

# The Magic Kingdom

Newsletter of the Friends of Swaziland  
July 2006

## Sanibonani!

Greetings all Swaziland RPCVs and supporters of our friends in Swaziland! This issue features a sobering article from Amber Kelley, our first contribution from a member of the new group of PCVs that entered the country in 2003. Also, you will notice references to the "Young Heroes" organization, a group we're actively supporting that has an amazing program to help out the AIDS orphans in Swaziland.

For any newly returned PCVs that are reading this, please join Friends of Swaziland. It's a great way of keeping in contact with your group members and supporting our Swazi friends. There's no fee for joining for the first year. We'd love to hear about your experiences in Swaziland.

For the 1968-1996 SD/RPCVs, feel free to send me something for the next newsletter, maybe something brief for the "Uhlalaphi/Alumni News" column to let us know what you've been up to.

Also, I hope to see you at the National Peace Corps conference in Washington, D.C. in September. More on that to come.

Nginyabonga,

John von Reyn,  
Group Leader

## FOS Funds Two Projects in Swaziland, but Needs More!

FOS has funded two projects in Swaziland since our last newsletter, one through the Peace Corps Partnership Program, the other through a recently formed foundation called "Young Heroes" that provides financial assistance to orphan families.

In July 2005 we contributed \$500 towards funding the "World Map Project," a project proposed by Swaziland PCV's Christina Granberg and Luke Fiordalis and vetted by the Peace Corps Partnership program. The money was used for supplies to promote geography literacy by creating world map murals in public places throughout Swaziland.

In March 2006, FOS contributed \$718 to support two orphan families in Swaziland through the **Young Heroes**

program. As stated in the Young Heroes website, "The Young Heroes program gathers funds from sponsors to distribute to Swazi orphan children under the age of 18. Unlike other programs, our goal is to keep families together on their homesteads and in their communities. So, instead of supporting one individual child, your contribution goes towards helping the entire family meet its basic needs. You can sponsor a family either in whole or in part. (Because some families are large, it often takes more than one sponsor to support them.)" For more information on Young Heroes see their website at:

[http://youngheroes.org.sz/index\\_home.asp](http://youngheroes.org.sz/index_home.asp)

We're constantly looking for worthy projects to fund, so if you have some suggestions, please let us know.

## FOS Activities at NPCA Conference in D.C., 9/14-16, 2006

By John von Reyn, Mbabane 1977-79

Friends of Swaziland will be sponsoring events at the NPCA conference for Swaziland RPCVs. The conference is slated to begin Thursday, September 14th. Five years ago we sponsored a reception at the Embassy of Swaziland, had dinner at a Senegalese restaurant and marched together to Arlington Cemetery for a memorial service to honor the PCVs who died while in service. We will be planning similar events. If you're interested in helping or have some ideas, please let me know. When events are finalized we will be posting the information on the NPCA calendar and the SD/RPCV E-group. **If you're planning on attending, please drop me a line. If you need housing we may be able to help.**

Here's a summary of the NPCA Activities planned so far:

**Thursday, September 14, 2006. 8am-7pm**

Opportunity to meet with Congressional offices regarding Peace Corps and other development issues.

**Friday, September 15, 2006. 9am-6pm**

Group Leaders Forum  
Annual General Meeting NPCA Board Meeting

**Saturday, September 16, 2006. 12 noon-4pm**

Anniversary Picnic

## DC Area RPCVs – Get-Together at Dr. Dremo's In Arlington in July

By Scott Lewis

Join us at the that fine, funky bar with the third-world ambiance in Arlington, VA, known as Dr. Dremo's, only a few short steps from the Court House metro. We'll be meeting on Friday, July 28th, beginning at 5:30 till ? If you haven't spoken siSwati in a few years, this will be your opportunity. Though not necessary, an RSVP would be nice, so we can get the word out on who all will be attending. For directions, check the Dr. Dremo's website at <http://www.drdremo.com/contact.asp>.

## Support Jack and Swazi Orphan Families

*Editor's Note: Jack Conrad submitted the attached letter and needs your support*

Dear Friends of Swaziland,

The Kingdom cries for our help. I'm writing because I've accepted a challenge to step-up and participate in this summer's Red Ribbon Ride (a.k.a. the AIDS Ride). The goal of the Ride is to assist distinct AIDS service organizations and to do so through the Ride's participants and sponsors. As a representative of Friends of Swaziland's Board, I will be joining the ride, and raising money for the orphans who are supported by Swaziland's Young Heroes Program.

As part of my participation, I've agreed to raise over \$2,500 in support between now and the Ride. That's why I could really use your help. Would you be willing to make a donation to help Friends of Swaziland reach this goal of support for the Young Heroes Program? Perhaps you would be willing to pledge 10 or 20 cents per mile, or even per km? You can do so by sending an e-mail message to the Friends of Swaziland treasurer, Scott Lewis (c/o adansoniad@aol.com, with a "cc" to me at jackgconrad@earthlink.net), indicating your willingness to sponsor Friends of Swaziland and me on the ride, along with the amount of your pledge. You will then have until early July to send Scott a check made out to Friends of Swaziland (re: The Red Ribbon Ride for the Young Heroes Program).

To help alleviate the suffering among orphans in the Kingdom, starting on July 13th, I will bicycle 500 kms (~300 miles) over four days through the prairies and farmland of the upper Midwest, while camping out at night (I can hardly wait).

HIV/AIDS currently affects 40,000,0000 individuals worldwide, most of them in Africa, particularly southern Africa and especially Swaziland. As you may know, the Kingdom now has the unenviable distinction of having the world highest incidence of AIDs with 40% of its adult

population infected. Worldwide, there were 5 million new cases of AIDs as recently as 2003; and of these 50% were women and 56% were under age 25.

Given our ties to Africa, especially to Swaziland, and the scourge that AIDs has brought to the sub-continent, I believed it was time for me to do something significant. That's why I hope you'll be willing to partner with Friends of Swaziland and me in this effort.

Thanks in advance for your support and generosity in helping Swazi orphans via the Young Heroes Program!

**Jack Conrad, Ekukhanyeni H.S. (1984-87)**

[From the Times of Swaziland, May 24, 2006: The Young Heroes Program was launched on February 3 this year and they have enrolled 150 new families with more than 350 children. This program has been independently presented to an international meeting of United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Global Orphan Alliance as a best practice that other countries should consider adopting.

For more information on Young Heroes and the Red Ribbon rides see the following websites: [www.YoungHeroes.org](http://www.YoungHeroes.org), [sz/index\\_home.asp/](http://sz/index_home.asp/) and [www.RedRibbonRide.org](http://www.RedRibbonRide.org).

## In Duduzile's Garden: A revised journal entry from February of 2004

By Amber Kelley, Swaziland 2003-2005.

Shakespeare's Tragedies, the Greek Tragedies and many of my favorite works that drove me to dedicate my time in university to literature are rife with blood and death. What is our fascination with those images we find in our art and in our culture? What is so beautiful about human suffering? I know there must be beauty in those old favorite passages, but oh how things have changed since death has become a reality in my daily life, rather than a poetic image in iambic pentameter.

A dear girl, Duduzile, has died. Like so many here, she died from AIDS. She died while resting in my arms. The image of her emaciated 5'2" forty-five pound frame is burned into my memory. The sound of her voice pleading, "Bamba, Bamba," or, "Hold me, Hold me," rings in my ears always. I still feel her tiny hands around my neck, tugging at my ears and hair, holding my cheeks, desperately hoping that our touches, our physical closeness, would help dull or distract her from all of her pain. What I would have done for proper painkillers to give her, but such luxuries were not available at our rural clinic.

Duduzile was twenty-one years old when she died. At such a young age she had already buried her two baby daughters; daughters who had sucked HIV from her breast

and who were infected by the womb that gave them both life and death. Other than her daughters, Duduzile had been alone in the world since the age of thirteen when she was orphaned. Her story is becoming tragically common of orphans in Swaziland. In order to survive to see tomorrow, these children make sacrifices today. They sacrifice their bodies to adults who offer food or money, and in turn they sacrifice their lives. Those that are able to survive without using sex as a commodity are just as vulnerable to rape and still more are infected while attempting to care for their dying parents, children, and friends.

At least Dudu was not alone during those last few weeks, days, those last few moments. That should be something, right? At least she knew, if even at the end, that SHE MATTERED TO THIS WORLD! We could not speak words during that last day, but our eyes communicated all. She knew she was not alone. Her giant brown eyes burrowed deep inside me, where I recall the whisper of her spirit when I pass a young girl on the street.

During our first few days together in the hospital, I thought that there would be something I could do to help Dudu survive; make a phone call to the right doctor, get the right drugs, or encourage her to eat and gain weight. But I now know that I could not prevent Duduzile from suffering that horrible death, just as I now know that I will not be able to prevent the deaths of the majority of those who touch my life here in Swaziland. My action, my job, is to help others fight when they can fight, but in many relationships my only course of action is to love and embrace, to help ease the pain of a body rejecting life and reaching for death. It was my honor to help my friend Duduzile in her journey to death.

I purchased flavored ice blocks for Dudu and helped her eat them. Her favorite color was pink so we painted her toenails "paint the town pink" and cut pink flowers out of magazines in order to make a flower garden on the wall beside her bed. I listened to Dudu's funny stories about the happier days of her childhood and listened to her child-like giggle. When she talked of her pain I told her I was sorry and, when she wanted to be held with love, my strong healthy arms more than happily scooped her up.

I have to believe that those few meager gifts, because they were given with love, made some difference to a young beautiful girl who needed to know that she was not alone in her fight. I believe, like Duduzile, all the Swazi children need to know that they are not alone in their struggle. Compassion. Recognition. That is all. What simple gifts to give.

I am an American. I am privileged. I have spent my twenty-eight years free from the anguish of extreme poverty, loneliness, and the pain of HIV. These children, these orphans, are ravaged by it daily. I am angered by the pain this beautiful girl endured; her heart exploded and then ... the spirit in her eyes was gone. Duduzile, along with so many others, has suffered what no child should.

It is when I am most angry, most filled with rage, that I must remember the thousands of children in Swaziland who have been saved from such pain because the Swazi people love and absorb those in need. Swazis are, more often than not, and more often than one might think possible, scooping up these dependent babes and giving compassion and recognition.

Every day elderly "bogogo," extended family members and neighbors are taking in orphaned children, their homes swelling. Sharing their love and what resources they have, their burdened lives becoming more laden. In the Swazi culture no child is an orphan because each village is willing to adopt children as their own. In fact, there is no word for "orphan" in the SiSwati language.

Everyday Rural Health Motivators (RHMs) are walking mile upon mile to care for the sick and the children of the many child headed households. The RHMs in my village are caring for more than 200 patients apiece. They are doing so for only \$7 a month, if the government pays them. I cannot express how honored I am to witness the work of these everyday heroes. Swazis understand the importance of loving their neighbor, which I believe will be what eventually allows them to defeat HIV in their country.

Orphans can and do escape the virus in Swaziland, but after that triumph what future exists for them? So many do not have an education or even a shirt on their back. Physical and emotional abuse often leaves them full of anger. Many do not understand love or healthy relationships. Years of poor nutrition affect their physical and intellectual capabilities. What can we do to stop the tidal wave of AIDS from crushing the children of Swaziland?

A quote by Jorie Graham crosses my mind daily here—"Child, what should I know to save you that I do not know?"

I wish someone could give me the answer.

Swazis are doing all they can to survive and to aid the children around them; however, those old traditional structures that allow no word for "orphan" have been overwhelmed, like the sick themselves, by the HIV crisis. The result is beautiful children like Duduzile slipping through the cracks. I want to do all that I can to support my new heroes here in Swaziland, in hopes of easing their burden and in hopes of preventing another child, full of promise, from dying as Duduzile was forced to die.

The problems of this place, Swaziland, can be so overwhelming. Children, mothers, and fathers die everyday without adequate medication and care. The number of the sick is rising. Maybe each of these lives cannot be saved, or even prolonged, but they can be improved. I could not save Dudu. RHMs could not save Dudu. So why bother? Because, as I held her frail body in a paper flower garden, Dudu smiled when she saw her pink toes.

## With your Help We can do a great deal!

Your current board has been serving for over five years. We're definitely in need of some new members with fresh ideas and talent who can help us continue our good work.

As Board member and FOS E-Group moderator Jack Conrad stated in the last newsletter, "Plagued by AIDS, famine, and poor governance, Swaziland needs our help now more than ever. What is missing from the equation? **You....**" I've listed the positions that are critical with a rough idea of the time commitment.

So, if you do have a little time on your hands and would like to use it to good effect, please let me know by either contacting me via e-mail, [jvonreyn@comcast.net](mailto:jvonreyn@comcast.net), or give me a call at 703-335-0848.

Ngiyabonga and salani kahle,  
John von Reyn, Group Leader

**Group Leader.** I've been at it for five years and it's time to hand it over to someone who has some more time to coordinate our activities. I'm guessing that 10 hours a month might do it, but obviously, the more time the better.

**Newsletter Editor.** I'm estimating about 20-30 hours per newsletter. Actually this could be a fairly easy job if you can keep up with it. You just need to add articles to a draft format as you see something of interest and solicit articles from the E-group, from Board members and others.

**Membership Coordinator.** Primarily keeps the membership database updated. Coordinates with NPCA using their database information to keep the FOS database current. A membership drive is in order, since we haven't had one in 5 years. This would be a mailing to all addresses in the database to encourage membership and update the database based on the mailing results. About 24 hours minimum per year.

**Fundraising Coordinator.** Actively solicits funds and project funding ideas. Circulates funding proposals to the Board for review and approval. About 24 hours minimum per year.

## FOS Charitable Donations

By Jack Conrad

Are you looking for special tax-deductible charitable giving opportunities? Note that Friends of Swaziland is now a 501(c)3 organization registered with the IRS. As such, your donations to the Friends of Swaziland Fund are now fully tax deductible. Your contributions help fund aid projects in the Kingdom. Contributions can be sent to Friends of Swaziland Treasurer, Scott Lewis, at:

1276 N. Wayne St., Apt. 425  
Arlington, VA 22201-5851

Thank you for your continued support of Friends of Swaziland activities.

## Treasurer's Report for 2005

Below is a summary of the Friends of Swaziland income and expenses for 2005, including rebates received from NPCA.

The Friends of Swaziland maintains a checking account at BBT in Arlington, Virginia.

Beginning bank balance on January 1, 2005: **\$7,657.50**  
Ending bank balance on December 31, 2005: **\$8,120.88**

### Income during 2005

NPCA Rebates: \$782.50  
Bank interest: \$7.12  
Memberships & Donations: \$680.00

**Total income during 2005** **\$1,469.62**

### Expenses during 2005

NPCA Re-affiliation for 2005 \$76.00  
Web Registration \$82.00  
Newsletter production/ mailing expenses \$111.89  
Group gift to Swazi Queen Mother Reception \$61.37  
World Map Project Donation PC Partnership \$500.00  
PC/Swaziland Video Project - CPU upgrade \$174.98

**Total expenses during 2005:** **\$1,006.24**

## Peace Corps Partnership Projects - Funding Possibilities

Peace Corps Partnership Program has posted the following projects submitted by PCVs in South Africa and Swaziland on their website ([www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm](http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm)) Check out the website for full descriptions and new projects:

### South Africa

Skills Training and Community Integration Volunteer :  
E. Campa (IL) Amount Needed - \$5,052.00

### Swaziland

Nkwene Sports and Recreation Center Volunteer:  
S. Layne (CA), Amount Needed - \$7,230.00

School Kitchen and Garden Water Project Volunteer::  
A. Pietruszka (OR), Amount Needed - \$11,077.25

## Uhlalaphi? (Alumni News)

**David Sullivan, PCV/SD - 1989-91.** reported on the E-Group list that Mary Ryan, who was the U.S. Ambassador to Swaziland, passed away recently. "When I was a volunteer there (1989-91, think she left in 1990), she opened her swimming pool to PCVs, which was great. In 2001 she was the Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs in charge of visas and was unfairly scapegoated for the September 11 terrorists being let into the country." And David also added later: "See **Wah Wah** [recently released

movie by Director, Richard E Grant, who grew up in Swaziland and attended Waterford.] It's set in Swaziland, filmed there – I guess Piggs Peak circa 2005 looks much like Mbabane circa 1967 – and, for other PCVs who worked in the Computer Centre, features our co-worker Mathokoza Sibiyi in the lead male Swazi role!”

**Steve Berman, Lozitha, 1975-77.** “Nine Bekunene! I joined the Peace Corps from a California commune and taught science at Lozitha School from 1975-77, well before the royal palace was built there. As I left the magic kingdom, they were starting to pave the road and put up telephone poles from Matsapha.

Since returning, I received my doctorate in Physiological Psychology, and after four years at Columbia University, was recruited to UCLA in 1990. I use brain imaging tools like EEG, PET and MRI scans to study attention, substance abuse, functional medical disorders and other forms of mind-body interaction. I'm a member of the UCLA Brain Research Institute, the Center for Integrative Medicine, and Scientific Director of brain imaging for the UCLA Center for Neurovisceral Sciences and Women's Health.

I sing in my synagogue choir and teach in a community service youth martial arts program for Seido Karate of Hollywood, where I hold a third degree black belt. I recently took two of our LA teens to join students from 17 countries in the Seido 30 Anniversary benefit celebration in NY. The tournament donated \$30,000 to widows of police and firemen killed in the World Trade Center attack and to UNICEF.

I'm also on the board of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Los Angeles, so a big Sawubona! to any of my old umganis, and if any Swazi RPCVs are coming through LA, stop by and say hi. We have an active group with several events a month, and I just put up a newly-returned African volunteer over the weekend while she found an apartment for the UCLA African Studies graduate program she starts in Fall. Our Yamanaka fund is always looking for good projects to support PCVs in the field, and as the new treasurer I'd love to see some of the funds go to kaNgwane. Check us out at <http://www.rpcvla.org/index.html>

## FOS Electronic Connection

**E-Group.** Friends of Swaziland has an E-group to keep us connected and help share news, information, and ideas through an Internet-based SD-RPCV Network. One of the main goals of the E-group is to make it easy for us to stay in

contact with each other by having one central e-mail address for broadcasting to members messages related to our group and Swaziland. Another goal of the E-group is make a difference where we can in projects and activities designed to assist Swaziland and Swazis. The address is: [sdrpcvEmailList@yahoo.com](mailto:sdrpcvEmailList@yahoo.com).

To subscribe to the FOS E-group, simply visit the website at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sdrpcvEmailList/>

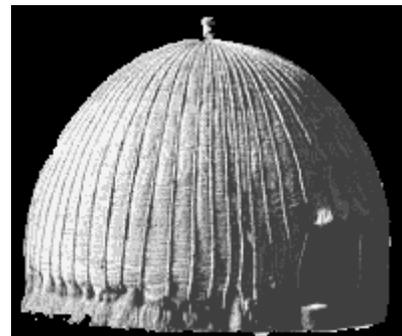
**SD/RPCV Web Site.** Check out the website at [www.FriendsofSwaziland.org](http://www.FriendsofSwaziland.org). If you have anything appropriate to post on the site, be sure to e-mail it to the Webmaster.

## Your FOS Officers

Group Leader	John von Reyn
Communications/E-Group	Jack Conrad
Webmaster	Tom Gutnick
Treasurer	Scott Lewis
Newsletter Editor	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Fundraising Coordinator	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Membership Coordinator	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Board Member	Lorraine Stehn
Board Member	Susan Soares
Board Member	Mark Pierzchala
Board Member	Terry AmRhein

## Newsletter Publishing Schedule

We try to publish twice a year, so the next issue should be published in late Fall, which gives you plenty of time to write that article or you've been meaning to submit.



Hamba kahle!

# Friends of Swaziland Membership – Join or Renew Today!

Membership in Friends of Swaziland brings you, in addition to all issues of our Newsletter, special mailings announcing the annual meeting, reunions, etc. Membership also brings you the satisfaction of contributing to the goals and aims of Friends of Swaziland. To join, complete this form and return it with your check.

You can also join the National Peace Corps Association and Friends of Swaziland at the same time (joint membership) NPCA members receive the quarterly magazine *World view*, the newsletter 3/1/61, eligibility for the National Convention, credit cards, Congressional representation, and other benefits. NPCA dues and contributions can be tax deductible. **First year of membership to NPCA and FOS is free to recently returned PCVs .**

Name		Today's Date
Street		Home Phone
City	State	Zip
Current Occupation		Email
<b>Experience in Swaziland:</b> (PCVs list Peace Corps job; Academics: list field and research topics; Swazis: list profession or field of study)		
<b>Years in Swaziland</b>	<b>Site/Hometown</b>	<b>Job Assignment (math teacher, etc.)</b>

We like to keep an update on our members. Please answer the following questions (use additional paper if needed)..

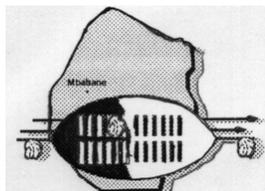
1. Briefly, what have you done since leaving Peace Corps? What are you doing now?
2. What projects or programs would you like to see FOS involved in (either in the U.S. or Swaziland)? Can you help?
3. What news features would or do you like in the FOS newsletter?

**Areas of Interest:** Check potential FOS Activities in which you would be most interested:

- Newsletter                       Reunions/Gatherings                       Trips to Swaziland  
 FOS Officer/staff position                       Fund raising                       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>JOINT MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF SWAZILAND and NPCA</b>		<b>Easy method:</b> Join from NPCA Website www.rpcv.org Otherwise send to address below.
Individual Friends of Swaziland & NPCA membership	\$50.00 _____	
Dual FOS/NPCA Memberships (two persons, one address )	\$65.00 _____	<b>Send to:</b> <b>Friends of Swaziland</b> <b>c/o Scott Lewis</b> <b>1276 N. Wayne St., Apt.425</b> <b>Arlington, VA 22201</b>
<b>MEMBERSHIP IN FRIENDS OF SWAZILAND only</b>		
Individual Friends of Swaziland membership	\$15.00 _____	
Dual FOS Membership (two persons, one address)	\$20.00 _____	
Additional donation to Friends of Swaziland. Thank you!! (Donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law.)	\$ _____	
TOTAL ENCLOSED (payable to Friends of Swaziland)	\$ _____	

The information collected on this form will be used by FOS and will be made available only to those organizations whose purposes are consistent with the aims of FOS. It will not be sold or traded for commercial purposes. The information may be used in the FOS Directory unless you request otherwise.



## Friends of Swaziland

c/o J. von Reyn  
6194 Deer Path Court  
Manassas, VA 20112

**Address correction requested**

To help us with our mailing costs, please consider joining -- only \$15.