



## WINTER 2009

*"All donations  
are welcome. All  
donations are tax-  
deductible."*

**Billy's Malawi Project**  
P.O. Box 312  
West Springfield, MA 01090

### **Officers:**

Tim Allen  
Suzanne Meserve  
Judith Kappenman, SSJ

### **Members:**

Paige Diamond  
Don Dowd  
Mary Ellen Lowney  
Kathleen Lynch  
Caroline Murray



We are pleased to announce that Mags Riordan will come to the States in early April and will have a busy schedule. She will also be at events to be announced. Please come out to support Mags and the Billy Riordan Memorial Clinic!!!

## **A village has no boundaries and no borders By Tim Allen**

Thanks to all of you for opening your hearts to the people of Cape Maclear, Malawi. The work of Billy's Malawi Project celebrates and supports the people in this village. We are honored to know and to support the work coordinated by Mags Riordan and the services provided by so many volunteers. The village of Cape Maclear is a place that most of us will probably never see, but it is a village we have come to know through the stories and the work being done by some incredible people that we have been blessed to meet and to come to know.

You are one of many who have supported the work in Cape Maclear. You have found a reason to believe, a place in your heart, a dollar in your pocket for the people there – people who are economically deprived but spiritually rich. You have helped them in very tangible ways. You have provided

medications, you have lifted spirits. In providing this support, you have defined village in a way, in a very broad way. The phrase 'It takes a village to raise a child' is a phrase we've all heard. To me, it means that we are all responsible for the next generation, for the child walking past us on the street, for the children who will be the future of our community, our nation, our world. We usually apply it to our local area and the people we see everyday.

But truly the village is being defined by you as a village with no boundaries. You are not intimidated by distance, culture, language, economics – you have chosen to look at similarities instead of differences. You have taken responsibility as a world citizen for people in another land - in another situation – people whose lives are challenged in ways we cannot imagine. You have taken action in

the village.

As we begin the new year, a year probably more challenging than most in many ways, it is so important that we all maintain a spirit of being together, supporting each other. The world is getting smaller in many ways, making it easier to get around and to communicate with other countries. But the advances in technology and travel are not yet having the impact we want on reducing poverty in the world, creating easier lives for people, educating children, making peace. It is up to individual people like you and me, doing good things, that will make the world more hopeful, more caring, more peaceful.

We wish you a great 2009 for your families and yourself. We hope for your continuing support and advocacy, but mostly we thank you for doing your part. Thanks for being part of the village.

**Please continue to help us to help the people of Cape Maclear help themselves.**

# Miles for Malawi Walk raises nearly \$400 for medicine

By Mary Ellen Lowney

Thanksgiving morning arrived with clear skies and warm temperatures, a welcome blessing for the nearly two dozen who came out to run, walk, and even pedal bicycles for Billy's Malawi Project.

The idea for the early morning jaunt came from project President Tim Allen's son Timmy, and his son-in-law Kyle Bertke.

And what a great idea it was!

Besides a group of young and fit runners and bikers, the event drew several board members, including Tim Allen, Judy Kappenman, Kathy Lynch and Mary Ellen Lowney. The youngest was an infant in a stroller, who was cheerful and apparently happy to help the



cause.

Walkers, runners and bikers started out at Timmy Allen's house in the East Forest Park neighborhood of Springfield, where coffee and donuts provided fuel and warmth. The gang set out on a three- to five-mile

journey through the streets of Springfield, stopping for water at the home of project supporter Christine Fey, and encouraging each other on. In the end, the day proved to be a boon for both fun times and fund-raising.

Thanks to the dedication and commitment of this fledgling group, the project raised almost \$400.

Even better news: Timmy Allen and Kyle Bertke are committed to organizing the event year to year, this being the First Annual Miles for Malawi Walk. Save the date for November 26, 2009, for the second annual run/walk/bike ride. Participants will gather again at Timmy's house.

Billy's Malawi Project extends a heartfelt thanks to all participants.

**Pictured above and at right: A group of runners, walkers and bikers gather outside Timmy Allen's house before starting out; Katie and Brigid O'Brien dress as pilgrim and turkey to celebrate Thanksgiving; Ryan McCollum straddles his bicycle; Billy's Malawi Trust board members Sister Judy Kappenman, Tim Allen and Kathy Lynch make it all look easy.**



Visit the clinic's website at [www.billysmalawiproject.org](http://www.billysmalawiproject.org)

# Billy Riordan Memorial Clinic provides a life-line to thousands

By Mags Riordan

As 2008 draws to a close the Billy Riordan Memorial Trust has completed another year providing a medical life line to an isolated community in Malawi, Central Africa. The people of Malawi are amongst the poorest on the planet. Access to medical treatment and educational facilities is very limited. Life expectancy due to HIV/AIDS is now reduced to 37 years from 42 years just last year.

The Trust has been working in Malawi since 2003. We depend totally on donations from individuals to maintain the essential services which we provide in this community.

Once again this year the generosity of many in the United States has enabled The Trust to purchase a wide variety of medication for dispensing at the clinic. Patient numbers have again shown an annual increase. More than 90,000 men, women and children have received medical help since the clinic since it opened its doors in 2004.

Fundraising in the United States continues on an ongoing basis with more than 95% of all donated money being spent on medication. Medical supplies purchased on a monthly basis include antibiotics, antifungals, analgesics, intravenous quinine, needles, syringes, bandages, dressings, antiseptics, topical applications, nebuliser applications and many other necessary items. The average spent per month is \$2,000. This budget does not allow us to purchase many important items which should be available at the clinic, such as snakebite venom and rabies treatment.

However, the presence of the clinic has made a significant difference to the overall level of health in the community. Mortality rates, particularly amongst babies and young children, continue to drop. For the first time in the history of the village, treatment for elderly people is now available. Prior to the establishment of the clinic, due to the re-

mote location of the village, many old people died on the floor of their huts unseen and untreated by any medical personnel. Today the elderly members of the community are brought by the Trust ambulance to the clinic where they receive medical attention and medication as required.

Due to the current global financial crises, the Trust is apprehensive. It is terrifying to think of anything that would threaten this clinic, which employs 32 local men and women in an area where the average annual per capita income is \$150, not to mention the impact on the health of the villagers. Services provided by the clinic are vitally important to this region.

The clinic must remain viable and present in this impoverished community. From our first world society which has so much, very little is requested.

Please continue to support the Trust. Please remember, overheads are minimal, volunteers give their time and expertise to this project and 97% of all donations go directly into the projects.



**Pictured at left: Volunteer nurse from County Cork, Ireland, Laura O'Sullivan, and clinic founder Mags Riordan from Dingle. The two were photographed recently outside the clinic.**

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## **A thank you from Malawi** by Mags Riordan

**A**s we reach the end of another year of work in Cape Maclear, Malawi, we enter our fifth year of providing basic health care to 15,000 people. The number of patients attending the clinic continues to climb as the population of Malawi increases by 2 million every 20 years. HIV/AIDS infection rates also rise, creating medical, social and financial havoc throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.

The clinic project is working well, with 3 doctors and 5 nurses giving their time and expertise to the project. The rainy season brings a huge increase in Malaria, which kills more than 3,000 children per day in the region. That more than doubles clinic visits between the months of January

and April. We have up to 150 patients per day arriving at the clinic seeking medical help. Living conditions also deteriorate during this time, with rain washing out grass roofs and mud huts. Sleeping on wet floors means more chest infections and pneumonia. Amongst adults, arthritis, chest complaints and rheumatism are commonplace. These diseases are compounded by the ever increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS. Providing medication for these patients is essential to prevent many unnecessary deaths.

Plans for 2009 include a Malaria Education Programme, provision of mosquito nets, training of laboratory technicians and providing work experience opportu-

### **About Malawi**

- Where: Sub Saharan Africa:: Borders with Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania.
- Population: 13 million.
- Life Expectancy: 37 years.
- 95% of the population are without electricity.
- 5% of girls and 7% of boys receive a 2nd level education.
- 20% infant mortality rate among children under 5 years.
- 75% of people live on less than \$2 per day.

nities for Malawian student nurses Land has been acquired for a new primary school. The people of Cape Maclear Thank You all for your support.