



**December 2013**

## **Billy's Malawi Project**

P.O. Box 312

West Springfield, MA 01090

413 736-4938

[www.billysmalawiprojectusa.org](http://www.billysmalawiprojectusa.org)



### **Board Members:**

Tim Allen

Suzanne Meserve

Judith Kappenman, SSJ

Lynn McDonald

Caroline Murray

Marilyn Murray

*Billy's death breathed life into the village."*

## **Billy's Clinic needs help; consider giving to this cause**

**D**uring her September visit to West Springfield and the Big E, Mags Riordan told us of the drought which has devastated the people in Malawi this year, including the Village of Chembe where Billy's Clinic is located. It is, she said, a drought to rival that of 2005, and perhaps even the worst the area has seen since 2002.

The local farmers lost their maize crop—the staple of the villagers' daily diet. As a result of this severe hunger, we know that people fall prone to all sorts of diseases, which may be alleviated to some degree by medicine. We have committed ourselves to provide funds for medicines since 2007 at our founding. We are pleased to report that we have sent almost \$100,000 over the past six years, thanks to your faithful and generous donations.

We wrote in an earlier newsletter that because of the volatile political situation in Malawi for several years, we have been prevented from sending money to Malawi. With a lawyer's help, we are now able to send money directly to Billy's Clinic through Ireland. Earlier this year we did forward a grant of \$20,000 which benefited the people of Cape Maclear.

We come to you with our annual holiday appeal,

asking you to be as generous as your means allow. The annual exhibit at the Big E earned some funds for the project, and just as importantly, raised awareness of the work that Billy's Clinic does in providing health care for the people of the village at Cape Maclear.

Thanks for your consideration of this request. If you would like to donate, please send your check to our address in West Springfield as listed above. We will provide a card that you may give to the person in whose name your donation is given as a holiday gift. Since we are a non-profit organization your donation is tax deductible.

On page 2 we have additional details about the Big E exhibit in West Springfield. Also on page 2-3 we announce the planned fundraiser we will conduct early next year to replace Miles for Malawi. Please consider participating in this project.

**Mags Riordan speaks in 2007 with an image of her son projected behind her. He was photographed on a boat on the lake in Malawi before he drowned.**



## Big E spreads the news of the Malawi Project while raising funds

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By Suzanne Meserve

Billy's Malawi Project celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> year of hosting a booth at The Big E (The Eastern States Exposition) located in West Springfield.

Billy's exhibit was well stocked with handmade items made by the resourceful artists and artisans of Cape Maclear. We raised a record breaking total of funds this year due to the many dedicated volunteers who gave their time to cover three or four hour shifts per day over the 17-day fair for a total of 204 hours.

Along with a six-day visit from Mags herself, a few *Friends of Billy* and a huge showing of support from STCC students and staff, we were able to raise more than \$3,310. Without the commitment of these individuals the success of this fundrais-



**Pictured above at the Malawi exhibit: volunteer Fatema Ghasemi and Mags Riordan smile for the camera.**

ing effort would not have been possible. Many thanks go out to everyone who participated at the exhibit.

The winner of the booth's Candy Jar Guess Contest, which in and of itself raised \$204 at \$1 per guess was Rebecca, a 13-year-old from East Providence, RI.

She had urged her mother to give her the money so she could guess the number. She guessed 254 and it was the closest to the actual number of 257 wrapped candies.

The Irish merchants, whose booths were near ours, were generous and donated items to the gift basket that Rebecca received. We are grateful to Fran Ryan of Dingle Linens, Brian de Staic Jewelry, and Mike O'Hare of The Craic House, all of them from Dingle.

Thanks to everyone who stopped by to visit us over the years. This was our final appearance at the Big E as we will no longer hold this event.

Again, our heartfelt thanks to everyone who supports Billy's Clinic.

## Be a villager for the day; join our fundraiser in the spring

We invite the friends of Billy and supporters of Billy's Malawi Project to participate in a day of fast by uniting with a Chembe villager for the day.

On March 29 we are planning to replace Miles for Malawi, the Thanksgiving race/walk fundraiser that we conducted for 4 years, with a day of fast. The Malawian villagers' daily diet consists of maize, possibly supple-

mented with vegetables, fruit or condiments; our diet of the day of fast will consist of oatmeal with participants choosing whether they will add fruits or vegetables with their meal.

Those who wish to participate will sign on for the day of fast by paying a \$10 registration fee; they will receive 3 packets of oatmeal comparable to the meal of maize that the vil-

lagers eat twice daily. Each person will commit to finding sponsors to support the cause.

We will encourage participants at Elms College and STCC among the various organizations on campus to join us, as well as board members and other local friends of Billy.

The organizers will also solicit

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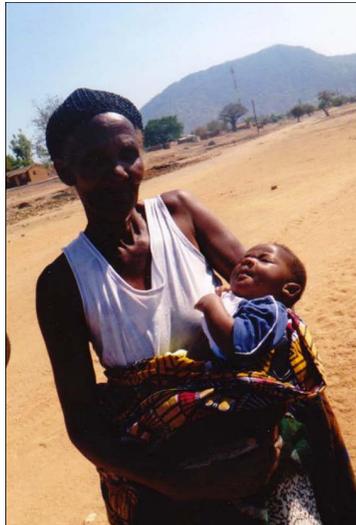
## Mags Riordan reports on the work of the Clinic

On September 18 members of Billy's Malawi Project USA board met with Mags Riordan who gave the following report of the progress made in Malawi

- 9<sup>th</sup> year completed; the Project will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary August 24, 2014
- Increase in number of patients served in the clinic with both out patient and in house care
- The HIV program serves 1000 patients each month; 7000 patients have been tested
- Under 5 feeding program continues – not funded by Project
- Bilharzias treatment is done twice a year in the school and is sponsored by Cavan County Council
- Famine is a threat this year as it was in 2002 and 2005. The Project provided the local employees with an advance to stave off hunger. Each of the 35 employees provides food for 11 family members
- The Trust has spent \$2 million over the years since its founding
- The clinic runs a family planning program that includes sterilization performed monthly in the theater
- The mosquito nets are not working due to many factors

### Project's Future Plans

- Eye Clinic: Mags was approached by South African ophthalmologist Eugene Meyer who offered to perform eye surgery 4 times a year beginning in January, 2014. He has provided the needed furniture and equipment; the clinic has set aside a space in the first building. The Project's only cost is for electricity.
- With the need to build a 3<sup>rd</sup> building: the project needs to raise \$100,000; it would house 2-3 consulting rooms, community room, storage area and bathrooms.



Pictured above: a grandmother presents her grandchild to the camera showing that he is now in health after being treated at the clinic.

Below: a young mother uses her thumbprint for her signature as she signs for treatment.

## Be a villager for the day (continued)

donations from sponsors – Quaker Oats, local markets, etc.

We will have the kick off on March 28 with pickup at distribution centers located at the Elms College and Springfield Technical Community College. The packet will include a Meal and Media kit; three oatmeal packets will comprise the meal.

The media kit will include materials about Billy's Clinic as well as a profile of a villager to shadow for the day by imagining this person sharing a meal at the same time—the villager with a meal of maize and the participant with a meal of oatmeal. The villagers are those who have received treatment at the Clinic.

We will advertise in local newspapers, on radio and hope to make an appearance on MassLive. More information will appear on our web site as plans are finalized in February 2014. We also plan to send reminders to our mailing list in February.

If you are willing to help in the planning, please call 413 736-4938.



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**Miles for Malawi organizers and board members pose with Mags Riordan: Pictured back row: Kathy Lynch, Tim Allen, Maureen Ryan, Don Dowd, Monique Hegarty, Kyle Bertke, Paige Diamond; front row: Timmy Allen, Judith Kappenman, Mags Riordan, Suzanne Meserve, Joe Hegarty, Meaghan Hegarty.**

Please consider using iGive.com as your search engine when purchasing items on the Internet. When doing so, designate Billy's Malawi Project as your charity. A portion of your purchase price is given to our organization and we send it on to help supply medicines for the people of the village. Thank you.

### **The Republic of Malawi**

- Where: Sub Saharan Africa: borders with Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania.
- Population: 14.8 million.
- 80% of population live rurally and engage in subsistence agriculture and in extreme poverty.
- Life Expectancy: 53 years.
- Almost a million of the population are HIV positive.
- Villagers have a high rate of major infectious diseases.
- 20% infant mortality rate among children under 5 years.
- 20% of children under 5 suffer malnutrition.
- 72% of people live on less than \$2 per day.