

Jesuits Open World's First High School for AIDS Orphans: St. Aloysius Gonzaga High School in Nairobi, Kenya



St. Al's school (above) serves the Kibera slums, home to more than one quarter of Nairobi's population. There are no residential buildings over a single story. The average home is 10 feet by 10 feet, housing five persons. Urban services such as water or sanitation are minimal.

St. Al's was co-founded in 2003 by Jesuit Terry Charlton and Christian Life Community. St. Al's is a Catholic school dedicated to serving AIDS-affected youth from the Kibera slum. It gives students hope for a better life by providing a college preparatory education and support to overcome the challenges of the loss of parents along with extreme poverty. \$750 per student per year covers the cost of the students' education, daily meals, and uniforms.

It is estimated that Kenya has more than 3 million AIDS orphans and that the number is steadily increasing. Roughly 1.5 square miles, the Kibera slum is home to 1 million people, 30,000 of whom are AIDS orphans of secondary school age. These children are not able to continue their education due to poverty, prohibitive costs, and a lack of accessible schools.

Our dream of a permanent school is quickly moving toward realization. The budgeted cost for the new 1-acre campus is an economical \$1 million. We plan to begin building Phase I in 2008 on land just a five-minute walk from Kibera. The building programs will increase enrollment from 196 to 420 students as well as provide labs for science and computers, a library, and other facilities.

Generous benefactors have contributed over \$500,000 towards the total cost of \$1 million. We hope to raise the remaining money in time to begin Phase II in late 2008. Our goal is to complete the building project by January 2009.

"I believe that we are the leaders of tomorrow and that we are the ones who can change Kibera."

—Paul Owino, St. Al's student



The first graduates of St. Al's (November 2006) are entered in a service program before advancing to college or technical school.



St. Xavier High School's World AIDS Day liturgy showed solidarity with the students from St. Al's.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

St. Aloysius Gonzaga High School, Nairobi, Kenya has received a \$300,000 grant from the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program and U. S. Aid for International Development (USAID).



Fr. Charlton (right) graciously thanks American Schools and Hospitals Abroad Division Chief George Like for their generous grant towards the construction of St. Al's permanent building.



On World AIDS Day (December 1, 2006), thousands of students from Jesuit schools raised awareness and support for fellow students at St. Al's. A big thank you to:

- Xavier University
- Loyola University Chicago
- Georgetown University
- The University of Scranton
- Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School
- Cristo Rey Jesuit High School
- Loyola Academy
- Regis High School, New York
- St. Ignatius College Prep, Chicago
- St. Xavier High School, Cincinnati

To help, please contact Jeff Smart at 773-975-6920 or jeff@jesuits-chi.org, or Mark Maxwell at 513-751-6688 or mmaxwell@jesuits-chi.org

To view a 10-minute video about St. Al's called "A School in Nairobi" please visit the Chicago Province website at www.jesuits-chi.org/about/videogallery.htm or request a DVD or VHS copy by calling Eileen Meehan at 1-800-922-5327.

Interested in visiting St. Aloysius Gonzaga High School in Nairobi, Kenya?

Chicago Province Jesuits are sponsoring a group trip in June 2008 (in honor of the feast day of St. Aloysius Gonzaga) to Nairobi. For trip information contact Kay Smolinski at (773) 975-6912 or kay@jesuits-chi.org



Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School alumnus Fr. Charlton gratefully accepts a check from Brebeuf students for St. Al's during a World AIDS Day celebration.