

Chicago Action for Jews in the Former Soviet Union

For more than 60 years, Marillyn Tallman has been leading the fight to combat anti-Semitism. In 1945, she helped relocate Holocaust survivors to the United States through her work at the Hillel Foreign Student Service. After a trip to the Soviet Union in 1968, Marillyn joined Chicago Action for Soviet Jewry to help monitor human rights violation against Jews. Since 1972, Highland Park-based Chicago Action has been a vocal advocate for the third largest Jewish community in the world, sponsoring fact-finding missions, linking U.S. synagogues with communities in the former Soviet Union and pressing for legislative action to combat anti-Semitism.



Marillyn Tallman

Ghana Fishing Children Project

One out of four children in Ghana is sold into child labor. The most dangerous job they can do is work on fishing boats. Most of these children don't know how to swim or they become tangled in the fishing nets, with many drowning.



Lori Dillon

The International Office for Migration's Ghana Fishing Children Project rescues, rehabilitates and reunites these trafficked children with their families. Since its inception in 2001, the Project has rescued over 600 children. After a child is rescued, the organization works to find their parents.

Lori Dillon has worked closely with Eric Peasah, Counter Trafficking Field Manager, to support the rescued children and his efforts to save more of the hundreds of trafficked children.

She started a pen pal program where children in the Lake Forest community write to the rescued children, offering friendship and support.

She also has started child trafficking awareness initiatives at the Deerpath Middle School and Lake Forest High School where her daughter Claire is a sophomore. A high school fundraiser is planned to help save more children.

CONGRESSMAN MARK KIRK'S

Leadership Awards

February 2008



Honorable Mention

The nation of Sierra Leone has precious few doctors, and when one is unable to work, hundreds of people are without adequate medical care. Due to failing joints, Olabisi Claudius-Cole, a doctor in Sierra Leone, could no longer serve her community. With no sufficient medical services to treat her, she came to the United States in search of help. Here, she met Dr. Wayne Goldstein, an orthopaedic surgeon at Rush North Shore Medical Center. Dr. Goldstein performed four surgeries for free and helped obtain the necessary artificial hips and knees. Olabisi is now back in her homeland, saving the lives of countless individuals because of the compassion of Dr. Goldstein.



Dr. Wayne Goldstein



Meet 10 very special Americans who represent their communities with distinction.

Dancing for Darfur

The Darfur region in western Sudan has been plagued with ethnic violence since 2003. Nearly a half-million people have been killed to date, with more than 2 million people displaced. New Trier freshman Zack Harris learned about the conflict in Darfur and was determined to help.

As the eighth grade student president at Central School in Glencoe, he organized a "Dance for Darfur," a fundraiser for the Luol Deng Foundation. Named after the Chicago Bulls player from Sudan, the foundation works with the World Food Program in Darfur to assist with food distribution. The "Dance for Darfur" was the first charity dance ever held at the school, and helped raise awareness at the school and in the community. More than \$1,000 was raised, with the total boosted to more than \$3,000 after community donations. Later in the year, Zack and his class raffled off a Luol Deng Jersey, bringing the total amount raised to \$5,000.



Zack Harris

COVE Alliance

In 2003, Uganda-native Hilary Muheezangango was studying for the Catholic priesthood in northern Illinois. While spending time at St. Mary of Vernon Church in Indian Creek, he shared personal stories of living in an area that has seen multiple civil wars and faces a large outbreak of HIV/AIDS. Hearing his story, St. Mary of Vernon parishioners came forward to offer support. In April 2005 the COVE Alliance was formed, a nonprofit organization serving orphaned and vulnerable children in central Uganda. Social services such as shelter, food, health care and education are pivotal components of the organization. Parishioners are actively involved in fundraising as well as mission trips to Kapeeka, Uganda to assist in the construction of the St. Jerome COVE Center, a medical clinic that will benefit the orphans of Kapeeka.



Mary of Vernon Church,
Indian Creek

Fred Outa Foundation

In 2002, the mother and daughter team of Susan Vaickauski and Maryanna Gibbs went to Kenya to volunteer with Fred Outa, a Kenyan-born humanitarian who founded a school to help orphans in the Nairobi slum of Kibera, the largest of its kind in Africa.

After Susan and Maryanna saw the extreme poverty of the more than 100,000 orphans in the slum, they knew they had to take action. AIDS, malaria and dysentery are the primary diseases that plague the community, and without educational opportunities or proper food, the children are stuck in a cycle of poverty.

In 2006, Susan and Maryanna founded the Fred Outa Foundation to raise money to build a girls' high school in Kenya. The foundation helps provide school supplies, food and medicines for the students of Fred Outa's school (Spurgeons Academy).



Maryanna Gibbs and
Susan Vaickauski

International Sharing Ministry

The International Sharing Ministry was created by St. Joseph Parish in 2005 to build an elementary school for the children of Mailisita in Tanzania, Africa. Father Val Laini of St. Joseph Parish is from Moshi, just to the west of Mailisita in Tanzania. Many of the children of Mailisita are orphans who have lost their parents due to AIDS.

Additionally, the organization is building a guesthouse in Moshi which will generate revenue from people traveling to the country for safaris or to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro. This will allow the school to become financially self-sufficient.

To date, more than \$100,000 has been raised and five classrooms at the school have been completed. Parish members travel to the site for mission trip.



St. Joseph Parish, Libertyville

Sharing an Ambulance

Most Latino-Americans in the 10th Congressional District are from only three villages in Mexico – La Luz, Tonatico and San Jose. Many families in North Chicago and Waukegan still have family members there and visit often. However, these communities are incredibly impoverished, lacking the kind of social services that are taken for granted in the United States.

Last year, the Village of Northbrook purchased a new ambulance for the fire department. Instead of scrapping the fully-operational, but older, ambulance, Village President Gene Marks contacted Congressman Kirk's office about donation opportunities. After consulting with his Latino Advisory Board, Miguel Arizmendi of North Chicago suggested that the ambulance go to Tonatico, Mexico, where it will do the most good. The ambulance will be driven to Tonatico this year, where it will benefit thousands of residents in Tonatico and surrounding communities.



Village of Northbrook and
Tonatico Social Club

Arzu Rugs

Arzu means hope in the Afghan language of Dari, and that is exactly what the organization provides to hundreds of women in Afghanistan. The nonprofit group provides sustainable incomes and access to education and health care to women in Afghanistan by sourcing and selling homemade rugs in the United States at above-market prices. At the end of 2006, Arzu had enrolled 235 households, or 2,050 people. Many of the participants are widows without any other sources of income. From literacy programs to eye care, Arzu is empowering the women of Afghanistan after years of oppression by the Taliban.

Arzu is the creation of Connie Duckworth of Lake Forest. After retiring as a partner and managing director at Goldman, Sachs & Co., she founded Arzu to better the lives of Afghan women. She is also an active member of the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council, a bipartisan, public/private partnership created by the presidents of the United States and Afghanistan in 2002.



Connie Duckworth

Sign of the Dove Church

From May 2007 to July 2007, church members installed a water system to catch clean rain-water and store it for local residents in Masaka, Uganda.



Daniel Kaggwa

Fighting Global Climate Change

The evidence that humans are affecting their environment is now irrefutable. As greenhouse gases continue to increase, our world is facing serious climate change risks. In addition to droughts and more severe storms, rising sea levels threaten millions of people throughout the world.

Highland Park is home to one of the leaders in the fight against global warming – Wendy Abrams. In addition to her climate change work with the National Council of Environmental Defense, the Union of Concerned Scientists' National Advisory Board, and NRDC's Action Fund, she also developed and implemented Chicago's "Cool Globes" art and public awareness exhibit along the lakefront. In conjunction with the City, 123 five-foot-tall globes were designed by artists with environmental themes and suggestions to reduce our carbon footprint. To find sponsors, she enlisted the support of some of the world's largest multinational corporations, including Toyota, McDonald's and Pepsi.



Wendy Abrams