

## Winter 2008

### WINTER 2008 NEWSLETTER

#### Kunyuk Girls' School Construction: A Promise Kept!

We are pleased to announce the completion of the Kunyuk Girls' School in the village of Akon! With your support, MSK has overcome legal hurdles, financial challenges, impassable roads, flooding, and political instability to deliver on a promise made to the Akon community three years ago. To get the job done, MSK's Field Coordinator, Kaidi Rial, spent countless hours traveling long distances, negotiating for building supplies and ensuring their safe delivery to our contractors.

The school lies near the village center and includes eight classrooms, three offices, a library, kitchen, dining hall, and bathrooms. The 900 enrollees will now attend classes indoors rather than under trees. This will allow them to continue classes even during inclement weather. In a region devastated by two decades of civil war, this beautiful campus serves as a reminder that educating a new generation of women leaders in southern Sudan is a critical goal worthy of enormous investment. The official ribbon cutting ceremony will take place in Akon in April 2009. Stay tuned for news of a special event in Boston next spring, when we will celebrate this new bright light in Sudan and share the students' stories along with a full report about the school.

However, completing construction does not represent an endpoint for us in Akon. We need your help to raise \$70,000 for desks and chairs, school supplies and uniforms, and to continue our highly successful women's literacy program now in its second year. The Women's Peace School is teaching 200 adults to read — most of whom are mothers of girls attending the school. Please consider supporting this valuable work by making a special year-end gift to MSK. Click [HERE](#) to donate online or sent your gift to My Sister's Keeper, c/o Bethel AME Church, 215 Forest Hills St., Boston, MA 02130.

## MSK Goes to St. Louis

The staff of My Sister's Keeper took our show on the road this summer, with an MSK vendor's booth at the General Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in St. Louis, Missouri. Our goals were to share the mission of MSK and to raise funds for the completion of the Kunyuk School. Many of the 12,000 conference attendees stopped at our table to learn about MSK and its purpose and purchase MSK t-shirts and "Beads for Needs" bracelets. A highlight of the event was when our sponsor, Reverend Dr. Cecilia Bryant, Missionary called for a Missionary offering for MSK that raised nearly \$7,000 in just one hour! Wonderfully, the week-long event generated \$14,000 for the Kunyuk School project.

## The Sisterhood Expands

18 months ago, My Sister's Keeper and Interaction Institute for Social Change launched Sisterhood for Peace to support diverse Sudanese women in the work of reconciliation and restoration of their communities. We began with 7

Sudanese women and now have a network of 300. In recent months, we have undertaken an expansion plan to connect even more Sudanese women throughout the Diaspora through civic engagement activities that promote peace in Sudan. Women will be trained to become more active in civic life as volunteers, workers in civil society organizations, voters, candidates and government officials. The Sisterhood training will encourage participants to build individual and collective visions, action plans and assets (including information, skills, relationships, and resources) that foster strong leadership. These assets will be mobilized to generate creative solutions and facilitate sustainable peace in Darfur and throughout Sudan.

#### Sisterhood for Peace Participates in SSWEN Conference in Juba - Sudan

Staff and members from the Core Strategy Group of Sisterhood for Peace participated in a conference organized by South Sudan Women's Empowerment Network (SSWEN) held in the flourishing Juba city from August 17-21. SSWEN, an organization based in the United States, is an important agent in fostering dialogues that bring women together to play pivotal roles in re-building Sudan. With the event theme, Weaving Together: Strategies for a Just and Sustainable Peace, we were honored to be part of this historic gathering that brought together 200 diverse Sudanese women who are all working to build a just and lasting peace in Sudan. Of the seven topics discussed at the conference, eliminating gender-based violence against women was identified as the most pressing concern that hinders women's lives and development. We are excited to witness and participate in the process of closing gaps among women who have been divided by war for decades, but even after five days of meetings the need to bring women together from across north, south, east and west Sudan still exists.

## Sisterhood for Peace Collaborates with the Nobel Women's Initiative

In July 2008, Sisterhood for Peace collaborated with the Nobel Women's Initiative (NWI) to design, host, and facilitate a meeting of Sudanese women's networks from Darfur, South Sudan, Eastern Sudan and Khartoum. The NWI traveled to Thailand, Ethiopia, Sudan and Chad on a mission to amplify women's efforts for peace and justice and to promote effective resolutions to the political crises facing Sudan and Burma. Delegates included Jody Williams, 1997 Nobel Peace Laureate, Mia Farrow, well-known activist and actor; Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate and Executive Director of the Greenbelt Movement; and MSK's own Gloria White-Hammond! MSK worked closely with the NWI and the Sisterhood for Peace Core Strategy Group to identify 35 Sudanese women active in diverse networks across varying regions to dialogue with the NWI delegation. Sisterhood for Peace participants, Sarah Rial and Magda Ahmed, facilitated a skill building session and Cynthia Parker from Interaction Institute for Social Change helped facilitate the overall convening. Not only were the Sudanese women's voices heard, but they experienced a rare opportunity to break down regional and ethnic boundaries, begin building trust, and share strategies for sustaining peace. The women in attendance were grateful for the opportunity and look forward to extending their work with Sisterhood for Peace in the coming year.

## Introducing MSK Chief Operations Officer

We are thrilled to welcome our new Chief Operating Officer, Lee Farrow! Lee was one of our Core Strategy Team

members for our Sisterhood For Peace initiative. In addition to her commitment and compassion, Lee brings a wealth of experience as a celebrated community organizer at the Harlem Children's Zone, where she developed and managed the community building project. Lee can be reached at [lee.farrow@mskeeper.org](mailto:lee.farrow@mskeeper.org).

#### In Times Like These

We are delighted to share such great news profiling the amazing adventures of My Sister's Keeper—especially, against the backdrop of so many sour economic developments! Despite challenging times, we have managed to advance our mission by carefully stewarding the resources that you have entrusted to us. You can be reassured that we will continue to honor your generosity by developing new strategies to maximize each gift and generate new revenue sources. Aware that this crisis affects many of us, we are praying for and holding each of you in our hearts.

Thank you for your generous donations, prayers and volunteer service. We welcome your comments, suggestions and inquiries. Email us at [mskeeper@mskeeper.org](mailto:mskeeper@mskeeper.org).

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