

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

Charity Seeks Medical Doctors and Nurses for Upcoming Ugandan Trip

HOLMDEL, N. J., December 16, 2010 – Sylvia’s Children, a 501(c)3 organization based in New Jersey, is looking for all types of medical professionals interested in a voluntourism opportunity caring for children in Uganda, Africa March 17 – 29, 2011. Those interested can contact Sylvia Allen at sylvia@sylviaschildren.org or call 732-946-2711.

Sylvia’s Children www.sylviaschildren.org supports over 1,000 children at the Mbirizi Advanced Primary and Day Care School, located in Uganda, Africa, and situated 40 miles away from the nearest health facility. The charity has been making one medical trip a year for the past two years to help service the needs of the population. There is very limited access to healthcare in this part of Uganda, and care that is available is often years behind the standard of medical care in developed parts of the world. Something as simple as sanitary supplies for girls is often not available or unaffordable. As such, the charity is looking for nurses, nurse practitioners, pediatricians, dermatologists, ENT’s, dentists, dental assistants, physical therapists, and infectious disease specialists who would be interested in making the trip to help provide care. The cost of the trip is \$3,500 all inclusive – airfare, hotel, all meals, ground transportation, water, and a three-day safari at the Mweya Lodge, where visitors can see elephants, lions, leopards, hippos, and more.

Last year, the group of volunteer nurses and a doctor examined each child and created a medical history for them. Children were treated for a range of ailments, including diseases of poverty, consequences of malnutrition and complications of HIV/AIDS. The group also carried over donated medical supplies which were used for treatments. Several of the children were taken by members of the group on the long journey to the nearest city for diagnosis and treatment of more severe illnesses, where it was discovered that one of the children will need heart surgery in order to survive. Groups of children were also shuttled for treatment of dental issues, including fillings and extractions. The ultimate goal of the charity is to fund the building and staffing of a health clinic at the school that not only serves the children of the school and their families but the village at large.

The charity was launched seven years ago by Sylvia Allen, a New Jersey businesswoman who made her initial trip to Uganda with a mission group she met while teaching at New York University. The Mbirizi school was one of the places they visited. A quarter of the children at the school had been orphaned or lost one parent to the AIDS pandemic plaguing their country. The mission of Sylvia's Children has been to raise awareness and funds to educate, feed, clothe and shelter these children at the school.

Since starting the organization, Allen has succeeded in getting annual sponsorship for 93 of the 235 orphaned children and has raised \$400,000+, all of which has gone directly to the school as all administrative expenses are covered by her public relations firm, Allen Consulting. She has also constructed a fresh water well; built a library and filled it with books; purchased seven acres of land; donated a computer with internet access; constructed a dormitory; built a playground; bought additional triple decker bunk beds for the boys' dorm; provided sporting and musical equipment; and built three additional double classroom blocks as well as hiring a full time nurse and building new stoves for increased cooking efficiency. In addition, two businesses have been started. With the building of a chicken coop and raising chickens, each child can now get one egg a day (needed protein) and the extras can be sold at the market. In addition, the school now has a building with 40 sewing machines so the children can learn a trade and additional business can be garnered by sewing uniforms for the private schools in the area.

The entire thrust of Sylvia's Children is to create a self-sustaining model that can be replicated at other schools in surrounding villages. The seven acres of land have been planted in corn and the school now has a corn milling business. Allen's next plans are to develop an arts and crafts cooperative, a health clinic and a fair-trade coffee business, which will allow the school to be self-sustainable. For more information please visit www.sylviaschildren.org or call (732) 946-2711.

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