



MAKE YOUR MARK

Dear Families,

This magazine is filled with stories of ordinary kids who are making an extraordinary mark on the world by addressing a problem with creativity and energy. Their actions—some small, some large—are having a direct and positive impact on others. In school, your child has been learning all about the power of transforming knowledge and compassion into action through a special program developed by Scholastic Inc. and two nonprofits, Malaria No More and Abbott Fund. The program, which uses malaria as a case study, includes components on science, writing, art, and geography.

Read the articles with your child, and then talk as a family about ways you can help others, whether it is taking action to alleviate malaria, a preventable disease that still kills more than a million people (mostly children) in Africa a year, or by addressing another issue either close to home or far away. We hope that this magazine and the discussions it provokes show that we all can make a difference, and that every child can, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Sincerely,

Malaria No More, Abbott Fund, and Scholastic Inc.



Together, They Sing

These South African orphans lost their orphanage in a fire. But they never lost their hope.

“Agape” is the Greek word for unconditional love. But life for kids at the Agape Health Care Center in Durban, South Africa, is harsh. They live in a region called KwaZulu-Natal, known for having the world’s highest HIV-infection rate. Many of these kids became orphans when they lost their parents to AIDS-related health problems.

In January 2005, life for the Agape kids got even worse: Their orphanage burned down. “We had no place to go,” said 15-year-old Yilinas Mqadi. “There was this cargo container from a truck that was next to our hut, so we stayed there.”

Despite these hardships, the Agape kids formed a singing group called the Children of Agape Choir and began to perform both new and traditional Zulu songs and dance routines.

At about the same time, across the world, the Geier family of Queens, New York, started the LOVE, HALLIE Foundation, dedicated to their



The Children of Agape perform at St. Ignatius Loyola Church in New York.



daughter and sister Hallie, who was 11 years old when she was killed in a car accident in 2004. As her parents were going through Hallie's belongings, they discovered that she had saved \$398 of her own money to help children affected by AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. In her notebook, she wrote, "People, be nice to each other. Love, Hallie."

Hoping to inspire young people to help African children, the LOVE,

"You can go through the worst things and be happy, and be positive, and be a helper."

HALLIE Foundation invited members of the Children of Agape Choir to perform in the United States. During three visits to America in 2005, they raised enough funds to rebuild their orphanage.

Now the Children of Agape are helping others. Seeing the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina on television in 2005, the Children of Agape decided to reach out to

children in the United States who had experienced homelessness and hardship.

"We decided that we should also help other children—and donate 10 percent of the money that we raised for our orphanage to give to the Katrina children victims, because they're suffering," said Yilinas.

Then, in December 2006, the Agape singers returned to the United States to raise malaria awareness, a disease devastating children in neighboring countries, although largely under control in South Africa. On December 14, they performed at the White House Summit on Malaria.

"These kids have taught me that you can go through the worst things and be happy, and be positive, and be a helper," Ted Geier said. "It's great to do something with kids where they can directly take part in the process to make change in their communities and in the world." ■

For more information visit www.lovehallie.org/agape.html.



Dragonflies and Mosquitoes: The Holy Trinity School

"You get a really good feeling...you can actually save someone about your age."

—Emma Davis, 7th grader, Holy Trinity School
"I was surprised to learn that every 30 seconds a child dies from malaria. That had a big impact on me," says Fallon Bridgeland, a student at Holy Trinity School in Georgetown, Washington, D.C. When she and her seventh-grade



Holy Trinity students hold a malaria teach-in.

❖ About Malaria, and What You Can Do ❖

Few people in America even know that malaria is still a danger in other countries. A recent Gallup poll showed that only 3 in 10 Americans even consider malaria to be a very serious global health issue, although it kills more than 1 million people annually and is a leading killer of children under 5 in Africa. In fact, on average, an African child dies from malaria every 30 seconds. Yet these deaths are preventable, and malaria is treatable.

Malaria is caused by a microscopic parasite that lives in the stomach and saliva of certain mosquitoes. After an infected mosquito bites someone, the tiny parasites can enter the person's bloodstream. Within two weeks the person gets sick, with symptoms that might feel like the flu at first but can get worse and even lead to death.

Scientists and researchers are working on a vaccine, but it could be years before it's available. In the meantime, there is a proven, comprehensive approach

that can prevent and treat malaria, and insecticide-treated bed nets are a key component. When draped over a bed, the nets prevent mosquitoes from biting when they are most active, from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m., and also kill mosquitoes that land on the nets. A bed net can cover more than one person and can last up to five years!

For \$10, you can provide a bed net and the training to go with it. You can give an African child the gift of growing up by making a donation at www.malariaNOMORE.org. If you want to take on a bigger role, you can raise awareness of malaria by organizing fund-raising events in your school, scout group, or club that could provide bed nets to an entire village. (Above, read how the Holy Trinity School pooled its resources in a school-wide effort to fight malaria.) The web site www.vetothequito.org has easy-to-follow, downloadable information kits that will help you get organized. Be part of the solution!



classmates began researching malaria, they found out that people can die from a mosquito bite, that malaria exists in many places around the world—and that “if you’ve saved \$10, you can buy a bed net and save a life.”

Through a series of creative fundraisers, the K-8 students at Holy Trinity raised enough money to save almost 500 lives. Their efforts included a bake sale, homemade gift certificates, and a “Read-a-Thon,” in which they collected pledges per page or book they read.

Holy Trinity students have also been spreading the word about the disease. The seventh graders presented lessons about malaria based on their research to their younger classmates. One dressed up as a mosquito, while others did skits, created posters, and played an educational version of “malaria bingo.”

The students at Holy Trinity have gotten a firsthand glimpse into the dangers kids in Africa face—and their courage—by writing letters to pen pals in Africa. Hoping to spread the word about malaria, the students are also writing letters to their friends in the United States.

To recognize the Holy Trinity students’ creative efforts, First Lady Laura Bush presented them with the Dragonfly Award at the White House Summit on Malaria on December 14, 2006. Created by Malaria No More, the Dragonfly Award will be given each year to honor students who have made outstanding contributions in the fight against malaria. ■

For White House Summit video, visit www.kaiser.network.org/healthcast/whitehouse/14dec06.

◆◆◆◆◆ By Kids, for Kids

To help homeless Hurricane Katrina kids, three sisters launched a national backpack collection effort.

The Children of Agape were not the only ones moved to action by the plight of children hit by Hurricane Katrina. In August 2005, Jackie Kantor, 14, and her sisters Melissa, 11, and Jenna, 8, watched the news about the thousands



The Kantor sisters of Maryland collected backpacks for Hurricane Katrina relief.

of kids in towns along the coasts of Louisiana and Mississippi who lost everything they owned when Hurricane Katrina devastated their homes.

The girls decided that they had to do something. From the comfort of their living room in Maryland, the sisters came up with a great idea: What if they collected backpacks and filled them with books, toys, and school supplies? The thousands of Katrina kids “have to have some joy, have to have some comfort, and I thought giving kids something that could entertain them would help make them feel like they didn’t lose everything,” said Jackie.

The sisters enlisted the help of their parents and set a goal of collecting and filling 1,000 backpacks. Within three days, the family had help from a team of 20 local volunteers. Just one week later, hundreds of volunteers at Jackie’s high school were boxing up more than 10,000 backpacks to be sent to children in five states!

“Giving money to the Red Cross is good, but it didn’t make me feel like I did anything,” said Melissa. “But if you make a backpack, you are actually able to put the love and care into the backpack that kids will get.”

Added Jackie: “I just thought it would be a really great way to connect with these kids of our own country,

who have just lost everything.”

Before they knew it, the effort grew across the country! By the end of the second week, the family had created a web site, www.projectbackpack.org, listing 40 cities that were collecting and stuffing backpacks.

In the end, more than 50,000 backpacks were sent to the kids of Katrina. Even major corporations such as UPS and Southwest Airlines donated their resources to the cause.

“The project is great because it’s by kids, for kids,” said Jackie. “It’s more than your parents writing a check. It’s about you putting your own stuff together for someone. That is so inspiring.” ■

For more, visit www.projectbackpack.org.

◆◆◆◆◆ Clean Drinking Water: PlayPumps

“We have a lot of fun playing on the wheel, and because there are a lot of us, we fill up the tank quickly.” —Young boy, South Africa

Have you ever ridden on a merry-go-round with your friends?

Has the merry-go-round ever provided your family with clean drinking water?

Thanks to the efforts of businessman Trevor Field, many kids in Africa can





❖ Family Activity: A Drop at a Time ❖

Try this water conservation activity to see how just by changing one of your habits at home, you can help save one of the world's most precious resources.

1. Water is a limited resource. Less than 1% of the world's freshwater, or only 0.007% of all water, is easily available for drinking, says the World Health Organization.
2. As a family, think about how you use water every day. According to www.water.org, the average American uses 176 gallons of water a day. In contrast, the average African uses only 10 gallons a day.
3. On a sheet, record every time your family uses water over a single day. Add up the results and divide by the number of people in your family.
4. Now imagine that each member of your family has a 10-gallon daily limit. For one day, try to live within the limit, and see how far you get. When did you "run out" of water? How would this change affect your life?
5. Typically, the oldest girl in an African family walks more than a mile each day to collect water. Try filling a bucket with water and carrying it as far as you can.

6. Add and multiply to get an estimate of the total number of gallons used throughout the day. The following are national averages.

- Shower** (4 gallons per minute)
- Bath** (50 gallons per bath)
- Hand and face washing** (1 gallon per wash)
- Brushing teeth** (1 gallon each time, with water running)
- Dishwasher** (20 gallons per load)
- Dishwashing by hand** (5 gallons per meal)
- Laundry machine** (10 gallons per load)
- Flushing toilet** (3 gallons per flush)
- Drinks of water** (1/8 gallon per glass of water)
- Cooking** (16 cups of water = 1 gallon)
- Total gallons:** _____



Using PlayPumps, kids pump clean water for a village while they play.

clean water is pumped from under the ground into a big tank that looks like a water tower. The tank has a pipe that connects to a faucet. People turn on the faucet to get clean water.

The pump is important for many reasons. First, 78 percent of the families in Africa do not have access to clean, piped water—water that they need to keep them healthy and strong. Second, young girls in Africa often have to walk several miles

organization called PlayPumps. Since 2006, PlayPumps has installed more than 700 pumps around Africa and attracted the attention of many people including Laura Bush, former President Bill Clinton, and rapper Jay-Z.

Small dollar amounts can have a big impact. Just \$60 can provide 10 people with access to clean water for up to 10 years. The pump is just one of many experiments in action. By itself, it is not an answer to every community's needs. But it is an example of innovation using the things we see around us every day and demonstrates that small inventions and creative ideas can help address big problems. Imagine which everyday item around your home or school could be the next great invention! ■

now answer "yes" to both. On a trip to South Africa in 1998, Field discovered a new invention—a merry-go-round attached to a water pump.

Here is how the pump works: When the kids spin on the merry-go-round,

a day to get water for their families. The pump can give these girls more free time, so they can stay in school and fulfill their dreams.

Field was so impressed by the creative invention that he started an

For more information, visit www.playpumps.org and www.casefoundation.org. Try the family activity "A Drop at a Time" (above) to learn how you can help improve water conservation just by changing your habits at home!

