

CONTACT

gkcptp.org



Greater Kansas City Chapter of People to People International

February 2008, Volume 2, Issue 1

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FROM AFRICA TO KC AND BACK



Twenty-one year-old Josh Parolin shared his heartwarming story of youth making a difference in war-torn Uganda with over 75 GKCPTP members and guests in attendance at the Plaza Library. Josh is the son of Bill and Peggy Parolin, GKCPTP chapter members.

Josh attended a People to People Peace Camp in Egypt during his senior year at Park Hill South High. This experience lit a passion that has taken Josh to Thailand and Uganda, with the intent of making a difference in the world.

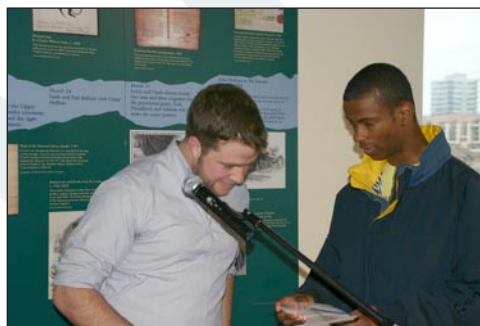
He has certainly made that intention a reality as he has created a network of hope in Uganda. Josh, along with other volunteers, began a foundation called ReNUH, a healthcare initiative of Adservio International. ReNUH seeks to restore healthcare to northern Uganda.

Josh explained that even the most basic care is lacking due to inadequate hospital facilities and lack of funding. Patients have been forced to receive sub-standard treatment at this distressed hospital because their lives have been heavily impacted by a war that has plagued northern Uganda during the past 20 years.



They hope to increase the level of medical care through these efforts.

Josh plans to return to Uganda where he will be working for People to People International. He will be helping to establish youth chapters. We thank the KCMO public library for their generous support of this informative program. Get more information regarding ReNUH at www.renuhproject.com.



Annual Meeting Reminder

March 30 (Sunday)
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

- Food
- Fun
- Officer elections

The Kansas City Public Library (Downtown)

14 West 10th Street
Kansas City, MO 64105

GIMMEE SHELTER!

*If I don't get some shelter oh yeah,
I'm gonna fade away, War, children, it's just a shot away, it's just a shot away...*

The aging baby boomers among us might remember the Rolling Stones' song by this name. A few of you are probably still rocking out to it in your leisure time. For hundreds of families who come to the Kansas City area as refugees each year, this is no song and dance. Imagine yourself exiting an airplane at MCI, with no family or friends, and nothing but the clothes on your back. Memories of things we can't and don't want to imagine are the baggage you carry.

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There are several agencies in town which help resettle immigrants who come to our country as refugees or asylum seekers. Board members visited one of these agencies

on January 18, 2008. The Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), located at 1608 Baltimore, assists people from many countries, including Vietnam, the former Soviet Union, Bosnia, Cuba, Haiti, Iraq, Iran, Liberia, Sudan, and Somalia. This nonprofit helps people without regard to religion, race, etc., as they become fully participatory and productive citizens.

GKCPTP is proud to announce a new alliance with this worthwhile organization. We have dedicated the first weekend in May as "Gimme Shelter" weekend. Members will bring household goods and clothing to the JVS warehouse, and sort goods for use by incoming refugees. To add the personal touch that GKCPTP is known for, we have agreed to fully furnish an apart-

ment for an incoming refugee family with the donations from our members and friends.



So, if you're planning a spring cleaning and can donate clothes, furniture, small appliances, etc., please assemble them in a corner of your garage or basement for this fun and worthy event. If you can't wait till then, feel free to take them down to JVS now. They'll even pick up larger items.

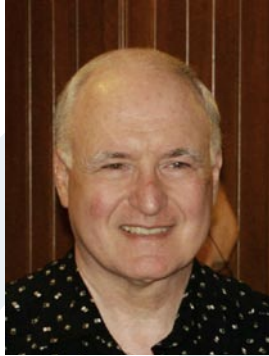
GKCPTP is also looking for members to help organize this fun event. Do you have decorating talent? Are you a good organizer? Are you willing to pick up some boxes of donations from members who can't make it down that weekend? Do you want to help welcome a family who has been through so much, possibly having lived in a refugee camp or even lost family members to atrocity? Collectively, our donations will go a long way towards furnishing an apartment and providing families some basic necessities.

If you are willing to help organize this event, please contact Theresa Osredker at theresa_66209@yahoo.com or (913) 897-6163. More details will be forthcoming in the next newsletter and on the website. Reserve Saturday, May 3, on your calendar now! And if you want further information about JVS, here's a link to their website: www.jvskc.org.

CALENDAR

Date	Time	Location	Program
20 Feb 2008	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Eisenhower Auditorium	Know your World: Turkey
29 Feb 2008	6:30 p.m.	KC Public Library, 14 W 10th Street, KC, MO	History of the International Military Student (IMS) Program
14 Mar 2008	6:00 p.m.	Frontier Conference Center, Ft. Leavenworth	Spring Food Fair (by invitation)
12 Mar 2008	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Eisenhower Auditorium	Know your World: Belize
30 Mar 2008	1:00-4:00 p.m.	KC Public Library, 14 W 10th Street, KC, MO	GKCPTP Annual Meeting
09 Apr 2008	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Eisenhower Auditorium	Know your World: India
14 Apr 2008	3: 00 p.m.	Barnes Plaza, 13th & Grand, KC, MO	Grand Boulevard of the Americas Dedication
14 May 2008	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Eisenhower Auditorium	Know your World: Cameroon
18 June 2008	3:30-4:30 p.m.	Eisenhower Auditorium	Know your World: Croatia

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Service on volunteer boards such as the GKCPTP board is usually a rewarding experience that more than justifies the time spent in supporting chapter activities. Occasionally the board must make difficult decisions in order to protect the image and interests of the chapter. Such a decision was made at the November board meeting where the following resolution was passed:

“The Greater Kansas City Chapter of People to People International will suspend the issuance of student loans and scholarships for those seeking to participate in the Student Ambassador Travel program pending a review of the marketing practices of People to People International and Ambassador Travel in soliciting students to participate in this program.”

The loans and scholarships may be reinstated if the board of directors of the Greater Kansas City Chapter of People to People is convinced the solicitation of students accurately and clearly states the method used to select the student and the nature of the solicitation mailings.

The board will continue to segregate funds designated for the Student Ambassador Travel Program from other funds of the Chapter and will not use them for any other purpose pending this review.”

The board passed this resolution reluctantly; however, contacts with prospective travelers in our area and persistent reports of misleading marketing practices made this action seem prudent. The board was particularly concerned that the marketing practices of Ambassador Travel did not accurately reflect how students were selected to participate in the travel programs.

I forwarded a letter to Mary Eisenhower, the Chief Executive Officer of People to People International with this resolution and offered to meet with her to resolve the GKCPTP concerns. I met with Mary Eisenhower on January 7, 2008 and we are continuing to discuss ways to resolve the concerns of our board. Mary has been very cooperative and is interested in resolving the issues raised by the resolution as soon as possible. I am confident this matter can be resolved and that we can reinstate the loan and scholarship program shortly. In the meantime, as provided in the resolution, funds designated for the scholarship and loan program will be held along with any interest accrued for use in the scholarship and loan program when it is reinstated.

I will continue to keep you advised of developments regarding the Student Ambassador Loan and Scholarship Program.

On a happier note, you will see elsewhere in this edition of the *Contact* that there have been a number of great programs organized by Theresa Osredker and more are in the works. The Christmas in Italy program with Sonia Eichenwald on the Plaza was a very special event overlooking the Plaza lights with great food and very interesting presentations on how Jews and Christians in Italy celebrate their holidays. I would like to thank everyone involved in this special event.

A new set of International Military Students has arrived and Barbara and I are getting acquainted with our new student, Major Al Matrif from Saudi Arabia. If you are one of the many new sponsors getting to know your student in the January class and have questions about the program, do not hesitate to contact me or one of the other board members. We will be happy to help. Have a great New Year and thanks for all your support of chapter programs!

Larry Dolci

GKCPTP SPEAKERS BUREAU

In keeping with our pledge to increase and diversify our membership, a speakers bureau has been established to promote our organization to other groups. On Jan. 10, 2008, Don Fuson gave a talk to the Legends Rotary Club. There were approximately 30 members in attendance.

Don spent time talking about the impact of the GKCPTP programs and opportunities (sponsoring IMS, hosting dinners, visiting dignitaries, home-stays, etc.). He personalized his story by adding several slides with pictures of the officers and their families from the past 8 years of sponsorship and some of the varied activities they shared. These former students came to Ft. Leavenworth for school but remain in the lives of his family and continue to be a part via email and phone calls.



Topics that generated the most questions were about the time commitment and how much active interface is required with the military community. The group all nodded when the discussion covered the fact that Americans need to know more about our own country in order to be good ambassadors while staying here at home as well. The members drew comparisons to the Rotary programs which support international students and exchanges with international Rotary members.

A huge thanks to Don for providing this service. If you have a club that would enjoy hearing “our story,” please contact Nelson Markel at nrmarkel@bucon.com. If you have an interest in providing a short talk, the speakers bureau welcomes your help!

A similar presentation will be given to the Parkville Rotary on February 22, 2008.

NEW OFFICER CLASS

More than forty new International Military Students (IMS) arrived at Ft. Leavenworth last month. Orientation and ice breaker sessions are complete. Gwenn Puetz extends her thanks to you for your willingness and commitment to sponsoring.

If you submitted an application and did not receive an IMS this time, be patient for a few months. We will need additional sponsors for the class arriving in June. We'll retain your application and in the next couple months, will ask for any updates to the information you've already provided.

For those that haven't completed a Sponsor Preference Form and Sponsor Information Form yet, please refer to previous emails (and reminders) sent in October and November 2007 by Larry Dolci. Complete the forms and email them to Larry at dolci@everestkc.net.

If you need electronic copies of the forms, contact me at svalasek@kc.rr.com and I'll email them to you. These are Word documents and relatively easy to complete. If you don't have electronic capability or are more comfortable with completing paper forms, let me know and I'll send them by US mail.

Sharon Valasek



GKCPTP sponsor Mike Osredker and military sponsor Dr. Sean Kalic help Major Zoran Liposac, of Croatia upon his arrival at KCI.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Happy New Year! I am so pleased to report the great success our membership has had in recruiting new members-30 for the year 2007. Keep up the good work!

Membership renewals were sent in November and were due upon receipt. There are 22 renewals that are past due. I hope that it will be a "New Year's Resolution" that the remainder will be paid quickly. A reminder was sent in mid December and a past due notice was sent in early January. A phoning team will attempt to call all remaining members by mid-month to ascertain their interest in continuing their membership.

The final count for the year is 129 units! A large number of brand new sponsors began in January and will require mentoring. If any "seasoned" sponsors would like to help, please email Pat Burnett at dburnett5@kc.rr.com.

HISTORY OF THE IMS PROGRAM

Friday, February 29 at Downtown Library, 6:30 p.m.

Members of GKCPTP will be interested in a special program at the Central Branch of the Kansas City Public Library to be held on Friday, February 29th at 6:30 p.m.

Brigadier General Mark O'Neill, Deputy Commandant of Fort Leavenworth, will make a presentation on the 114-year history of the International Military Student program. He will also focus on the strategic importance of the program. It is anticipated that officers from 39 countries will be in attendance. Given our chapter's major role in making the IMS program a success, a good turn-out would demonstrate our commitment to the officers and their families.

A reception will begin at 6:00 p.m., just prior to the formal presentation. The program is free, but reservations are recommended. Call 816.701.3407 to secure a seat. Free parking is available in the library district parking garage - 10th and Baltimore.

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CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

President	Larry Dolci	913-648-0845	dolci@everestkc.net
1st Vice President	Pat Burnett	816-746-9698	dburnett5@kc.rr.com
2nd Vice President	Theresa Osredker	913-897-6163	Theresa_66209@yahoo.com
Secretary	Nila Cleaves	816-942-1820	naninila@att.net
Treasurer	Gary Lofstrom	816-942-8887	gary@lofstromandcompany.com
Director 2008	Ofelia Acosta	816-726-7633	Ofee2000@yahoo.com
Director 2008	Julie Goodhart	913-381-2712	JulieGoodhart@kc.rr.com
Director 2008	Candice McField	913-271-4474	cmcfield@yahoo.com
Director 2009	Bev Londerholm	913-897-3596	blonderholm@sbcglobal.net
Director 2009	Terry Smitka	816-480-4227	tsmitka@rwbaird.com
Director 2009	Tom Waggoner	913-631-1223	jkid96@msn.com
Director 2010	Alan Felton	913-268-8281	afelton@feltonmedical.com
Director 2010	Nelson Markel	913-766-3543	nrmarkel@bucon.com
Director 2010	Vacant		
Immediate Past President	Sharon Valasek	816-942-2794	svalasek@kc.rr.com

TRAGEDY STRIKES CHAPTER MEMBERS

The board would like to make the membership aware of a tragedy and deep sorrow suffered by members **Ellen and Vic Miles**.

Most of the country is probably aware that on December 9th, 2007, a father was injured and two of his daughters were killed by a man with an automatic assault rifle in a parking lot of a Colorado Springs church.

The 18- and 16-year old sisters who were killed, and the injured father, are the granddaughters and son of the Miles'. Ellen tells us that their injured son is recovering at home, and the family is receiving counseling.

They are staying in a gated community where they feel safer. Ellen says that Dave is the best dad there ever was, and this family is the most loving family she has ever known. The loss of the daughters has been difficult to say the least.

People have asked what they can do to help. Two funds have been set up to help their son Dave

and his family. The need for counseling and other services is expected to be long term. All of us at GKCPTP extend our sincere condolences, thoughts, and prayers, to Ellen, Vic, Dave, and all the family.

Memorial fund:

Pastor Brady Boyd
New Life Church
11025 Voyager Pkwy
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Trust fund:

David Works Trust Fund 999 18th St,
Suite 3400
Denver, CO 80202

Contact Ellen and Vic for additional ways to support them in their grief, as well as to express condolences.

Ellen and Vic Miles

5917 Wornall
Kansas City MO 64113
816-444-2459
816-223-7100 c
vicmiles@juno.com

MEMBERS RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

Ethusiastic, involved members are the lifeblood of our chapter, and we appreciate when members invite their friends and acquaintances to chapter events. Once they participate, why not ask them if they'd like to join? And our First Vice President of Membership, Pat Burnett, is glad to help with member applications and follow through.

New member(s)

Jerry and Cathleen Herigon
Kim and Joel Nitz
Joe and Kristin Freeman
Andrea Simmons
Kevin and Teresa Fogarty
Jeffrey and Gabrielle Wheat
Bill and Maria Rooney
Brenda Pederson
Paul and Maggi Choplin
Todd and Dena Nash
JD and Roxanne Westfall
Louis and Norma Reinking

Sponsor(s)

Gwenn Puetz
PTPI
Ray and Joan Barrett
Thelma and Pamela Simmons
Mike and Theresa Osredker
Mike Brettmann referral
PR and DS Saldana
Jim and Bev Parmelee
Mike and Theresa Osredker
Mike Brettmann referral
Alan and Pamela Felton
Dora McDonnell



Remember to invite prospective members to GKCPTP events!

DELLA ROBBIA HOLIDAY

On December 14th, a wonderful time was had by all at the lovely Plaza location of the Kansas City Public Library. In an area overlooking the holiday lighting of the Country Club shopping district, members and guests enjoyed Italian catering and wine.

Italian Christmas Traditions

Speaker Mike Stelhern, professor at Rockhurst University and a self-described Italiophile, shared stories of Italian Christmas traditions.



Sonia Eichenwald, Mike Stelhern, Theresa Osredker and Larry Dolci at Della Robbia event

Did you know that traditionally, presents were rarely exchanged at Christmas? That day is reserved for family gatherings and special dinners. Gifts were more commonly exchanged on the feast of Three Kings - January 6th, also known as the 12th or last day of the Christmas season. Mike shared the Italian folklore story of La Befana (the kindly old witch). According to legend, the Three Wise Men, and later a shepherd, stopped at her hut to ask directions on their way to Bethlehem and to invite her to go with them. She refused, and later that night saw a great light in the skies. She gathered some toys that had belonged to her own child, who had died, and ran to find the kings and shepherd. La Befana could not find them or the stable.

Now, every year she looks for the Christ Child. Since she cannot find him, she leaves gifts for the children of Italy.

Jewish Hanukkah Traditions

Our own Sonia Eichenwald then provided an engaging explanation of the Jewish Hanukkah traditions in Italy. We learned how these customs are the same, and in other ways differ slightly, from Jews around the world.

We also learned that most Italian Jews are of Sephardic lineage (immigrated to Italy from Spain) as opposed to the Ashkenazi Jews, from Eastern Europe or Germany. One example of the slight variation is found in the tradition of serving foods fried in oil to commemorate the oil of the Hanukkah lamp. In Italy, the fried foods are lighter; fritter type foods and chicken which is delicate and delicious.

It is also common for Jews to open their homes to friends of all faiths during this time. Sonia treated the group to Panettone, delicious fruit bread which her family has enjoyed and made through the years.

Everyone in attendance enjoyed the holiday gathering so much, we just may repeat this program next year! Thanks especially to Sonia and her husband, Howard Eichenwald, for making this a remarkable event.



Attendees take in the traditions of a Della Robbia holiday

PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

It's time to elect officers and board members.

Greater Kansas City People to People 2008-2009

Submitted by Paulette Markel, Chair of Nominating Committee

- President.....Larry Dolci
- 1st Vice President (Membership)....Pat Burnett
- 2nd Vice President (Programs)Candice McField (replacing Theresa Osredker)
- Secretary.....Nila Cleaves
- Treasurer.....Gary Lofstrom
- 2009 DirectorsBev Londerholm
Terry Smitka
Tom Waggoner
- 2010 DirectorsTheresa Osredker (completing term of Pat Medill)
Alan Felton
Nelson Markel
- 2011 DirectorsRoxanne Westfall (replacing Candice McField)
Gabrielle Reilly (replacing Ofelia Acosta)
Chi H. Yi (replacing Julie Goodhart)

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Check box for entire slate, or enter write-ins for specific office exceptions:

Your signature and date

Mail-ins should be mailed to GKCPTP, PO Box 22365, KC, MO 64113 by March 20, 2008.