

Two-for-One Charity

Mobilize Seniors

Help African Children and Villages

We're Walking for an African Child



Phase One

The Beginning

**THE IDEA COMES TO VIP-CSS DAY PROGRAM
“WE’RE WALKING FOR AN AFRICAN CHILD”**



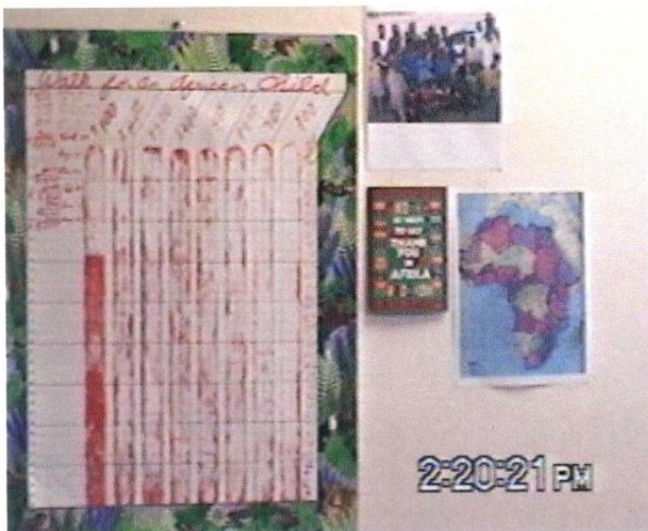
The idea for this project began in 2002 when Laraine Lippe brought back news about the conditions in Africa and this group of AIDS orphans that needed funding to get an education.

As a physical therapist, I was working in a senior day center in Brooklyn. My seniors were walking laps around the halls to build their endurance. We decided to turn our laps into a walkathon to help raise money to send these orphans to school.



We began our walkathon on the center’s Anniversary Week in 2002 with a goal of sending one child to school for a year (\$100). We were very excited that we were able to raise \$200 by the end of the week and send two children to school.

The money we used to sponsor the laps came from some unfortunate person who lost two hundred-dollar bills along the street, which I found. We wish this person could know the good that came from his or her loss.



As we continued to walk, we kept a daily record of the money we raised on the chart on the left. In this phase we were able to cover the laps financially in an informal way, wherever we could find the funds.

Our earnings:
 2002: \$ 500
 2003: \$1,400
 2004: \$1,700
 2005: \$1,800
 2006: \$3,200
Total: \$8,600

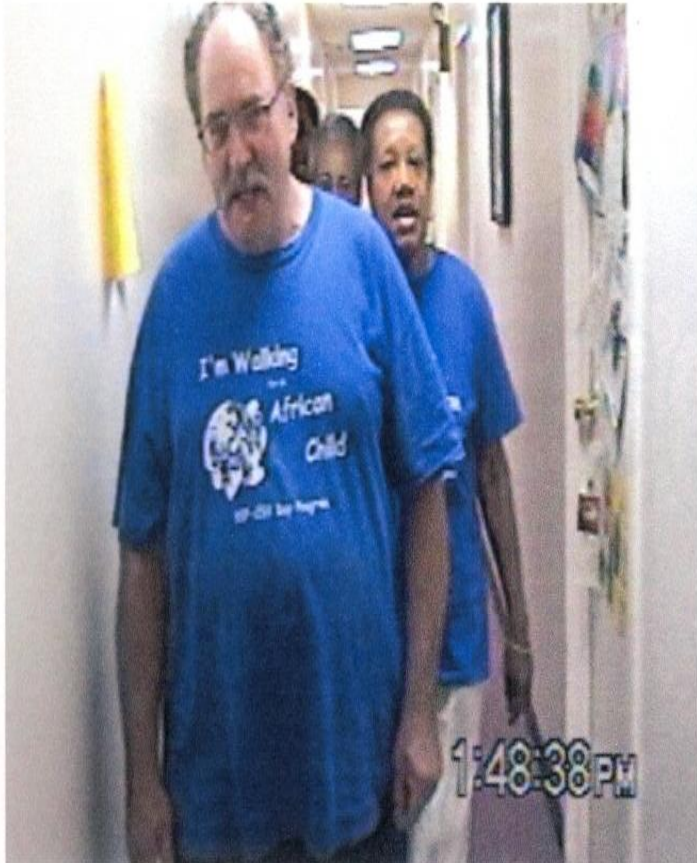
As you can see, our seniors increased their walking distance each year. We credit this improvement to the enthusiasm the clients had for the walkathon and their interest in this group of children. One client who came to us in 2002 walking limited distances with a cane was able to complete the 2006 six-mile AIDS walk without a cane!

Our seniors have felt the joy of reaching beyond themselves and knowing that their efforts have been a help to others who truly need that help. They have felt the warmth of working together for a goal they believe in and the satisfaction of becoming more physically fit at the same time.

Some words from our seniors:

From a 92 year old woman after walking: “I’m puffing, but I’m doing this for you and the children.” She’d rest for a couple of minutes and then stand up with determination and say, “Let’s go!”

From a family member of one of our clients after her death: “She remembered that trip *[to the UN where our seniors were honored by African Action on AIDS]* and she was always excited about it when we talked of it. It was a very big thing for her – the trip and the donation and the UN. She really enjoyed it. During her stay at the rehab and then the hospital, I would show it *[packet of photos from UN trip]* to her every few days to perk her up and partly to keep telling her she had to get better so she could go on more outings.”



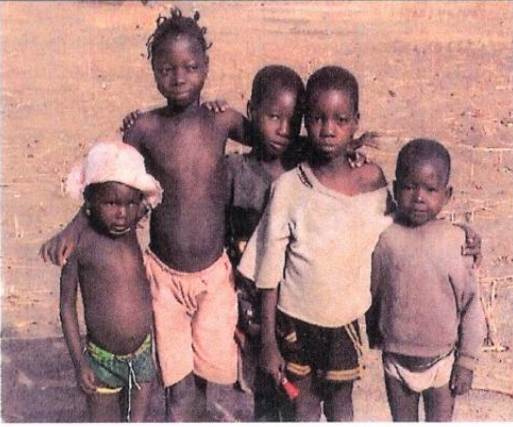
Unfortunately, our center was defunded and closed at the end of June 2006. But our hope from the beginning was that this seed of an idea that began at our center would spread to other centers and multiply the good that we could do by our efforts alone.

Phase Two

Expansion

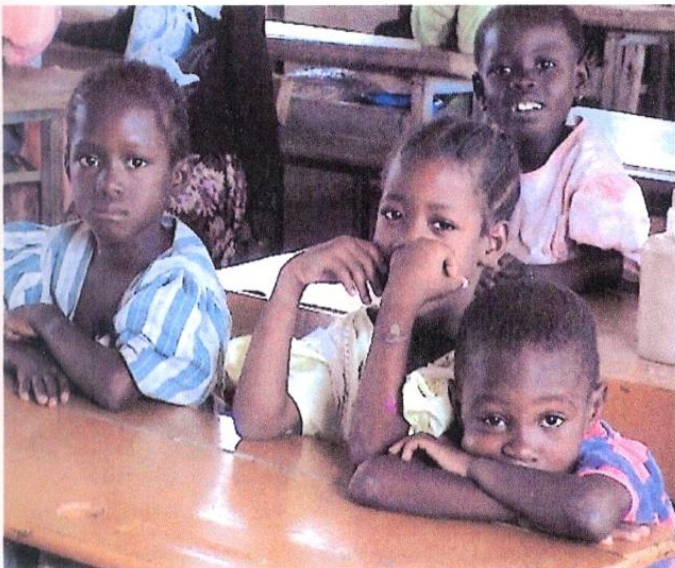
A NEW BEGINNING

A PROBLEM:



Many villages in Africa have no water supply. Lack of sanitation and hygiene cause health problems that weaken the immune system, leaving little reserves for fighting AIDS. Children have to leave school to walk hours to bring back a small amount of water.

A PROJECT OF AFRICAN ACTION ON AIDS (AAA) AND RUTH ENGO:



Go into each village that does not have water and supply:

- A well
- A water tank
- A hand washing area
- Three latrines
- Education (hygiene, sanitation, AIDS prevention, equipment maintenance)

The cost per village for the above is \$10,000. So far, five villages have been serviced. The goal is to service the 150 villages in one province of Cameroon.

AN IDEA:



Have senior walking groups throughout New York City establish walkathons to support the AAA project. Individual walking groups could “adopt” a village or walking groups could work together and pool their earnings.

Based on what we did in the VIP-CSS program, each walker in the group would generate 10 cents for each 100 steps walked, as recorded on a pedometer.

Since this phase of the project is larger, it is necessary to find an outside funding source.

WHERE WOULD WE FIND WALKING GROUPS?

THE BIG  SENIOR STROLLERS

PRESENT:



WALK ACROSS THE BOROUGHS

My first idea is the Big Apple Senior Strollers program of the New York City Department of the Aging's Health Promotion Unit. They have already established 120 walking groups throughout the five boroughs of the city. Possibly, they would want to make the AAA project into the theme for the next year. Some ideas for theme titles:

- "Walk for Water"
- "Walk Across the Globe"
- "Walk for Humanity"
- "Walk for Charity"

Another idea is to form walking groups at senior centers, senior residences (independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing facilities), or places where seniors gather on a regular basis.

WHAT ABOUT FUNDING?

One idea is to find a foundation that would be willing to sponsor up to \$2,000 per walking group. Based on walkers earning 10 cents for each 100 steps, the walking group as a whole could accumulate 2,000,000 steps during the year for this amount.

The actual amount the foundation would pay to AAA on behalf of the walking group would depend on the actual number of steps taken.

For groups that have the ability to earn more than \$2,000, possibly they could try to find additional support from local businesses, bake sales, etc. to cover their steps in excess of 2,000,000. This could be fun and challenging for them and lead to cooperation of seniors and businesses at the local level.

The foundation could decide how many groups it would be willing to sponsor.

Some groups may want to sponsor charities in America or in other countries. Since one foundation could probably not fund all the walking groups, groups wanting to choose their own charities could do so and find foundations to support their work.



globalgiving

BENEFITS:



For the seniors:

- Health benefits of walking
- Benefits of socialization in a group effort for a worthy cause
- Motivation to walk
- Feelings of joy, satisfaction, accomplishment, and meaning from participating in an important project that helps other people. As George Bernard Shaw said, *"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one."*

For the community:

- Increased awareness of severe problems faced by many of the world's people
- Cooperation of seniors, local businesses, and others at a local level.

For AAA and the African villages:

- Funding for these important projects
- Increasing awareness of need for funds on the part of the public, which may generate additional assistance.

A note from Cindy Newton, PT: In my 22 years of working with seniors, I've been greatly saddened and bothered by the hopelessness, lack of connection, and lack of meaning that is so common in the later years of life. I kept asking myself, "What can be done?" In this union of exercise, group effort, and working for a truly worthy cause I have found my answer. I have a vision of being able to expand the program the seniors at VIP-CSS started. Possibly it can evolve into a city effort, which could then be a model for other cities. The crucial work of AAA can use every pair of feet it can get!

Cindy Newton, PT
Fitness for Seniors
212-712-8881
cindynewton@aol.com

In the News

Walkathon Benefits Seniors And Helps Kids, Too

A walkathon that was developed as an incentive to encourage a group of Brooklyn seniors to exercise has resulted in the participants raising enough money to fund scholarships for five African children whose parents died of AIDS.

The seniors, who attend Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers' Michael Spiegelman VIP/CSS Day Program for Seniors in Canarsie, walked five miles, or a total of 250 laps through the corridors of the program's center, and raised \$500 to send five AIDS orphans in Burkina Faso, Africa, to school for a year.

"Our walkathon to benefit the AIDS orphans combines every aspect of where we are going with this program—from the physical to the psychological," said Merry Nachemin,

administrator for the program, which serves Brooklyn seniors who have a mental health diagnosis such as depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, or obsessive compulsive disorder.

"This is more therapeutic than 50 sessions because they are getting gratification and recognition. It's concrete and it's spiritual. Plus, we're bringing two worlds together."

Cindy Newton, the physical therapist for the program, said she first asked the clients to begin walking laps in order to build up their strength and endurance. She later decided to use the walking routine to raise money for the AIDS orphans to help the clients battle the feelings of isolation and lack of purpose that many seniors struggle with.

"The walkathon has given the clients a sense of commu-

nity by enabling them to participate in a group effort and feel that they are involved in a project that is meaningful," Newton said. "If you feel connected with something as a whole or if your efforts contribute, it's very satisfying. It would be a nice thing for other therapists to try in other settings such as nursing homes or senior centers."

For their efforts, the program's seniors were honored by the African Action on AIDS, Inc., which administers the scholarship program to more than 1,000 AIDS orphans in 17 African countries who would not be able to attend school without assistance.

"It's really an honor and a privilege to come here and find out that we've helped little children," said Ben Schneider, 91, at the ceremony. "It's the greatest thing in the world to help others. You sleep better at night."

The seniors attending the ceremony were recognized as grandparents who were helping grandparents raise children in another part of the world. Each received a certificate declaring them heroes and commending them for their leadership.

The African Action on AIDS was created in 1990 to help improve the welfare of children orphaned by AIDS.

For more information, contact Ruth Bamela Engo-Tiega, founder and president, at 201-662-7015.

For additional information about the Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers' Michael Spiegelman VIP/CSS Day Program for Seniors, call 875-5625 or visit www.bpcinc.org.



From left: Cindy Newton, physical therapist; Mildred Robbins Leet, mistress of ceremonies; Ruth Bamela Engo-Tiega (back row), president, African Action on AIDS; Ben Schneider, program participant; Merry Nachemin (front center), program director, surrounded by other seniors from the program.

Canarsie Digest

Seniors honored

African Action on AIDS Inc. recently honored a group of Canarsie seniors, ranging in age from 60 to 91, for participating in a walkathon to help children whose parents died of AIDS.

The 28 seniors, who attend the Michael Spiegelman Day Program, walked 250 laps through the center's corridors to raise \$500 for orphans in Burkina Faso, Africa. The funds will be used to send five children to school.

Cindy Newton, physical therapist for the seniors' program, which is run by Brooklyn Psychiatric Centers, said the walkathon was an incentive for the seniors, who needed to exercise to build their strength and endurance.

When he received his certificate of appreciation from African AIDS in Action, Ben Schneider, 91, said, "It's the greatest thing in the world to help others. You sleep better at night."



- home
- mission
- projects
- Centres of Excellence
- Standards
- ask the doctor
- just know
- AAA leadership
- contact us
- donate

Brooklyn, New York

IN BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, WALKATHON BENEFITS SENIORS AND HELP ORPHANS TOO

"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one."

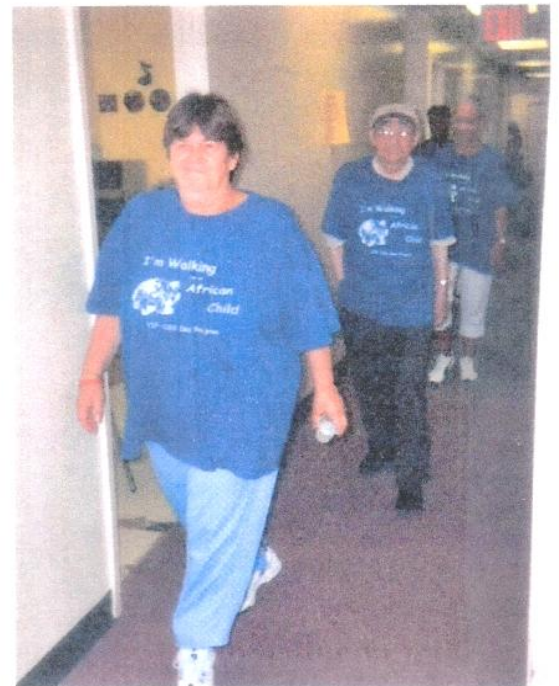
Senior citizens who are clients at the VIP-CSS Day Program in Brooklyn, New York walk laps in the halls or around the building as part of their exercise class. When they heard about orphans being sponsored by the Monique Kaboré Educational Assistance Program of African Action on AIDS in Burkina Faso, they decided to turn their laps into a walkathon to raise money to help send these children to school.

To date, they have raised over \$4,800 and feel the joy of participating in this important work. As one 92 year old client would often tell the physical therapist after doing her laps, "I'm puffing, but I'm doing this for you and the children."

As the clients have worked to build their own strength and endurance, they know their efforts have also gone to a cause greater than themselves and feel tremendous motivation and satisfaction. They hope their walkathon can be a model for other organizations that can join in this work and multiply their efforts. As George Bernard Shaw said, "This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one."

<http://www.africanactiononaid.org/content/view/32/70/>

9/17/2006



See www.AfricanActionOnAIDS.org

Center That Helped Elderly AIDS Walker Is Closing

By Charles Rogers

The AIDS Walk that took place on May 20th is not competitive, in the classic sense. That is, at the finish line, no one is announced a winner or a loser. Just finishing the six-mile trek is what counts. Garnering public awareness, productive donations and expressing compassion as the walkers complete the event are sufficient reasons for taking part in it.

Seventy-two-year-old

Adrian, who took the walk "like a breeze," is one of those winners. A proud winner.

Adrian is a client of Canarsie's Michael Spiegelman V.I.P./C.S.S. Day Program for Seniors at 1310 Rockaway Parkway, which is scheduled to close soon, and said she was "proud and happy" to have been able to take part in the event. The AIDS Walk took place in Manhattan and went from the Band Shelter in Central

Cathy

Park, over to Riverside Drive and traversed the streets of the East Side until returning to the park.

"A little over three years ago I was using a cane and I wasn't able to do it," she said, "but thanks to V.I.P.'s programs and the therapist who worked me hard, I got better and better and I made it."

Physical Therapist Cindy Newton, who works for the center, said Adrian was a "good student." She still has her and about 30 other clients walking through the corridors of the building multiple times so they can build themselves up physically.

Adrian said the reason she took part in the recent walk was not only tied to how she feels, physically, but "I felt I had the ability to help other people now, whereas at one time I just couldn't."

She said she takes part in these events because of a compassion for those who aren't able to help themselves. She also said she knew an AIDS victim who passed away at age 40.

"This program and others like it have helped a lot of people," she added. "That's another reason I participate: I want to give something back."

Adrian is no stranger to these altruistic walks, having taken part in last year's three-and-a-half-mile Walk for Breast Cancer in Prospect Park. She and other clients of the V.I.P. Center also conducted their own "Walk-a-thon" in 2003 so they could raise money for AIDS orphans in Burkina

Faso, Africa.

"They raised more than \$500 so 24 orphans in that West African country whose parents died of AIDS could go to school for a year," said Marie Kelleher, director of clinical operations at the center, noting that the seniors were honored recently by African Action on AIDS, Inc., an organization created in 1990 to help improve the welfare of children orphaned by AIDS.

But there is now a damper on all this Good Samaritanism: Despite the courage shown by clients like Cathy Adrian, administrators like Ms. Kelleher and workers like therapist Newton, sadly, the Spiegelman V.I.P./C.S.S. Day Program in Canarsie is due to close by the end of June.

"We just found out about it," said Kelleher, "and we've written a few letters, but we're afraid there won't be enough money to help us in time." She was told to contact local elected officials, including City Councilman Charles Barron, Senator John Sampson and Assemblyman Alan Maisel, along with Congressman Ed Towns, with the hope that they may be able to at least extend the time element.

"It would be a sad time if we were closed," Ms. Kelleher said. "So many people have been helped, including those youngsters in Africa. We'd hate to stop now."

Those who might be interested in helping can call or write to their elected representatives. The sooner the better.



Cathy Adrian, right, stands with therapist Cindy Newton of V.I.P. Center, whom she credits with getting her "in shape" enough to complete the AIDS Walk recently. Sadly, center will close June 30 unless more funding is received.

Charles Rogers

Canarsie Courier June 1, 2006

Error: The walkathon was ongoing from 2002 to 2006 and the total amount raised was \$8,600.