



Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Services

Technical Assistance and Development Office
2706 Eton Road
Charlottesville, VA 22903
434.906.4239
mustin3000@yahoo.com
www.thars.org

Christmas 2007

Dear Friends,

On December 4, 2007 the U.S. Ambassador to Burundi, Patricia N. Moller, visited our *Pieces for Peace* quilting group at Kibimba. This quilting group consists of about 50 amazing women. Most the women are victims of sexual violence. Some are war-widows. The women danced and spoke to welcome the Ambassador. Then, in the presence of the Ambassador and her entourage, four women from the group were given quilts as a sign of love and care from other group members.



Ambassador Moller visited our quilting group at Kibimba.



Women who were victims of violence displayed quilts to Ambassador Moller.

Mrs. Moller was much impressed by what the women were doing to complete their healing. In addition to showing quilts, the women also displayed baskets they had made. The Ambassador promised to seek a market for the women's quilts and baskets. She also welcomed a project proposal to help fund quilting groups.

After the visit at the quilting site, Ambassador Moller saw how THARS works with local community leaders to promote peace and reconciliation. At the Communal Headquarters of Giheta a crowd gathered to meet and hear her. She movingly commended THARS' efforts to promote healing, reconciliation and self-help initiatives.

Ambassador Moller's final THARS visit was in Gitega where we are slowly but surely developing the Trauma Healing Training Center and Base of Operations for THARS. She walked on the site as we talked of our vision of healing and reconciliation in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Later, she

sent word she would consider funding a building at the Training Center for about \$12,000. Some of the people here who heard of the ambassador's visit told me that surely God is part of our initiatives.

Overall this has been a mixed year for THARS. The end of funding from our USAID grant has forced us to cut back and restructure operations. Some of the Listening Rooms have closed due to lack of funding. At the same time THARS built a new relationship with the Violence and Community project at the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. And through the generosity of individual donors, construction on the THARS Training Center and Base of Operations in Gitega has continued. The Training Center is only partially completed but has already hosted its first training event this year.

In the coming year THARS will continue construction of the THARS Training Center and Base of Operations at Gitega and provide trauma healing services and training. We will conduct research on violence in Burundi and the African Great Lakes Region and strengthen community involvement in Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Intervention. And we will continue to develop THARS's financial sustainability. Your support has made a tremendous difference during this difficult time of transition. A dollar goes a long way in Africa. A donation at this time would be warmly appreciated and put to good use here.

Checks should be made payable to:

“Sherwood Friends Community Church” and indicate THARS on the memo line. Sent check to 2706 Eton Road, Charlottesville, VA 22903, Attn: THARS.

Thank you for your care and love,



David Niyonzima

P.S. As a small Christmas gift to you, I enclose our new bookmark with a sunset photo of the view from Bujumbura across Lake Tanganyika to the mountains of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In our native language, Kirundi, the front of the bookmark lists the signs of trauma. The reverse lists things you can do to heal trauma. The bookmarks were produced with the support of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities during my fellowship there last summer. They are widely used here in Burundi.