

J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust

GRANTS AWARDED IN 2010

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust is a charitable fund established in the memory of Kirby Simon, a Foreign Service Officer who died in 1995 while serving in Taiwan. The Trust is committed to expanding the opportunities for community service, professional fulfillment and personal well-being of Foreign Service Officers and Specialists and their families. The Trust has been funded with contributions from Kirby Simon's colleagues, friends and relatives and other persons interested in the purposes of the Trust. The trustees are present or former members of the Foreign Service – State Department community and Kirby Simon's parents.

In the Fall of 2009, the Trust once again invited proposals for the support, in 2010, of projects initiated and carried out by Foreign Service personnel or members of their families, or by other U. S. Government employees employed at American diplomatic posts abroad. In response to this invitation, the Trust received 84 proposals from 57 countries. With its modest resources, the Trust was able to provide funding for 58 of these projects, representing 41 countries. Grants ranged from \$890 to \$4,500, for a total of \$146,687.

The following pages describe the projects supported by the Trust in 2010. (Material in quotation marks is taken directly from the grant proposals.)

ALBANIA – TIRANA – Computers, educational toys and English language materials for the Albanian School for the Deaf – a project proposed by Klinton Behaj, Regional Security Office Administrative Assistant, and Shannon Behaj, Consular Officer.

“The Albanian School for the Deaf is the only educational institution where deaf and mute children in Albania are able to study.” This seriously underfunded boarding school, which houses 131 students aged 5 to 18, has no computers, educational books or games or any English language resources. The parents of these children are too poor to send them to international schools outside of Albania, and the school depends on charitable donations and “unreliable government handouts.”

Funds from the Trust are paying for several laptop computers, Internet services, educational toys and games and English dictionaries, enabling the students to gain computer literacy, network with deaf communities in other countries through the Internet and build key skills such as reading and working in a team.

ALBANIA – TIRANA – Basic school supplies for impoverished students – a project proposed by Blerta Picari, Community Liaison Office Assistant.

In the Albanian public primary education system, very few educational materials are provided by the school. Students are required to purchase their own text books as well as school

supplies and uniforms. The target neighborhood, Kinostudio, is a Roma and Egyptian community, one of the poorest and most neglected in Tirana, and the children and their families have been subjected to social exclusion and discrimination. "It is difficult for these children to attend school when their peers make them social outcasts for their lack of school supplies, serviceable clothing and even shoes, which has led to very high illiteracy."

Funds from the Trust provide students with books, and basic school supplies, "allowing them to start and continue to attend school, decreasing drop out and illiteracy rates in minority communities." "Other materials (i.e., clothing, shoes, etc.) are collected through drives at local international schools and the U.S. Embassy CLO offices."

ARGENTINA – CHACO PROVINCE, TOWN OF CASTELLI – Bricks for building a school for orphans – a project proposed by Carolyn Finn, daughter of John Finn, Cultural Affairs Officer.

"Chaco is a very poor province, made poorer by decades of drought." For 20 years, the Community Service Club of the Lincoln American High School has been working with the local people to build and maintain five one-room schoolhouses, repaint and renovate many others and give donations of food, clothing and school supplies. "In 2008, the Community Service Club adopted the Casa Bethel orphanage in Castelli, which houses 45 orphaned or abandoned children and educates a total of 70 local children in a 'provisional' school operating within the orphanage." In 2010 the club started a very ambitious project of building a permanent school to house a primary and a secondary school, much larger and better equipped than the one room schoolhouses built previously, which will not only serve the educational needs of the children at the orphanage but will also provide new opportunities to 600 children in the area who currently have no school to attend.

The grant applicant is a 17-year-old junior at the Lincoln School and an active member of the Community Service Club. Funds from the Trust are being used to buy large bricks to be used in the building of the school.

ARMENIA – YEREVAN – Materials for and improvements to an orphanage for special needs children – a project proposed by Chong Farquhar, spouse of Robert Farquhar, Chief of the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy.

The Mary Izmirlyan's Children's Home was established in 1998 as a kindergarten targeting special needs children, and "in 2003 it was transformed into an orphanage to provide long term care to a broader range of children." It currently houses 100 children, ages 1 to 13, 60% of whom are either mentally or physically disabled. "Operating expenses are funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs, though these funds are barely adequate and shortages of basic needs items are common." "The younger children have had to compete with the older children for use of existing playground equipment and are often left to sit or lie on the ground because the staff-to-child ratio does not allow for individual attention."

The grant applicant volunteers at the orphanage weekly and is recruiting other Embassy members to volunteer their time as well. Funds from the Trust are being used to renovate and

enlarge a sandbox to make it safe for 1-3-year-old children. In addition, the Trust will provide desperately needed cloth diapers and games for children of all ages.

BAHAMAS – NASSAU – A new enclosure for endangered Bahama Parrots at the Ardastra Gardens Zoo – a project proposed by Shawn Kobb, Foreign Service Officer.

The Bahama Parrot, colorful and intelligent, once lived in abundant numbers in the trees on two of the islands of The Bahamas, but is now an endangered species due to the permanent destruction of its natural habitat, vulnerability to feral cats and raccoons and the capture of parrot chicks by the hundreds of thousands each year for sale as exotic pets.

“The Ardastra Gardens Zoo and Conservation Center in Nassau is the only known zoo in the world to have these beautiful parrots on display and is playing a leading role in trying to save this endangered species.” “The zoo receives no funding from the government, relying on ticket sales, goodwill donations and concessions for income.” Funds from the trust are being used to replace the rotting wooden enclosures “to provide happier, healthier living conditions for the birds as well as better exposure of the parrots to the visitors of the zoo.”

BOLIVIA – EL ALTO – Materials for two inexpensive, long-lasting, water sterilization systems in rural Bolivia – a project proposed by L. Michael Wilson, son of U. S. Embassy officer Rodney Smith and Diana Smith of U. S. Military Group, and Diana Smith herself.

“The world’s largest dry plain, the Altiplano, is 11,000 – 15,000 feet above sea level and is home to one quarter of Bolivia’s population.” Clean drinking water is a serious issue in this area. This project not only makes clean drinking water available for two communities but also provides training to Bolivian youth to start a small business doing future installations and maintenance of the water system. The project organizer is an engineering student at Old Dominion University, VA, who will design, build and test the system and then work with Project Luz de Esperanza, a project that rescues and rehabilitates street children, to train several youth on how to build, install and maintain the simple system.

Funds from the Trust are paying for the materials for two complete water sterilization systems.

BURKINA FASO – OUAGADOUGOU – Expansion and renovation of a maternity clinic – a project proposed by Miki Scheidel, spouse of Vice Consul Noah Geesaman, and Maureen Berry, spouse of Regional Security Officer Chris Berry.

“The Nioko 1 Complex started as a secondary school in 1997 and has expanded since then to include a K-12 school for 600 students, an orphanage housing 15 – 25 infants and toddlers, a health center with over 10,000 visits per year and a maternity clinic which delivers 600 babies per year.” The Nioko 1 village of about 14,000 people depends mostly on agricultural and livestock production, has a female illiteracy rate of 22%, an infant mortality rate of 8% and a malnutrition rate of children under age 5 of 35%. The maternity clinic is open for deliveries 24 hours a day, providing pregnancy check-ups, infant vaccinations and weighings on several days during the week and often has up to 90 women squeezed into the waiting room.

Funds from the Trust will “increase the maternity clinic by over a third, doubling the capacity of the delivery room, providing a separate room for vaccinations and consultations, creating a space to hold group training sessions, such as HIV/AIDS awareness, and improving the overall flow and efficient use of the clinic.”

CHAD – N’DJAMENA – French grade school texts for an orphanage of 71 children – a project proposed by Dale Rush, Foreign Service Health Practitioner.

“FAFED Orphanage houses and teaches 71 young children from the age of three months to the age of 18. It comprises dormitories, a kitchen and three classrooms. The orphanage is the main charity of the U.S. Embassy, which gives the orphanage ‘Toys for Tots’, visits weekly, and privately contributes baby formula, fuel for the generator and myriad other things.” The need is great and the orphanage enjoys little local support. “It has three very primitive classrooms but almost no books.”

Funds from the Trust will buy sturdy, basic textbooks in French, which will be used for many years to come.

CHINA – NANPING CITY – High speed Internet access and low-cost netbook computers for the Zhengsheng Orphanage and School – a project proposed by Matthew Dolbow, Spokesman and Deputy for Public Affairs, U. S. Consulate General Hong Kong.

The Zhengsheng Orphanage and School, located in the mountains of Fujian Province, is a four-hour drive from the nearest airport. “Despite the fact that the 120 students, ages 6 to 16, who live there, have very little, both materially and in terms of parental love, they are generous and kind to each other, well behaved and very focused on education.” The school has a rudimentary computer lab but “if the students want to go on-line, they have to hike down to the nearby town across dangerous railroad tracks to use the computers at a dirty internet café, which is not an appropriate place for young people.”

Funds from the Trust will pay for the wires to be installed to the nearest access point for DSL and for several low cost netbook computers for the children to share in the computer lab.

COSTA RICA – SAN JOSE – An access ramp, a water line for a hydroponic plant production area, and a computer provided to a day care center for learning-disabled adults – a project proposed by William R. Wisell, U. S. Consulate San Juan.

The Integrated Care Center for Incapacitated Adults (CAIPAD) is a day care center for learning-disabled adults who need constant supervision, allowing their families to work. Clients of the center need instruction in self-care, job and social skills. The Government of Costa Rica provides very limited support to this center, and fund-raising has been difficult. A hydroponic plant production area was previously donated by the Tennis Club of San Jose, and clients have received off-site training in hydroponic plant production, but the area is inaccessible because of an unsafe ramp, and there is no water supply line running to the area.

Funds from the Trust will provide for the rebuilding of the ramp, the installation of a water line to the hydroponic plant area and a new computer needed for administrative and fund-raising purposes.

CROATIA – PRIMANTURA – A reading device for a camp for the blind – a project proposed by Foreign Service Officers Sean Cely, Daniel Meges, Todd Bullock and Brian Manning and Diplomatic Security Special Agent Matthew Kelley.

Croatia is a country in which the blind and near-blind do not have the same opportunities for education as their sighted counterparts. The Primantura Camp for the Blind, owned and operated by the Croatian Association of the Blind, plays host to over 1,200 persons with vision problems each year; summers are devoted to a free camp program for vision-impaired youth. At the top of the camp's wish list is "*MagniLink*", a device that attaches to a computer and displays on a screen a magnified version of print materials, opening up a new world of information. This device increases the camp's capacity to inspire near-blind children to want to learn and is available throughout the year to enhance the educational and leisure activities of the near-blind patrons.

The grant applicants were able to negotiate a warranty and a reduced price for the device, and funds from the Trust enabled them to make the acquisition.

ECUADOR – GUAYAQUIL – Equipment and material assistance for a domestic violence shelter – a project proposed by Jennifer Young, Vice Consul, U. S. Consulate General.

This project aims to assist the Hogar del Nazaret, a women's and family shelter for victims of domestic violence, to improve its capacity "to provide for the needs of the families staying there, to improve the level of comfort and livability in the living quarters of families and to organize activities to make the children's time at the shelter more enjoyable and fulfilling." The grant applicant, along with other volunteers from Consulate, has already organized clothing and toy drives, English lessons and arts and crafts for the children and plans to return on a bimonthly basis to continue these efforts.

Funds from the Trust are being used to obtain much-needed items such as a computer and printer for office staff, air conditioners, kitchen supplies, chests of drawers and shelves, an industrial freezer and school uniforms and shoes for the children.

EGYPT – MANSHEYA, CAIRO – Basic clinic equipment and supplies for the health unit of a new Community Center – a project proposed by Kevin Kilpatrick, Regional Medical Officer with the U. S. Department of State.

In "garbage city", the zabbaleen district in Mansheya, on Cairo's eastern edge, adults and children alike spend their days collecting garbage and sorting it for sale or recycling. They are "constantly exposed to diseases, used syringes, household waste and broken glass", and there is "constant economic pressure for the children to work rather than attend school." In 2003, a Catholic priest, Father Luciano Verducci, established two Community Centers in this area where the children could study and receive very basic healthcare. In 2011, because of Fr. Luciano's

continuing efforts, a new center will open with a dedicated space for healthcare of the students.

Funds from the Trust will provide basic equipment, supplies and medicines for the clinic. The grant applicant intends to work at the clinic as needed and to recruit other medical volunteers.

EL SALVADOR – SAN SALVADOR – Equipment for the laundry room and kitchen at a foster home for abused children – a project proposed by Cristina Selva, Community Liaison Officer.

“Hogares Providencia Foundation Home is a non-profit organization that provides a home to about thirty boys who have been victims of abandonment, intra-family violence and sexual abuse.” In one of the world’s most violent countries, these at risk children would become “easy prey for the youth and adult gangs dedicated to criminal activities, drug trafficking and other crimes”, were it not for the nurturing and supportive home environment at Hogares Providencia.

Funds from the Trust are providing kitchen and laundry equipment, including two washing machines, one dryer, supplies for the laundry room, and small appliances for the kitchen. These items enable the home to provide the children with more adequate food intake, clean clothes, and training in the care of their clothing and appearance, thus reinforcing their self esteem and fostering “social skills and values the children have not learned from their parents.”

EL SALVADOR – SAN SALVADOR – Photography classes for underprivileged children and youth – a project proposed by Veronica Maria Vasquez-Cuerno, Cultural Assistant at the Public Affairs Office, U. S. Embassy.

In cooperation with Don Bosco University and Flickr El Salvador, the Salvadoran photography association, photography workshops are offered to 40 “at risk” children, ages 8 to 15, from Soyapango, one of the most violent areas of San Salvador. This project teaches the children the basics of photography, empowers them with confidence, self-esteem and hope, and contributes to their general well being. The best pictures are displayed at an exhibit at the University and posted on the Flickr El Salvador web site, “sharing the vision and voices of the children.”

Funds from the Trust are used to purchase cameras and memory cards and help with the cost of transportation.

EL SALVADOR – SANTA TELCA – Purchase of a van to transport children of an orphanage – a project proposed by Wendy Cole, spouse of Michael Cole, Chief of American Citizen Services, U.S. Embassy.

“Mi Casa International is a non-profit organization created to seek and serve abandoned, orphaned, and abused children.” The orphanage receives regular monetary donations from various sources, but these donations have been barely adequate to provide minimal clothing and school supplies. With no money available for transportation, the 15 children, ages 3 to 17, walk to school accompanied by staff members, but otherwise rarely leave the orphanage. The

grant applicant had occasionally taken the children out as a group for recreational activities in her own van, but was concerned that when she left the post, there would be no way for this to happen.

Funds from the Trust help with the purchase of a used van, “so that the children can continue to take advantage of the many stimulating and educational activities that El Salvador has to offer.”

THE GAMBIA – KANFING – Materials to build a stage for the Ebuja Theater – a project proposed by Emily Eller, Community Liaison Officer.

“The Gambia has a diversified, rich and unique culture, but, unlike its African neighbors, it has failed to harness traditional music, dance, masquerades, storytelling and rituals to make a meaningful contribution to economic or social development or tourism.” The Ebuja Performing Arts Association, a NGO established in 2003, has been raising money to build an indoor/outdoor theater which will enhance the capacity for social and cultural development, entertainment and tourism. Directly or indirectly, the theatrical activity will also spread educational and public health information on malaria and HIV/AIDs to rural areas through storytelling and dance, promote personal expression in a country that has struggled with its human rights in the area of freedom of speech, bring together a poor community energized by hope, and provide opportunities for youth to be trained for future employment in the tourism and entertainment fields.

Funds from the Trust will help to pay for materials to build a stage for the theater.

GEORGIA – TBILISI – Prosthetics for low limb amputees – a project proposed by Marilyn Prekup, Foreign Service Health Practitioner, Maya Gelovany, Nurse, U. S. Embassy, Levan Kiknavelidze, Physician, U. S. Embassy and Marika Kalmakhelidze, Public Relations Manager for the Georgian Foundation for Prosthetic Orthopedic Rehabilitation (GEFPOR).

A multidisciplinary team will work to restore mobility for 25 low limb amputees at the GEFPOR. This team will address the individuals’ functional, emotional, psychological and social needs; look for ways to increase public awareness about amputees’ problems; look for ways to integrate the amputees back into society: draw attention of the Georgian Government on the presence of the handicapped people in the country and advocate for their needs and rights.

Trust funds will pay for the appropriate orthopedic prosthesis.

INDIA – NEW DELHI – Screening for and treatment of anemia at a school for girls – a project proposed by Chuck Wright, Regional Medical Officer.

“The rate of anemia in India is very high and leads to poor grades, early school dropout, lack of productivity, early marriage, and early pregnancy with poor fetal outcome.” This spiral of anemia – leading to poor growth, performance and productivity and eventually to school failure, lack of education and dependency – can be stopped with early intervention and nutritional support. The Kasturbha Balika Vidhyalya School, located in the poor section of New

Delhi, is a school of 750 girls, ages 11-19, one third of whom live on campus. The Adolescent Anemia Project is using this school “to attempt to stop the disease and serve as a model for other schools in the area. “

The Trust is providing funding for screening blood tests, treatment for the anemic girls with iron tablets and anti-parasite medications, and monitoring their progress over a school year.

INDIA – NEW DELHI – Renovation of a classroom for a youth empowerment and learning center – a project proposed by Wesley Hamilton, a sophomore at the American Embassy School and son of Ralph Hamilton, State Department Financial Officer.

“Manzil is a non-profit organization providing a community center and resources [enabling] local youth from low income backgrounds to learn, teach, be creative and see the world in new ways.” It is expanding and needs to have a room fixed up for English and computer classes. Wesley Hamilton’s Eagle Scout Project will “paint the room, add electrical outlets with Uninterrupted Power supplies and set up computer desks.”

Trust funds will pay for equipment and materials to fix up the new classroom.

JAMAICA – KINGSTON – Books and educational supplies for the Jamaica Library Service with a special focus on resources for children with special needs – a project proposed by Victoria Nibarger, and Amy Unander Rule, Foreign Service Officers.

“According to Rotary International, literacy is the cornerstone of sustainable development” in developing countries like Jamaica. “The vast majority of Jamaican children do not enter Grade 1 as emergent readers. A significant cause of the problem is the severe deficiency in appropriate reading material for the early childhood age group and for children with special needs.” This project provides books and educational materials to the Jamaican public library system, and the organizers also plan to host “Kingston Reads!” -- a festive special event “at the Kingston Public Library that will attract the public by having some famous athletes and entertainers at the event. Future sessions will give Embassy personnel the opportunity to volunteer their time in reading to children.”

Funds from the Trust provide for the purchase of reading materials.

KYRGYZSTAN – BISHKEK – Basic health and safety-related materials for infant orphans in the state-run children’s orphanage, “Detski Dom” – a project proposed by Danielle Cahill, spouse of Sean Cahill, Information Service Center, U. S. Embassy.

The state-run orphanage, Detski-Dom, houses nearly 150 infant orphans, many who have special needs and are waiting to be placed internationally should the current ban on international adoptions be lifted. “The orphanage is over-crowded and undersupplied”, with infants sleeping in cribs with no mattresses, “wrapped in rags for lack of diapers, no protective covering to protect their one blanket from becoming soiled”, and no baby baths for bathing.

The grant applicant is working with an NGO, Uplift-Aufwind, to improve the living conditions for these children, and funds from the Trust will be used to purchase mattresses, cloth diapers, plastic coverings for the diapers, activity blankets and a chair for the nursery where volunteers can sit to hold the infants. "It is hoped that by providing a more inviting environment more volunteers can be attracted to participate in caring for the children."

LIBERIA – MONROVIA – Supplies for two boarding schools for the deaf – a project proposed by Dinah Zeltser, Democracy and Governance Officer at USAID/Liberia, and Isaac Jefferson, Financial Assistant at the U. S. Embassy.

Very few efforts to include deaf people in Liberian society are taking place. After 15 years of civil war and the resulting destruction of most infrastructure, the Liberian education system has been slow to recover. As boarding schools for 40 students, "the Monrovia and Grand Bassa Schools for the Deaf are the only schools of their kind in Liberia." Their goal is to provide a "foundation for the future of the deaf children of Liberia" with early intervention and integration into mainstream society, but they lack the most basic tools and supplies.

Funds from the Trust will provide mattresses, chairs, blackboards, books and various educational materials for deaf instruction for these two schools.

LITHUANIA – VILNIUS – A field trip to cultural and educational events for residents of a children's home – a project proposed by William David Bobo, Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Mission.

The Alytus Children's Home, which houses over 150 children between the ages of 4 and 18, is located in a small town two hours from Vilnius, the country's capitol. With Lithuania celebrating a millennium of history, Vilnius continues to host programs in arts, culture and history. Normal funding for the Home meets the basic nutritional, physical and educational needs of the children, but finding funding for field trips to cultural events has been difficult.

Over the past several years, the Trust has enabled disadvantaged children from this and other children's homes to travel to Vilnius for cultural and recreational programs, community events and festivals. These trips have not only benefited the children but have also enabled Embassy volunteers serving as chaperones – and their families – to practice their Lithuanian language skills while participating in greater community outreach.

MADAGASCAR – ANTANANARIVO – Funding to upgrade the kitchen of an orphanage – a project proposed by Françoise Davenport, spouse of Leif Davenport, Associate Peace Corps Director, Laura Miller, spouse of Matthew Miller, U. S. Embassy Financial Management Officer, and Tammy Young, Foreign Service Health Practitioner.

The Sisters of Charity Orphanage not only houses 90 children under age 5, but also caters to the poorest of poor families in the neighborhood by providing a day care facility for children whose families live in the streets and an emergency relief service providing food, bedding, clothing, and assistance with reconstruction of damaged homes; dispensing medication to the poor; providing school fees for over 60 children; helping over 600 people with hospital and clinic fees;

and preparing meals for those who have nothing to eat (approximately 46,000 meals from 2006 – 2008).

The kitchen stove consists of three wood-burning cook tops, and because of poor ventilation, the room fills up with smoke, causing the cooks to have to cook the remainder of the meals outside. “Kitchen staff sits outside on the steps using wooden bowls for cutting boards when cutting vegetables and fruits, and bags of food are piled on the damp floor, accessible to rodents and insects.”

Funds from the Trust are being used to upgrade the kitchen.

MEXICO – CIUDAD JUAREZ – Playground and green space for orphans – a project proposed by Josefina Dominguez and Catalina Acuna, Foreign Service Nationals, and Sonnet Frisbie and Marlene Phillips, Foreign Service Officers, U. S. Consulate.

In this city of 2 million people, the epicenter of the raging war between rival drug cartels, 2600 murders occurred in 2009. Casa Hogar Santa Maria is an orphanage which focuses on serving the most destitute of the city’s orphans, its street children, who are heavily recruited by the drug cartels. This orphanage, a safe haven for 40 – 60 children, struggles to provide for the basic needs of these children and has been trying to “find the means to transform a brown, dusty piece of dirt behind their building into a safe and comfortable area where the children can play outside year round.”

Using funds from the Trust to purchase “sturdy playground equipment” and landscaping materials, the “U. S. Consulate community will work together to assemble the new equipment, plant climate-appropriate plants and decorations and generally beautify the area.”

MEXICO – MERIDA – Addressing educational, medical and basic needs of 30 children at a non-profit shelter – a project proposed by Maureen A. Smith, Foreign Service Officer.

Amor y Vida is a non-profit shelter providing a safe and nurturing environment for 30 children who have been abandoned, abused and / or neglected by their parents. These children suffer from mental or physical handicaps, malnutrition and family violence. Although the goal is to get the children adopted into new families, “in practice many of the children wind up staying several years or until they reach the age of legal independence.” The children attend public schools and are given a chance to live a normal child’s existence. The grant applicant has been a volunteer at the home, teaching English, helping with homework and leading the children in stretching and exercising – enhancing gross motor skills and coordination – and has recruited other volunteers from the Consulate to become mentors to the children.

Funds from the Trust are being used for medical needs of the children, house repairs, household and school supplies, and enrichment activities.

MEXICO – MERIDA – Printing and lamination of guide books for development of ecotourism – a project proposed by Lorena Ulloa, spouse of Gregory Segas, Principal Officer U. S. Consulate.

“Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatan (PPY) is a non-profit organization that has been working for 20 years to preserve the environment of the Yucatan Peninsula’s protected areas.” In order to offer local communities a sustainable livelihood, part of PPY’s efforts to protect the environment has centered on developing sustainable ecotourism. In Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, the largest tropical forest of Mexico, PPY has conducted a training course for 14 young people from the community who will offer their services as bilingual naturalist guides for visitors to the nature trails and archeological sites. “The guides have identified a need for basic equipment, such as bird and plant guides, to help tourists identify the many species of birds, animals, and plants, but are not yet generating enough income to pay for them.” Funds from the Trust are making the printing and lamination of these guides possible.

MEXICO – TIJUANA – Funding for the construction of a pantry at a shelter for children of prisoners – a project proposed by Vice Consuls Mary Vargas and Susan Keyack.

Casa Hogar Vida Joven was established in 1991 to address the needs of spouses and children of inmates of Tijuana’s La Mesa prison. These family members had previously been allowed to live within the prison walls, but when the authorities began to expel prisoners’ relatives, they were forced to assimilate to life on the streets of Tijuana. In 2002, when prison reform finalized the expulsion of prisoners’ family members, Casa Hogar Vida Joven was forced to rapidly expand from providing meals and assistance to families of prisoners to becoming a full-fledged shelter facility for children whose parents are both incarcerated or who have one parent in prison while the other struggles to begin a new life. The center currently houses 35 children in a clean and safe space, providing them with food, tutoring, recreational activities, psychological treatment, and access to health care in a faith- and community service-oriented environment.

However, the current food storage area is hazardous and inadequate, with unsecured shelving that has resulted in damage to the food items and injuries to the staff. Funds from the Trust are paying for the reconstruction of this area.

MEXICO – ZAPOPAN – A system of surveillance cameras and anti-vandalism domes for an orphanage – a project proposed by Vice Consuls Barbara Szczepaniak, Jamie O’Mealia and Andre Cadieux and Consular Vice Clerks Alfa Cecena and Monica Maciel

Casa Hogar Nacidos de Triunfar is a privately owned and operated orphanage in Zapopan, Mexico, and is home to 150 children, most between the ages of 4 months and 12 years old. These children have been placed by social services after severe abuse and neglect. The facility is new and spacious, paid for by U.S.-based corporate donors and a few wealthy Mexican philanthropists; however the lack of operating funds does not allow for adequate staffing. With only 10 caregivers to supervise 150 children in a 24 hour period, including only 3 caregivers during the overnight shift, this inadequate staffing “has led to safety breaches, with young children allowed to dangerously wander throughout the facility with minimal supervision, leaving them at risk for serious bodily injury.”

Funds from the Trust will provide for the installation of a camera based security system, “allowing for improved supervision of the children and their visiting parents and monitoring of

the activities outside the orphanage, which is located in a dangerous area, isolated from the main roads and frequented by drug users.” The grant applicants “will develop this project in the context of their on-going and active volunteer participation at the orphanage.”

MOLDOVA – CHISINAU – Funding to save the Girl’s Wrestling Program at High School of Sport – a project proposed by Nick Pietrowicz, Regional Security Officer.

“The problems with poverty, trafficking in persons, abandoned children and similar social ills in Moldova are well documented.” Moldova is the poorest of the former Soviet republics, struggling to develop a post-Communist educational system which fosters growth of boys and girls equally. The Sport High School is open to youth across Moldova who show aptitude for athletics. The Government of Moldova provides room, board and classroom education and coaching, but “antiquated notions of equality have lead to girls’ sports being funded as an afterthought to the activities of boys.” In spite of this, over the last eight years, the Girls’ Wrestling Program has offered 20 girls “an empowering alternative to the norm, allowing them to express and improve themselves in a constructive, healthy manner, and has even developed a number of European Champion level wrestlers.”

“Many of these girls come from impoverished families” who have been unable to purchase the required equipment, which the school does not provide. They have had to cope with equipment cast off from the boys’ program and a training room that is in total disrepair. Funds from the Trust will provide for “repairs of the training room, equipment such as wrestling shoes, headgear and singlets, and a laptop computer so that the girls’ training records, requests for support and other administrative files can be maintained in a modern, orderly fashion.”

MOLDOVA – CHISINAU – Rehabilitation equipment for a day-care center for handicapped children – a project proposed by Jonathan Kirkpatrick, U.S. Department of State Foreign Service Specialist.

“One of the poorest nations in Europe, Moldova was incorporated into the Soviet Union at the end of World War II. During this period, the disabled were overlooked by the government and were relegated to the fringes of society. Today, through the efforts of foreign governments and international aid groups, local government institutions are now aware of the need to provide a caring and socially dignified environment for use by the physically handicapped.” The Renastere day-care center for handicapped children in Chisinau was initially funded through many different sources, and now the local government is ready to aid the center in expanding to a new location in the city. In operation since 2007, Renastere is a second home for handicapped children (ages 7-16), where they make friends through interaction with other children with similar deformation – cerebral palsy – and raise their interest in an independent life.

Funds from the Trust will help the new facility reach its full potential and enhance the infrastructure of the current center by paying for a computer, a photo copier, one cross trainer and one treadmill. These items will play a significant role in strengthening the physical

condition of the children and in raising awareness of the need for support through an informational brochure that will be printed and distributed.

MOLDOVA – CHISINAU – Two washing machines and two vacuum cleaners for a special needs day care and pre-school – a project proposed by Natalya Sloan, spouse of Information Management Specialist Kevin Sloan.

“Day care and pre-school number 74 serves the needs of children who have physical and mental disabilities such as autism, Downs Syndrome, epilepsy, or cerebral palsy.” There are 50 children, ages 3 to 8 in the center, the majority of whom come from single parent homes with working mothers. The center is closed on weekends but the children attend school on weekdays, with some allowed to stay overnight. The government has paid the salaries of staff and the utilities, plus a very small amount toward food, but it would like to shut the school down to save money. The school is trying to stay afloat by relying on donations and sponsors, but the burden of maintaining the old but functional building falls on the staff and parents. Many of the children have “problems with bed wetting, and, because the school cannot afford disposable diapers, staff is spending hours washing soiled bed linens by hand.”

Funds from the Trust will make it possible to purchase two washing machines and two vacuum cleaners, “greatly improving the sanitation situation and freeing up the school staff to spend more time with the children.”

MOZAMBIQUE – MAPUTO – Children’s books for mobile libraries in disadvantaged neighborhoods – a project proposed by Mary Jo Amani, wife of Todd Amani, USAID Mission Director.

The Polana Canico Neighborhood Lending Library is part of a wider project by Books for Kids Africa to address literacy and the critical lack of books and opportunities for children to read for pleasure. The plan is to create a mobile library that can travel to disadvantaged neighborhoods. Books in Portuguese will be selected to spark the interest of children and adults with limited reading abilities. Rotaract, a youth branch of the local Rotary Club, is volunteering to offer story time to the children and an opportunity for the children to select books from the mobile library and read on their own.

Funds from the Trust are being used to purchase high quality books and book bags for the mobile lending library.

NIGERIA – LAGOS – Bed nets for all cribs and beds at two orphanages – a project proposed by the Lagos Community Service Club including Jan Flattum-Riemers, Regional Medical Officer, Olesuen Kuteji, Consulate Nurse, and Dr. Andrea Haskins, spouse of Jason Haskins, General Services Officer at Consulate Lagos.

Two orphanages, Home for Motherless Children, with 100 children, and Home for Handicapped Children, with 96 children, in Lagos will receive “pretreated bed nets to decrease the transmission of life threatening malaria in the children, especially the babies and children who are not able to even brush off the mosquitoes due to their age or disabilities.” Many of these

“children are suffering with active cases of malaria or are recovering from active malaria” and suffer from “severe anemia due to a lack of meat and dark green vegetables or liquid iron drops. The bed nets will prevent malaria, thereby preventing the subsequent severe anemia and helping the children to stay healthy.” Grant applicants will donate their time to install the bed nets.

Funds from the Trust will be used to purchase the bed nets and brackets to connect the nets to the ceilings.

PAKISTAN – ISLAMABAD – Computers and recreational equipment for a group home – a project proposed by Janice Forman, Office Management Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Mission, and Katherine Mortensen, Assistant General Services Officer, U.S. Embassy.

The Edhi Home in Islamabad, Pakistan, a residential facility providing shelter to about 250 of Pakistan’s poorest citizens – widows, Afghan refugee families, the destitute, orphans, and mentally and physically disabled persons – is run by the Edhi Foundation, which relies on donations to run operations and provides a range of emergency and relief services throughout Pakistan. The Edhi Home is divided into residential, storage, educational and recreational space, with women and children on one side and men and boys over age 12 living separately. The home provides vocational skills, making it possible for those who can leave to earn a living and “making life bearable to those who will never be able to leave due to mental and physical disabilities.”

Funds from the Trust will be used to purchase two computers and printers and English language software, one for the women’s side and one for the men; to improve educational opportunities; and to refurbish the playground equipment and upgrade the sports equipment inventory to improve recreational opportunities for all of the residents.

PAKISTAN – NORTHWEST FRONTIER PROVINCE – Computer, books and multi-media tools for a teacher resource center at a secondary school – a project proposed by J. William Wade, Public Diplomacy Officer, U. S. Consulate General, Peshawar.

Ravaged by fighting between Taliban and Pakistani troops and having to compete with well-financed extreme religious madrassas, the Khushal secondary school in Pakistan’s Swat Valley struggles to counter hateful ideology through a moderate curriculum aimed at promoting tolerance and preparing its students for meaningful employment. “Although Khushal’s teachers are dedicated to shaping objective, capable minds, their commitment far outweighs their meager resources.” The teachers also struggle from a lack of appropriate training. “Technology, training and the proper teacher-based text books will help address these two problems and tip the scales in favor of Khushal’s faculty.”

The applicant will use funds from the Trust to “stock the teachers’ resource center with books, a computer, and multi-media tools”, and he will work closely with the school’s director “to design lesson plans to instruct the teachers on the effective use of the materials.”

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES – SALFIT – Equipment for a sports club – a project proposed by Christopher Sandrolini, U. S. Consulate General Jerusalem.

“The West Bank – which has been occupied by Israeli military forces since 1967 – has been impoverished and subject to frequent unrest.” This has created “great stress and psychological problems for Palestinians, especially among young people (over half the population is below 19 years old).” The “few community institutions that exist, such as cultural and artistic entities, youth centers and sports or recreational facilities, are often sparsely furnished with leaking roofs, antiquated equipment, and so on.”

The Salfit Sports, Cultural, and Social Club, established in 1973, is an important institution of civil society in Salfit, a town one hour north of Ramallah, which serves as a gathering place for people across the province. The club’s mission is “to care for Palestinian youth and to develop their athletic abilities while reinforcing their sense of civic and national pride.” The club also helps the youth “to participate in national tournaments in table tennis and elementary school soccer.”

Funds from the Trust will help the club obtain the equipment and supplies it needs for these tournaments.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA – PORT MORESBY – Materials and supplies for a shelter and training center for disabled adults and children – a project proposed by Helena U. Joyce, Community Liaison Officer.

“People with disabilities are frequently marginalized in Papua New Guinean culture.” Cheshire Homes is the only organization in Port Moresby that works to combat the stigma currently associated with disabilities and helps people with disabilities become productive members of society. A privately funded, not-for-profit organization that regularly does not have sufficient funds to maintain the basic needs of its residents and students, Cheshire Homes not only provides 24 hour care for 22 people, but also runs an elementary school on its property for children with disabilities who live in the Port Moresby community.

Supporting the purchase of materials and supplies, funds from the Trust are making it possible for Cheshire Homes “to provide programs in music therapy and in sports such as volley ball, badminton and table tennis.” Funds from the Trust are also paying to purchase a much needed washing machine, which will not only “free up staff’s time from hand washing laundry but will also be used as a teaching tool, giving residents skills that can make them feel useful, capable and possibly translate into employment opportunities in the hotel industry or private homes.”

PHILIPPINES – QUEZON CITY – Audio visual equipment, library resource materials, and literacy skills training for a high school – a project proposed by Richard W. Nelson, Counselor for Public Affairs, and Maria Theresa Sula, Commercial Assistant, U.S. Foreign Commercial Service.

Masambong High School in Quezon City is a national secondary school with a population of 1200 students. “It was submerged in floodwater during Typhoon Ondoy in November 2009,

resulting in the destruction of much of the library materials and equipment needed by the students.” Typically public school libraries have not been given top priority when it comes to allocating government budget resources.

In addition to using funds from the Trust to provide audio visual equipment and library materials, Embassy employees who are equipped with professional development skills in key areas – communication, journalism, press, arts, culture, research, information technology, emerging social media networking, and business and office management – have offered a six-month workshop on skills training and a future career workshop.

PORTUGAL – CASCAIS – Funding of blacksmith/farrier services for a horseback riding program for the disabled – a project proposed by Richard T. Reiter, Counselor for Political and Economic Affairs, and Rita Zanin-Carlson, spouse of Lt. Col Karn Carlson, USAF, of the Embassy’s Office of Defense Cooperation.

“The Riding for the Disabled Association is a non-profit organization founded in 1989 that develops the mental and physical capabilities of handicapped children and adults through horse-riding lessons.” Located on the premises of the Dom Carlos I Royal Riding Club in Cascais, Portugal, which generously provides a covered ring, stables and a small office, the goal of the Association is to provide its 82 enrollees with riding therapy, aka “hippotherapy”, a specialized form of physical therapy in which a horse is used as a treatment tool.

Funds from the Trust are paying for the services of a professional blacksmith/farrier, to care for the horses’ hooves and shoes for one year, an essential item in the Association’s budget which cannot be met by volunteers.

ROMANIA – BUCHAREST – An education center at an animal shelter – a project proposed by Priscilla Fox, Office Management Specialist, Regional Security Office, U. S. Embassy.

Romania is famous for its large stray dog population, estimated by local media to be between 30,000 and 200,000, and officials have tried to solve the problem through “shockingly inhumane ways.” The Nature – A Heritage for the Future is a non-profit organization that cares for stray animals and is dedicated to reducing the stray dog population through humane solutions such as trap-neuter-return (TNR) campaigns and by educating Romanians, especially children, to respect animal rights and accept civic responsibility for their surroundings. Since 2003, *The Nature* has built kennels to house 180 dogs and has pursued funding to build an all-inclusive shelter, with a vet clinic, a grooming room, a reception area, an educational center, a kitchen for food preparation, a maintenance room, guardroom, an office and an atrium, but due to the economic turndown has been forced to seek funding for one room at a time.

Funds from the Trust will make it possible to complete the educational center, which is used to welcome visitors to the shelter, teach them about the problem of stray dogs, and host education classes for children, teaching them how to respect animals and coexist with them in a caring, responsible way.

RWANDA – KIGALI – Sewing, cooking, gardening, and English language supplies for a vocational school for orphans of the genocide and HIV/AIDS – a project proposed by Jennifer Foltz, Political Officer.

According to UNICEF, half of the population of Rwanda is under the age of 18 and there are approximately 860,000 orphans, 100,000 who live in child-headed households. There is however, “strong commitment and political will on the part of the government to promote the rights of all citizens, especially vulnerable women and children, and the country has made great strides in economic growth, education and health.” Esther’s Aid is an NGO based in the United States that supports a small vocational training school for orphans of the genocide and HIV/AIDS. This program is supported through donations and provides free vocational training in sewing, catering and English language, empowering over 100 students each year to find good jobs.

Funds from the Trust provide supplementary support for the equipment and supplies that enrich the sewing, catering and English language instruction.

RWANDA- KIGALI – Accessible, clean water sources for an impoverished village and for a primary school – a project proposed by Karl Deringer, spouse of Anne Casper, Deputy Chief of Mission.

The efforts to provide the most basic necessities and foster sustainable development for 143 impoverished people in Bwiza village, located on the outskirts of Kigali, have included raising money to buy goats to raise and sell, teaching residents how to terrace their land to plant food, planting fruit bearing trees, getting donations of cows and tools, and ensuring that the children have what they need to go to school. The grant applicant, “after seeing that villagers must walk between 40 minutes and 2 hours down a rocky terrain to obtain water, helped them to build rain catchment systems on the few huts that have metal roofs, but they do not provide enough water for even the basic needs of the entire village.”

Funds from the Trust are being used to build two large catchment systems on the nearby Gasabo Primary School, providing sufficient water supplies for both the village and the school.

RWANDA – NGOMA DISTRICT in the Eastern Province – School fees and support materials for orphans – a project proposed by Javier Pareja, Financial Management Officer, U. S. Embassy Kigali.

There are hundreds of thousands of orphans in Rwanda. The government provides free education for all from grades one to nine, but students wishing to continue to secondary school, grades 9 to 12, must pay tuition. Upper secondary school provides students with practical vocational training and allows them to compete for scholarships at state universities, greatly increasing their opportunities and contributing to the economy of their families and communities. “This project targets 22 specific orphans who are within one year of completing secondary school and who have grades indicating academic success, with emphasis on orphans who are supporting younger siblings.”

Funds from the Trust are being used to pay for the tuition and some basic supplies for these 22 students.

SOUTH AFRICA – CAPE TOWN – Monthly parties for orphanages – a project proposed by Alberta Mayberry, Foreign Service Officer, Anthony Velazquez, FBI Special Agent, Assistant Legal Attache’, and Mia Shrader, spouse of Sung Mi Shrader, Community Liaison Officer.

With an estimated 2.5 million orphans, about half due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, “South Africa is facing a challenge of increasing numbers of orphaned children, abandoned babies, worrying levels of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children.” 100 Hands, a volunteer group comprised of members from the U.S. Consulate General and the local Cape Town community, chose the South African Children’s Home (SACH) as the first facility it would support. Since 2008, 100 Hands has conducted a monthly program at which it engages the children in sports, games, talent shows, guest speakers, a special meal of pizza, hot dogs, hamburgers, and soft drinks, and a birthday celebration with cake and ice cream.

Now, because there are so many orphanages in the Cape Town vicinity, 100 Hands is expanding these monthly events to two more orphanages. Corporate and individual donations continue to be solicited but funding from the Trust will ensure the continuation of these special events for the next year.

SOUTH KOREA – ANSEONG – Transportation and teaching materials for volunteers teaching English to North Korean refugees and cultural excursions for students – a project proposed by Fonta Gilliam, Political Officer, and Teresa Ferguson, Vice Consul, both from the U. S. Embassy, Seoul.

Of the 18,000 North Korean who have risked their lives and made it to South Korea, the majority left the North “to escape famine and political repression”, and many “experienced sexual and/or economic exploitation en route to freedom.” Virtually all lack the necessary skills to successfully integrate into South Korea’s highly competitive educational system. The Hangeore School was established in 2006 by the South Korean government to address the social and educational alienation of North Korean refugee students. Upon the request of the school, Foreign Service Officers developed the Embassy English Program (EEP), an unofficial, volunteer English language program which provides English mentors to teach English language classes and facilitate American cultural events for students from the Hangeore Middle and High Schools. “The cost of teaching materials and transportation to the schools, 2 hours outside of Seoul, has been a deterrent for volunteers.”

Funds from the Trust will decrease the financial burden for the volunteers, so as to ensure the sustainability of the program.

SRI LANKA – COLOMBO – Used Embassy computer hardware and monthly English conversation classes for an orphanage – a project proposed by Claire Breedlove, Vice Consul, Dominic “Doc” Meyer, Information Management Specialist, and Roy Srinivasan, Human Resource Officer, U. S. Embassy.

The Parakrama Home for Boys is a private orphanage that houses 50 boys between the ages of 5 and 16. A group of Entry Level Officers from Embassy Colombo visited the Boy's Home as part of the U. S. Marine Corps Detachment's Toys for Tots program and "discovered that the computer room at the school was totally outdated and in need of drastic upgrade." Because helping the boys to learn English is a top priority, the Embassy volunteers initiated monthly English language training classes and obtained a used computer from the Embassy. The grant applicants installed a new hard drive and set up a network with four donated monitors, keyboards and mice. This allowed them to purchase only one software program for touch typing and one for a popular English language program while allowing access to the computers for five boys at one time.

Funds from the Trust are used to purchase the new hard drive, the software, a printer, computer reference books and other supplies.

SRI LANKA – GALLE PROVINCE – Equipment to create a transportation cooperative for housebound special needs children – a project proposed by Sina Nofogato'a Jones, Professional Associate, spouse of Political Officer Nathan Jones.

"Statistics suggest that nearly 32% of all disabled people in Sri Lanka, over 87,000 people, have had no educational opportunities, and only 3% of the disabled population over age ten has received any kind of vocational training." Gross misconceptions about disabled and special needs children – that their disabilities are somehow contagious or that if a pregnant woman comes in contact with a disabled person, she will give birth to a disabled child – have resulted in disabled children being forced to lead their lives in social isolation, with little or no access to the outside world.

Equality-based Community Support and Training (ECSAT), a non governmental organization, has been working to promote the inclusion of all people in schools, services, communities and employment since 2005. As parents of disabled children in rural areas became aware of this program, demand for ECSAT's services grew quickly, and they now have a waiting list of 45 children. One of the biggest challenges has been arranging affordable and reliable transportation for the children.

Funds from the Trust are used to purchase three pre-owned "tuk tuks" (a motorized version of the traditional rickshaw), "empowering a cooperative of parents serving as volunteer drivers to give their children a chance to interact with the broader community and to take advantage of educational opportunities."

SRI LANKA – PANADURA – Lockers, supplies and books for life skills workshops at a shelter for sexually abused teen aged girls – a project proposed by Charles Ferrara, Office Management Specialist.

"The National Training and Counseling Center for Children (NTCCC) is a government-run home for girls who have either survived sexual assault or have been identified as highly at risk for abuse." During their 6-9 month stay at the shelter, the girls receive intensive professional

counseling. As a result of the recent partnering with a local, charitable organization called Emerge Sri Lanka, they also have the opportunity to attend workshops focused on life skills, business skills and savings generation. Program participants are taught to make jewelry and plan their own business. The profits they make from selling the jewelry are placed in savings accounts which they can access after age 18. Because, until recently, they had no place to store supplies, they were prevented from creating jewelry outside of the supervised weekly workshops, “limiting their ability to generate savings.”

Funds from the Trust not only finance the purchase of lockers for the jewelry making supplies, but also provide each girl with her own workbook complete with materials from all the workshops for future reference.

TAIWAN – TAIPEI – Audio-visual equipment for an environmental NGO – a project proposed by Paul Baldwin, Foreign Service Officer, and his spouse, Janice M. Englehart.

“TEAN, the Taiwan Environmental Action Network, is a non-governmental organization promoting responsible environmental behavior on the part of industry, government and the public.” It tracks industry practices to ensure compliance with existing environmental regulations and monitors government agencies’ ability to enforce existing legislation. In addition, it promotes legislative reform and provides education to better engage the public in the country’s rapidly evolving environmental practices, offering Taiwan a fresh perspective in balancing growth and environmentally sustainable practices.

Funded by the Trust, this project develops a uniform education program that TEAN can use for presentations to a variety of audiences, and it acquires the audio-visual equipment necessary for carrying this program.

THAILAND – FANG – Establishment of a bakery and barber shop vocational program for an orphanage – a project proposed by Penelope V. Williams, Administrative Support Specialist.

Kid’s Life Children’s Home is a charity organization that is home to 77 abandoned or orphaned children ranging in age from 3 to 20 years old. Prior to entering Kid’s Life, many of the children lacked basic educational skills and opportunities, but once there they are offered extensive after school tutoring. Kid’s Life has been preparing its middle and high school students for possible careers by providing on-site vocational training – at first with a bakery and barber shop and later with bicycle/motorcycle repair and weaving and sewing, especially for children who are not college bound.

Funds from the Trust are used to purchase supplies for the bakery, including an industrial sized oven and a barber chair used to establish a uni-sex hair salon.

THAILAND – CHIANG MAI – Dental care, educational fees and nutritious meals for a children’s home – a project proposed by Gary Anderson, Management Officer, U. S. Consulate General.

The Phonsawan Child Development Center (PCDC), which currently serves 73 children aged 5-15, was opened in 2002 with money donated from Shek-Man-Hin, a 9-year-old boy from Hong

Kong who was dying of leukemia. This child, instead of using his gift from the Make-A-Wish Foundation to go to Disneyland in Tokyo, decided to use the money to help disadvantaged children who do not have an opportunity to attend school or even receive one decent meal per day. He died in November, 2002, but his spirit of compassion and generosity remains today through the children being served at PCDC. All of the children come from poor migrant worker families, and PCDC prepares them for elementary school by teaching the Thai language, beginning literacy, fine motor skills, basic math, art and socialization skills.

Funds from the Trust are being used to help fill a serious funding gap, specifically for dental care, nutritious meals and certain educational expenses.

TURKEY – ANKARA – Children’s welcome kits for families transitioning to a new post – a project proposed by Kierstin Van Camp-Horn, spouse of Brad Horn, English Language Officer, and Allison Catalano, Community Liaison Co-Coordinator.

“Transitioning to a new post is a challenge for all family members, but it can be especially difficult for young children.” Although they are given all the basic household necessities, families often arrive to find that, due to limited space in suitcases, they have not brought enough childhood necessities. “The children spend months with little to do at home while waiting for their personal belongings to arrive.”

Funds from the Trust are being used to create a collection of Children’s Welcome Kits, consisting of carefully chosen children’s books, DVD’s, toys and activities that “focus on literacy skills and learning through play.” In addition to the materials purchased through the Trust, project applicants solicited donations of slightly used children’s books and toys from the embassy community.

VENEZUELA – CARACAS – An electrical generator and educational supplies for English classes at a shelter for unwed mothers and their children – a project proposed by “Helping Hands”, a charity action committee in the U.S. Embassy including Chairperson Veronica Millares, Foreign Service Officer, Secretary Katherine Yoneoka, Manager of the U.S. Embassy Caracas Employee Association, Ann Perrelli, Vice Consul and Mora Paiva, Foreign Service National Employee in the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), among others.

Helping Hands has received Kirby Simon Trust grants in 2004, 2005 and 2008 for its work with the Obra Social de La Madre y El Nino (‘The Social Work for Mother and Child’ – OSMAN), a shelter dedicated to unwed, homeless and adolescent mothers and their children in Caracas. This year Helping Hands became even more involved with hands-on interaction with the young mothers and their children through monthly visits and English lessons. OSMAN is managed by the Daughters of Charity of San Vincent de Paul and currently houses approximately 50 girls (ages 11 to 18), many whom were victims of sexual abuse and incest.

“With Venezuela facing a dire electrical crisis, the shelter was unable to pump water from its well during power outages, so Helping Hands sought another grant from the Trust to purchase an electrical generator, ensuring a continuous supply of water.” In addition, funds from the

Trust for a laptop computer, software and teaching manuals enabled Helping Hands to help foster education and, in particular, to promote English language education as a marketable skill for the young mothers.

ZAMBIA- KOTOKA POST – Construction of a play structure for children in the southern part of Kafue National Park – a project proposed by Ethan Robb-McCord, Grade 10, American International School, son of Michael McCord, Foreign Service Officer.

“Southern Kafue National Park is one of Zambia’s oldest national parks and is the second largest in Africa. It is also one of the most neglected, with deforestation and poaching of wildlife” decimating the park. The Zambian Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) has been working to restore the park with an anti-poaching team and efforts to restore the flora and fauna, but because of the difficulty in reaching the southern part of the park, attracting and retaining skilled ZAWA staff has threatened the success of these efforts. The staff and their families, with over 100 children from infant to high school, live at the Kotoka Post in extremely austere conditions. Because of the danger of predatory animals, the children are restricted to the village. The grant applicant teamed up with the Elephant Orange Project (EOP), which rescues orphaned elephants and works to introduce them back into the herds in the park, to construct a simple but flexible and challenging play structure that will provide social and recreational opportunities for the children of the Kotoka Post village. The young applicant also created a teen council to organize free village labor and secure engineering support and donated transportation of the building materials.

Funds from the Trust are paying for the building materials.

ZAMBIA – LUSAKA – At a school for orphans: a new earth friendly four-toilet latrine and bio-gas fuel fuel kitchen – a project proposed by Donald Tilley Jr., Human Resources Officer and David Stum, Human Resources Assistant.

Dedama Community School was established in 2005 by head mistress, Edna Choongo, who used her own land, and money from her own pension, to provide educational opportunities for orphans who would not otherwise have an education. In response to President Obama’s first national service day, September 11, 2009, the U.S. Mission in Lusaka “adopted” the school as a community work project, repairing furniture, planting a garden to supplement the students’ diets, introducing composting, hiring a local welder to repair the iron security gate, buying books, providing uniforms and painting educational murals on the classroom walls.

Because the school’s population has grown to more than 200 students, the four-toilet latrine (two for boys, two for girls) is unsanitary and inadequate. Grant applicants propose to build another four-toilet latrine with an earth-friendly innovation—rechanneling methane or bio gas from the latrine to fuel burners in the kitchen area. Funds from the Trust will pay for the necessary materials.

ZIMBABWE – HARARE – A solar water heating system at an orphanage for boys – a project proposed by Francis Chisholm, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy Malabo.

“St. Joseph’s House for Boys in Harare, Zimbabwe, is a boy’s orphanage that was founded 80 years ago” and currently houses 49 boys ages 10 to 17. “St. Joseph’s operates on a shoestring in a shattered economy suffering from pervasive unemployment, a GDP of less than \$1 per day, one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates and the lowest life expectancy in the world.” Meals consist nearly exclusively of bulgar wheat and beans provided by the USAID food program. The house has no back-up power supply so it is vulnerable to frequent power outages, and there is no hot water supply, requiring the boys to shower, wash clothes and wash dishes in cold water.

Funds from the Trust will be matched by the grant applicant “to provide the house with a low-cost, low maintenance, solar powered hot water system to increase the dignity of the children and provide, long-term, a small comfort in otherwise exceptionally austere conditions.”

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