



Rwanda Convention 2009

MONTREAL May 15th to May 18th 2009

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Bugesera District and Miracle Corners Rwanda: A Formula for Success



Greetings from Nyamata. In the season of thanks giving and sacrifice, I write to inform you of the progress that Bugesera District currently experiences in terms of socio-economic development and to gain your support as active participants in its continued growth and prosperity. I am a volunteer with an organization called Miracle Corners Rwanda (MCR), which is currently building a community development center in Kayenzi, a midpoint between Ntarama and Nyamata villages in Bugesera. For those of familiar with the capital, this center will serve a similar purpose to that of the successful Kimisagara Youth Center in Kigali, which provides varied educational and recreational facilities for the community with particular emphasis on youth skills and leadership development.

Our center opens doors in the first quarter of 2009 and is slated to host a pre-school with English as the medium of instruction, Swahili and English classes, an entrepreneurship training course, ICT facilities and training, arts and cultural activities, and activity-based counseling. Bugesera community members are actually constructing this center and have garnered support in construction from Rwandans in Gisenyi, Kigali, and as far as Bujumbura. The construction leadership team is led by a rising star in Rwanda, KIST civil engineering student Innocent Nizeyi-

mana of Kibuye. MCR is working with the community in efforts to meet needs mandated by a national policy shift from Francophone to Anglophone status. The center is the brainchild of Jacqueline Murekatete, a Rwandan genocide survivor and Human Rights activist who has been speaking out loudly against the injustices of genocide, war, discrimination, and social inequality for years. She is the Director of the Jacqueline's Human Rights Corner, a partner organization with Miracle Corners of the World (MCW). Since April 2007, she and the leadership team of MCW, Eddie Bergman and Alfie Hanssen, have campaigned to provide initial funding for the construction of the center.

This center is one of a number of projects being launched within the Bugesera District, thanks to a national and district level effort to infuse this community with access to opportunity, both immediate and long-term. Over the next two years and particularly with the launch of the incoming international airport, Bugesera District will become a beacon of light and commerce shining bright in the East Province. The trend is upward and the community is poised to take advantage of this growth. This is why I write.

In addition to supporting the current efforts of Miracle Corners Rwanda, there is a significant project that is in early stages that will need your help to become a reality. Bugesera District currently does not have a library. In fact, on more than one occasion, youth in Nya-

mata have asked me for books. Having traveled through and worked in a combined fourteen countries in Africa, I can say that the request was progressively atypical. In most places in the world in fact, a volunteer is more likely to be asked for amafaranga (money), but my ten year-old yardmate, Ange, wisely asked for a dictionary. She is one of the girls in Nyamata who will begin her classes in English in January, opting to completely drop French instruction. Youth come to our yard a few days each night to learn English from a recent high school graduate. In addition, a neighbor mentioned when assisting a colleague on a short film that he is studying computer engineering at university and had looked for a book on Adobe Flash and searched all the libraries, but could find only one or two introductory chapters on the material.

We asked him where the nearest library was and he said Kigali. For the youth, that is essentially inaccessible. So, in light of the local demand, we started an ancillary project to host a library through the Miracle Corners Development Center. This requires essentially two phases. In the first phase, we will acquire the books necessary to fill an basic independent library and house them in the MCR center where community members may access them.

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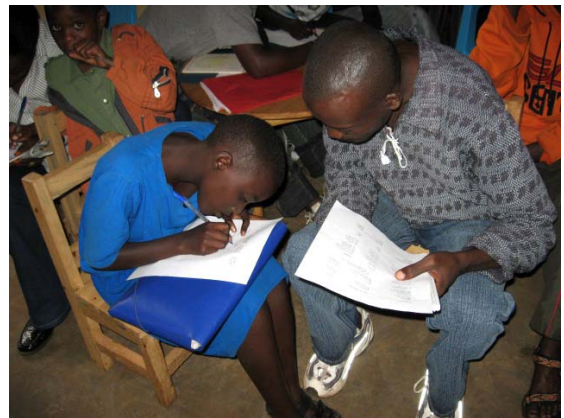
RWANDA SCHOOL PROJECT

The year 2009 is 'a stepping stone to the future' for those interested in assisting Rwanda become the information capital of East Africa. The Rwanda Convention Association's theme for its 2009 convention in Montréal, Canada, will stress the need for the continued development of knowledge transfer into Rwanda.

In early 2009, the Rwanda School Project (RSP) will begin transferring basic knowledge to future Rwandan leaders. The school to open in Rwamagana will be a depository for current information, high standards and basic education. Three years in the planning and thousands of donated hours of talented people are being funneled into a knowledge-based secondary school. The school project is designed to merge with and support the Rwanda Vision 2020 plan.

As vice president of the RSP board of directors, I invite all who are interested in the future of Rwanda to spend a few minutes viewing the information on one of our web sites.

For those who would like to join us in the development, we welcome your help. The opening of this web site tells the story:



The Rwanda School Project is working with the Lutheran Church of Rwanda to open a secondary level (junior-senior high) school in Eastern Rwanda. The state-of-the-art school will open in 2009 with an English-language, high-standards curriculum that focuses on sustainability. The land has been purchased and fenced. The first building is under construction. A major campaign is taking place in the United States to raise \$450,000 for completion of the first phase of a completed campus. This campaign is endorsed by the Sierra Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Thank you making the important project possible through your donation.

Burl W. Waits, JD

<http://www.processlearningcenters.org/>

<http://www.vcinternational.net>

<http://www.rwandaprojects.org>

A Land of Thousand Hills: The Rebirth of Rwanda and the Man Who Dreamed IT

By Stephen Kinzer

Not many Americans have the chance to travel around the United States talking about Rwanda. I've been doing it for several months, and will be giving more speeches in the months ahead. This is all in connection with my new book, "A Thousand Hills: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It."

This book tells three stories. The first is the story of Rwanda's past, including its early history, the period of colonization, the Kayabanda and Habyarimana regimes, the rise of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, and the war of 1990-94. Second, it is a biography of Paul Kagame, using his story to tell the story of Rwanda's modern history. Third, it is an account of what is happening in Rwanda today.

Speaking to American audiences about these subjects has been an interesting experience. Like most people who have heard of Rwanda, those who come to my speeches associate the country only with genocide. Some even think the genocide is still going on. I take pains to point out that Rwanda is not a genocide, it's a country. Genocide did happen there, but genocides also happened in other places, and we don't associate those countries only

Rwandans in the US, and Americans who want to learn about Rwanda.

This small and poor country has a great story to tell. I'm thrilled to have been able to bring it to my readers.

with that one episode.

While writing "A Thousand Hills," I read just about every book about Rwanda that has been written in English, along with some in other languages. Most of these books are about the genocide. I tell my audiences clearly that my book is not about the genocide. It has to be mentioned, of course, and I do explain it in some detail—including the role of outsiders in promoting it and then failing to stop it. But I concentrate on more exciting stories.

The most interesting of these is President Kagame's life story. He is certainly one of the most successful revolutionaries of his generation. He and a handful of comrades built their revolutionary movement in a way no rebels in history ever had: inside the regular army of another country (Uganda). This was one of the largest-scale covert operations in the history of warfare.

Stories about the period of Tutsi exile, and the war that followed, lead naturally into the story of post-war Rwanda. Outsiders are fascinated by the reconciliation process now underway in Rwanda.

Many also are surprised to hear that Rwanda is now doing far better than anyone expected a decade ago. It is a remarkably positive story.

There is much debate about the political process now underway in Rwanda, and I do not shy away from it. On the contrary, it is part of what makes this country so interesting. Is President Kagame a visionary who uses authoritarian rule to prevent another genocide and move his country forward, or is he a repressive dictator? Is forbidding debate about Hutu-Tutsi issues a way to keep peace, or does it create more anger and frustration? How long will limitations on political activity be necessary? What level of free expression is acceptable in a country where hate speech recently led to such a tragedy? These are fascinating questions that are part of Rwanda's story.

While writing this book, I had more than 30 hours of private interviews with President Kagame. He discussed aspects of his life and beliefs that he had never spoken about publicly before. Coming to know him in such a direct way was part of what has made the experience of "A Thousand Hills" deeply rewarding. So is the chance to meet

"I take pains to point out that Rwanda is not a genocide it's a country"



Stephen Kinzer

In the second phase, we will look to build or receive a separate building to house the library and support expanded programming. Both efforts are essential and both require your assistance. District Mayor Gaspard Musonera has been supportive of MCR work and will work to facilitate the library from the Rwandan side, but we would like your support. If you would like to get involved with Miracle Corners Rwanda, please contact Jacqueline Murekatete at Jacqueline@miraclecorners.org and if you would like to feed the youth's hunger for knowledge with the library project contact Amir Demeke at amirde-meke@gmail.com.

This is just the beginning of what local change with global exchange can do. With your effort, we can further prove that Rwandans abroad and friends of Rwanda can drive the nation's development from any location within this increasingly global society.

Founded in 2000 by Rob Albrooks and Eddie Bergman after the two built a school and public health facility in Ivory Coast, Miracle Corners of the World has developed community centers in Arusha and Songea, Tanzania as well as in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The organization believes that successful development efforts must be community-inspired, driven, and led. Each of the centers operates with local leadership while MCW supports leadership development and training through its extended network. Miracle Corners of the World has done additional work in South Africa and

and runs an annual youth leadership training that brings together young activists from Africa, North and South America, Asia as well as Israel for exchange and to expand the efforts of grassroots leaders.



Future Center in Rwanda

By Amir Demeke

Www.miraclecorners.org



RWANDA CONVENTION 2009

MONTREAL MAY 15th to May 18th

Building A knowledge based Economy

Dear Members,

We end the 2008 year in a time when we saw “Change” in the US, an emergence of economic development in Rwanda, and a Rwandan Diaspora more active in supporting Rwanda and its development.

2008, marked the rebirth of RCA that is focused not only in the economic, and social development of Rwanda, but in the formulation of a united and strong networking Rwandan Diaspora. Through the development of its Quarterly Newsletter, and social networking groups, RCA is promoting Rwandan professionals and entrepreneurs in the Diaspora to encourage professional development in its US communities. Encourage Rwandans to promote the education and awareness of Rwandan history around the world, and most importantly promote development of Rwanda by its Rwandan Diaspora.

In 2009, RCA welcomes all to participate at its sixth annual Rwanda Convention in Montreal, Quebec that will be dedicated in the promotion of a knowledge based economy through; education, economic investment, media development, and Information and Technology.

Our first ever Rwanda Convention in Canada, RCA team would like to recognize the Rwandan community in Montreal for their work in promoting Rwandan culture through its group Isangano. Montreal is the home to the ever first Rwandan cultural center in North America, which promotes unity and reconciliation, youth programs for Rwandans in Montreal, and the epicenter of community meetings. RCA believes that Montreal community should be regarded as a triumphant step in North American communities for its everlasting plight to strengthen and unite its Rwandan community.

2009 also marks the beginning of the first RCA youth program led by Teddy Mugabo and Rita Umilisa. Both young Rwandan students in North America, they will lead the first ever youth platform to allow a voice for the Rwandan Youth to express their developing views for Rwanda and address the needs for targeting more youth participation in our Rwandan communities. We welcome you in Montreal on May 15th to 18th, 2009 to aid in the development of Rwanda, and the networking of Rwandans in North America.

On behalf of the RCA team umwaka mushya wamata nubuki ubabere muhire kandi wishya n'ihirwe. Murawurya, ntubarya.

Urusaro Bakuramutsa, President

www.rwandaconvention.org