

DEVELOPMENT

Majengo 'miracle' benefits local youths

BY VALENTINE MARC NKWAME

A miracle has just happened in Arusha and with it, came the establishment of the town's first ever community centre and youth village.

The Charitable *Miracle Corners of the World (MCW)*, in collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania and New York University, have officially launched the Dr. Herman Wrice Youth Empowerment Village cum Community Centre, in Arusha on Thursday, the 16th of August 2001.

Located in the Majengo area of Arusha municipality, an area which is one of the densely populated in town, the newly opened centre, so far caters for more than 105 pre-school children attending its daily school programmes, being offered free of charge at the centre.

On the other hand, local youths are also benefitting from the centre's free computer courses while also taking a recreational advantage in the string of sporting games, cultural activities and social exchange programmes.

The project is a brain child of two highly motivated but down to earth young people namely;

Edward J. Bergman, from the New York University - School of Continuing and Professional Studies, who is the project director and Robert Alsbrooks from the University of Pennsylvania as the programme director.

Others include Mohammed Gaffa who is the director in-charge of the village, and about 15 other project coordinators from; New York University, University of Michigan, University of Pennsylvania, Smith Colleges and Holy Cross MA.

According to Edward bergman, the newly opened centre is going to serve the local Arusha community in four main ways: Health, Technology, Tourism, and Volunteer services.

The New York University Chapter of *American Student Dental Association (ASDA-NYU)*, will be providing free dental services, dental cleaning, education and tooth extractions plus all types of dental sealing.

In tourism, students from the faculty of hospitality, tourism and travel administration at the New York University will be traveling to Arusha to conduct

training aimed at providing community members with essential knowledge and skills as far as tourism industry is concerned. Arusha apparently, is the East Africa's tourism capital.

Meanwhile, the *Pennsylvania's Miracle@Penn Student Organisation*, has also installed over 10 computers in the upper floor room of the centre in order to provide the community with computer literacy, this section is known as Community Technology Centre (CTC).

All these sum up the MCW's own motto of; Global development through empowerment of self-sustaining ability.

To sustain itself, the centre has established a few of its own income generating investments like a community retail shop and a boarding house.

There are also plans to enable the centre earn money through cultural exchange programmes in which foreign visitors who will be paying educational visits to the village and get to interact with the local people.

During this week's inauguration ceremony, both the District Commissioner for Arusha, Bertha Mende and the Mayor of Philadelphia John F. Street made official appearance, the former representing



Majengo Children enjoying live shows during last week's ceremony to officially launch Dr. Herman Wrice Youth village (Picture by Raymond John)

Arusha Regional Commissioner, Daniel Ole Njoolay.

Mayor John F. Street, presented a special trophy to the centre to serve as an official bond between all the cities, towns, countries and people involved in the project.

Thousand of people filled the centre's small yard and got entertained by traditional dancers, singers and acrobatic shows topped with soft drinks.

Dr. Herman Wrice Youth Centre of Arusha, is named after a community activist the late Dr. Wrice who was born in 1939 and passed away last year, the wife of the late doctor; Mrs Wrice was among the distinguished guests

during the official opening ceremony.

Co-founder and programme director; Robert Alsbrooks, may not be very conversant with the local Kiswahili language but this didn't stop him from reading his opening speech in Swahili.

"I wrote it myself." He said, "Someone later translated it for me!"

Earlier on, Alsbrooks told *Arusha Times* that, the centre was intended to be a pilot project and that they plan to establish more centers throughout the country (Tanzania), the entire continent (Africa), and possibly world wide.....A series of more miracles we guess.