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MPA SHARES FUNDS AND HOPE WITH AFRICA'S POOR

Microfinancing Partners in Africa (MPA) raised over \$65,000 at its February 9 African Gala at Sunset Hills Country Club. These funds, along with an additional \$10,000, are being sent to Jamii Bora (Swahili for Happy Family), a microfinancing organization located in Nairobi, Kenya, an area devastated by post-election violence earlier this year. Jamii Bora is the first African group that MPA is partnering with to help the African people bring themselves out of extreme poverty by providing them with small loans.

MPA, founded and managed by Sr. Antoinette Temporiti, CPPS, works with community-based organizations in Africa to create and support funding systems that furnish small, collateral-free, low-interest business loans to those in extreme poverty to enable them to develop sustainable businesses and economically viable communities.

“It occurred to me when I was eating lunch one day that what I paid for my meal could be used as a small business loan for Jamii Bora,” said Sr. Antoinette, who has visited the Jamii Bora community on several occasions at the invitation of Ingrid Munro, Jamii Bora founder and director.

“It was the strength and courage of the Kenyan people that motivated me to begin MPA,” explained Sr. Antoinette. During the violence earlier this year in Kenya, Sr. Antoinette spoke with Ms. Munro and was moved by her words of hope. “*What has*

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taken our people so long to build has been destroyed in one week,” said Ms. Munro. “But what can’t be burnt, stolen, robbed or destroyed is the new confidence, knowledge and self-assurance. What has been destroyed in a short time will be rebuilt with help from MPA. We will get new funds for the loans to help our people again,” she said.

Microfinancing Partners in Africa, whose board members include: Richard Arnoldy, Shonagh Clements, Sr. Jean deBlois, CSJ; Jim Guest, Laura Slay and Sr. Antoinette, holds an annual African Gala every February. There will be a second fundraiser on June 1, 2008, a Happy Family MPA BBQ from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. in Tower Grove Park. Proceeds from this event will also be sent to Jamii Bora.

In addition to an MPA board, there is an MPA Religious Advisory Board including: Srs. Elaine Aubuchon, SSND; Sherri Coleman, FSM; Jean deBlois, CSJ; Mary Pius Fagan, OP; Jan Hayes, RSM; Mary Jo Heman, OP; Leah Holzum, DC; Elizabeth Kolmer, ASC; Madeleine Lane, SSND; Lisa Lazio, CSJ; Louise Lears, SC; Lucy Meissen, CPPS; Liz Peplow, CSJ; Kate Reid, ASC; Rosemary Russell, CPPS; and Antoinette Temporiti, CPPS.

For more information on Microfinancing Partners in Africa (MPA), visit its website at www.microfinancingafrica.org.

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