

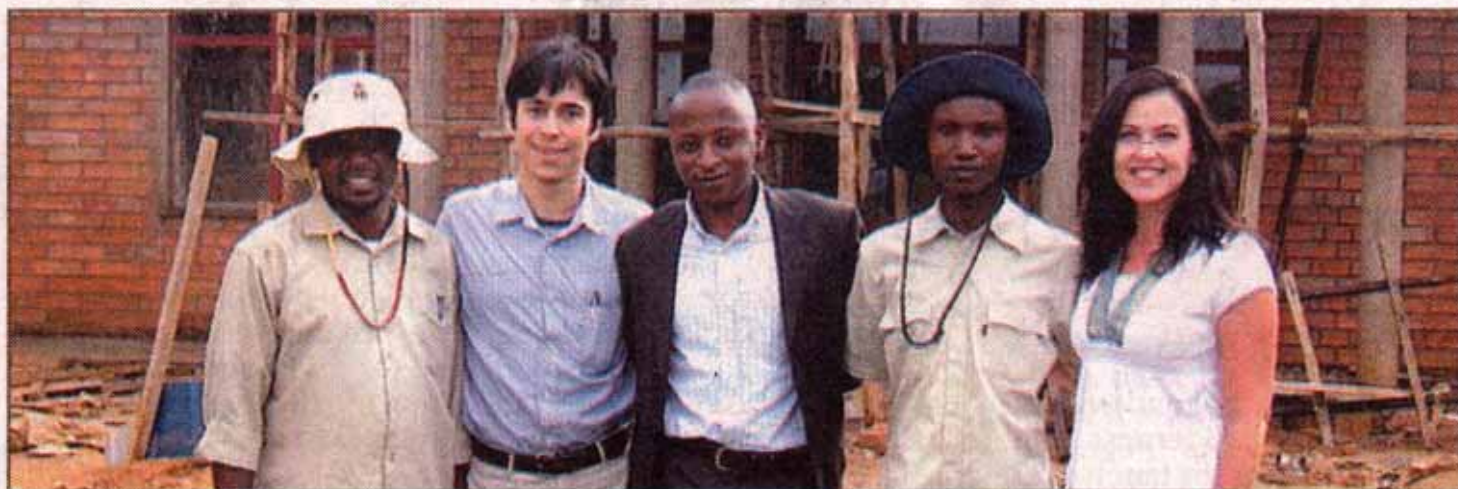
Miracle celebrates 10 years

NONPROFITS

Lots of chief executives, company presidents and leaders of nonprofit organizations have rung the opening bell at the Nasdaq stock market over the years. But not many have been like **Edward Bergman**.

Bergman, 30, a Northport native and graduate of Northport High School who rang the bell at yesterday's opening, is executive director of Miracle Corners of the World. A Manhattan-based organization marking its 10th year, it has built 15 facilities in Africa — community centers and dental offices among them — that have helped thousands of children and adults in different countries on that continent. Bergman was 20 when he started the organization.

"One of the most exciting things for me is going back" to Africa and visiting, Bergman



Edward Bergman, second from left, and volunteers at the MCW community center in Rwanda.

said. The children don't always know who he is, Bergman added. "But they know the people" his organization trained.

At Northport High, Bergman said, he was inspired by two teachers, **Peter White** and **Anthony Asplin**. He went to Nicaragua in 11th grade to do volunteer work with a group of Northport students on an annual trip led by White. Later, at New York University, he wondered what else he could do. His parents left South Africa before Bergman was born, because they strongly disagreed with apartheid policies there. His grandparents had fled Nazi Germany and

wound up in South Africa.

"I had this deep personal desire to understand family roots and those [roots] that went through Africa," Bergman said.

He wanted to go to Africa, and so wrote 40 letters to different contacts. A nun in Tanzania wrote him back, and he opened a garage there where mechanics trained for work.

Later, in the Ivory Coast, he and his organization, which has about eight to 10 staff members, built a three-room classroom and helped a group of women buy a machine to grind kava, an herb used for medicinal purposes. Bergman helped open community cen-

ters in other countries. In 2006, he introduced newly elected Tanzanian government officials to Nasdaq executives. In celebration of Miracle Corners of the World's 10th anniversary, Nasdaq invited Bergman to be its bell ringer.

Bergman's father is **Stanley Bergman**, chief executive of Melville-based Henry Schein Inc., one of the world's largest distributors of dental and medical equipment. The elder Bergman said his son had great mentors in high school and after.

"I'm happy," he said of his son's successes. "At the end of the day, we have to give back to the world."