



STARCROSS
community

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Sharings

Winter 2009

What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility—a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world. President Barack Obama

RESPONDING TO THE PRESIDENT'S CALL

There is much hope around the world that this is the beginning of the end of an age in which the smart thing to do was to find an advantage over the other guy—to climb over each other to obtain a privileged position.

How many times did we hear young people on Inauguration Day say they are ready to remake our society and are just waiting for our new president to “Tell me what to do!” They are the lucky ones. For most of the older generations our duty comes knocking at the door. Several of my close friends put their children through college, saw them get established, rejoiced in the beginning of a family. Now, these same children are out of work. Stress has taken a toll. There are new priorities for the retirement resources my friends put aside. The problems are shared and the solutions are shared.

So it must be for the suffering community in which we each exist. When I was very young, 70 years ago, we had to memorize the Corporal Acts of Mercy: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, care for the sick, ransom the captives, bury the dead. I think these Acts of Mercy are now Acts of Necessary Survival.

Ransoming the captive is close to my heart right now. Around me are people captured by poverty, drugs, unemployment, lack of education, disability. We must start by stopping the rat race for a few opportunities of improvement. A good part of my hope is based upon my trust in our youth. I have overheard musicians in very important competitions generously helping each other without regard to who will win the prize.

Sister Julie was in Uganda on Inauguration Day (see page 2) she was one of the few Americans at a celebration in Kampala where she took some of our AIDS Orphans. She sent this in an e-mail:

WOW! What joy and pride and hope over here! People on the news and on the streets have been talking about how the US may now become more peaceful, etc. But by the time of the inauguration, the words had become simple and personal. “We black people are equal”. “We have the intelligence and vision to lead the most powerful nation on earth.” “We are worthy of respect.” The front page of the morning paper is a full page color picture with just the words, PRESIDENT OBAMA. YES WE CAN!

My strongest memory of January 20, was to watch our new president and his wife dancing slowly after a tiring day. Michelle Obama in her beautiful, simple dress reminded me of the daffodils slowly coming through the barren ground here at Starcross. This prayer was in my heart, for them, for those I love, for the people of this country, and the people of this planet “Don’t let their dream die!”

Brother Toby

NEWS FROM STARCROSS KIN WORLDWIDE!

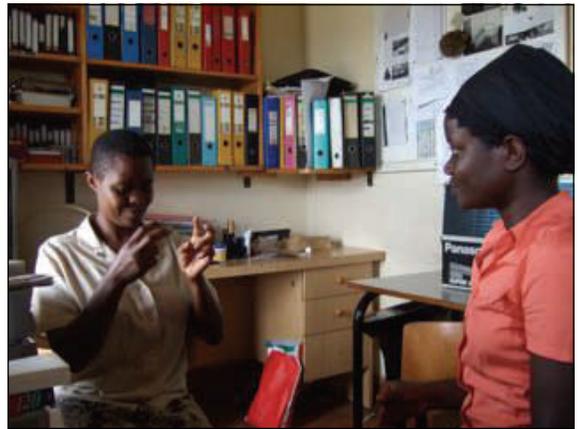
This is the time of year Sister Julie stops thinking about olive trees and heads to Uganda to review and supervise the Starcross Kin Worldwide program for AIDS orphans. At any one time there are about 100 kids. They come in young and leave when they are launched in life — then more come in. “Leave” is not really the right word. The older kids continue as big sisters and brothers to this family.

Teddy came to us when she was 8 and destitute. She is now ready to graduate from Makerere University, “The Harvard of East Africa” in Mass Communication. She also works part-time at our House of Hope as assistant director. Teddy probably speaks for all of our young people when she says “Starcross is my home and family. I love my brothers and sisters. This family will always be my priority in life.” She is also going to be a treasure to her country.

Every one of our young people who have been “launched” is employed. This is remarkable in a country with 23% unemployment among young people. How? An opportunity for education is part of the answer. But a stable home life, our remarkable director Margaret Nanteze, and feeling the confidence of their 282 American sponsors contributes to the success of our; journalists, nurses, welders, mechanics, artists, social workers, computer experts, business people, teachers, caterers, tailors, carpenters, interpreters.

All of these stories are inspiring to the younger children. And all have special remarkable twists. Our Harriet will enter the field of Human Rights with a focus on the needs of people with disabilities. Her specialty is sign language interpretation. She introduced Sister Julie to her major professor — who is totally deaf and does not speak! Even when she was a little girl Harriet was concerned about the disabled and discrimination against them. She is very active and will undoubtedly become well known to Uganda’s lawmakers!

After her trip Sister Julie is preparing a Power-Point report on the program that will be posted on the Starcross website for sponsors and all those interested. An e-mail notice with the link will be sent out soon.



Harriet “listening” to her professor.



Edward & Richard just came to us from a corner in this house next to the city garbage dump.



Timmy & Teddie watch President Obama’s inauguration on TV with Sister Julie.

AT YOUR REQUEST . . .

There are special needs arising in “this winter of our hardship”, as our president put it. We are trying to listen carefully to what we hear from you. When we were working heavily with people living with AIDS we learned that brief retreats from the tension were necessary. We are hearing the same thing now. Here is one response.

EYE OF THE STORM RETREATS

Feb. 21-22 and May 30-31 @ Starcross
Directed by Brother Toby

These gatherings are limited to 8 people. There are times of; coming together, “hands to work” in the peaceful setting, quiet space, simple Ecumenical meditative gatherings in the chapel, sharing meals. We start at 12 Noon on Saturday and end at 2PM on Sunday. There is no fee but it is very important that you not drop out at the last minute as plans are made in advance and the size is limited.

Call Sister Marti (707) 886-1919 or e-mail sm@starcross.org to register or for additional information.

DO YOU WANT *SHARINGS* BY E-MAIL RATHER THAN THE PAPER EDITION?

A number of you have asked for an e-mail edition of our quarterly *Sharings*. We could not work out the technical details until now but thanks to a new program Sister Marti is mastering, we can give you a choice! *Sharings* is printed on recycled paper but join the e-list and help us be even more sustainable.

You can get on the list by going to *Sharings* on the website homepage (left side) www.starcross.org/about_us.htm and pulling down the tab to “E-mail Sharings” and filling it out. OR you can just e-mail us your desire and we will do this for you: community@starcross.org.

Also, all you patient users of our on-line ordering will be delighted to know that we will soon have a state-of-the-art ordering system for Olive Oil, books, wreaths, fruit, gifts, contributions, and the like. Complete with confirmations, easy tracking and many other wonderful things! Thank you for enduring our growing pains.

FRIENDS SAVE US IN HARD TIMES

Is the economic downturn felt at Starcross? It sure is. But that is not all of the story. We are funded by sales of wreaths, olive oil, books and contributions. Donations and sales have been going down. In the late autumn we correctly calculated our income would be reduced by about 20%. It was scary, as all of you know. Then something happened.

For many years a school principal has been buying wreaths. We chatted once a year. Her degree was in music, and she once performed with the Chicago Symphony. Sadly she died in the autumn. Later we found she had for years been regularly contributing to an annuity for us. This unexpected and generous gift removed us from the economically critical list! There is still a gap but we can handle it.

We can't give her name as she always valued her anonymity but there is a part of the Olive Grove dedicated to her and she will never be forgotten here.

We can function as we do only because of contributions. Bequests in wills and annuities are an important part of our support. They guarantee the long-term future of the Starcross influence in lives and in the world. All of our self-support endeavors originated with bequests.

Please consider a bequest to support us in the future. You can decide if you want to give for our general needs or for a specific activity (such as children, self-support, etc.)

Your or your attorney will draw up the clause you want but it will probably include something like this:

I give and bequeath the sum of \$_____ to Starcross Monastic Community, a non-profit organization at 34500 Annapolis Road, Annapolis, CA 95412. IRS Tax Exempt ID # 94-1687876.

Or, like our friend, you might consider an annuity.

Thank you for this blessing.

STARCROSS

STARCROSS MONASTIC COMMUNITY
34500 Annapolis Road
Annapolis, Ca. 95412

U.S. Postage
PAID
Non-profit Org.
Permit #20
Santa Rosa, CA



WINTER NEWSLETTER 2009

FRIENDS OF STARCROSS SPRING WORKDAYS

March 28-29

These quarterly gatherings are open to all on our mailing list. Simple accommodations are available at Starcross. Motels are also available.

We start at 9 AM (simple breakfast) on Saturday and end on Sunday with 12:30 PM Lunch. The focus this time will mostly be on bottling and labeling Olive Oil. But there are always alternative tasks. Each season brings its own delights to those who come to this special and peaceful space.

We will also have updates on Starcross projects, Ecumenical meditative gatherings and sharing bits of our life and heritage. There is a warm and friendly atmosphere in these get-togethers. We cannot accommodate children or pets, or guests who know nothing about us. There is no fee.



Planting Lavender

To register: Send an e-mail with names and contact information (phone, address, e-mail) to gathering@starcross.org or mail to Starcross, 34500 Annapolis Road, Annapolis, CA 95412. For more information call Sister Marti (707) 886-1919 or e-mail the Friends Facilitator Sandra DeBella Bodley. DeBella@sonoma.edu.



Painting a Fence



Sharing Meals



Canning