Circle of Peace School. There are no administrative fees, and all the services we provide are 100% volunteer.



CIRCLE OF PEACE SCHOOL PASSES RECENT INSPECTION WITH FLYING COLORS

By MaryLove Bbaale

At the beginning of the school year (February) we had a school inspection conducted by the Makindye Division School Committee. Their visit was a follow up from a previous inspection.

In May 2014, they required the school to improve the students' bathroom, office and classroom space, dining shed and play area. When the inspectors came this time they were very impressed by the improvements.

They found that both students and the school compound were very neat; we scored 100%.

Bathroom facilities scored 100% because we have separated the nursery bathroom from the primary bathroom, separated boys from girls, and provided the teachers with their own restroom.

Teachers received 100%. The committee was very pleased with how teachers



MaryLove in her office with a Administrative Assistant

were responding to and treating students. They found that teachers paid attention to students and were very professional, handling each students with care and love.

Our new welcome center, First Impressions, makes visitors feel valued. Our receptionist and staff gave the visitors a warm welcome. We received 100%

The committee liked our playground design. We have filled the play area with sand. All our play equipment is placed in the sand, which prevents students when they fall from getting hurt.

The one problem the committee noted was space. They strongly advised that we start thinking of building new classrooms soon since we have the land available. Expanding the school will bring in students whose parents can afford to pay. We're hoping that COPI can help us with a new building soon.

Overall the committee thanked us for the improvements we had made. Principal and Headmistress MaryLove Bbaale was invited to join the inspection committee and visit other schools. Assisting the committee to advise other schools on how to improve and make their schools better is an honor.

Thanks to COPI and all our supporters. We wouldn't have been successful without you.

Ms. MaryLove Bbaale is Principal and Headmistress at CoPS