

July 23, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Amanda Blount
amandablount@yahoo.com
www.miraclecorners.org

Miracle Corners of the World Opens New Youth Center in Kissy, Freetown, Sierra Leone

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE, July 5, 2007 – Miracle Corners of the World opened a new youth center earlier this month in Kissy, East Freetown. The center aims to provide educational, cultural, and economic opportunities to over 1000 unemployed youth, as well as programs and recreation for the surrounding community. The opening ceremony was attended by more than 200 guests, including MCW-USA's co-founder and executive director, MCW Sierra Leone board members, Sierra Leone police, and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) representatives.

Valued at \$35,000, funds for the center were raised by MCW-USA and complemented by UNDP. The center, which sits on five acres of land donated by the local police, includes a multi-purpose hall, a computer room with internet facilities, a store, a restaurant, and office space. The sustainable facilities will support computer training, skills-development courses, pre-school education, and after-school clubs at nominal costs, as well as programs devoted to strengthening police-civil society relations.

MCW co-founder Eddie Bergman called on Kissy youth to view the center as a catalyst to other community building and youth empowerment projects. "The center aims to bring young people together to dialogue and to help build better lives for themselves and for one another."

Sierra Leone, with approximately 5.5 million people, is one the least developed countries in the world, according to the UNDP Human Development Index. The 11-year civil war destroyed much of the country's education infrastructure. Estimates indicate that 70% of schools were demolished and 31% of the population is literate. Many schools lack trained personnel, resources, and materials.

"MCW hopes to address some of these challenges through the work of the center," said Bergman.

Senior Sierra Leone police representative T.M. Lahia highlighted the center's potential role in combating and reducing high crime rates among youth in the area. "The project works well with Sierra Leone police's strategic plan, which aims to engage youth in sustainable development," he said. "We are committed to provide security to the center and need to ensure transparency and accountability for sustainability and progress."

MCW-Sierra Leone project director Amanda Blount managed the 2-month construction project, working closely with engineer Nick Orso, who headed a local construction team, and MCW-Sierra Leone project coordinator Harry Gbetuwa. Gbetuwa will manage the center year-round, alongside MCW Sierra-Leone board member and secretary general Kabba Sesay.

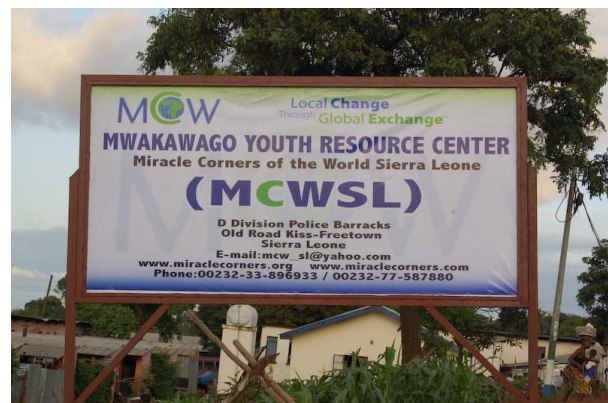
The center was named in honor of former Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Sierra Leone and MCW-USA board advisor Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago. While he was SRSG, Mwakawago had invited MCW to Sierra Leone to conduct a needs assessment of Freetown's youth in order to develop a project that would complement government efforts to create jobs for youth in 2003.

Pending success of the Kissy center, MCW plans to work in partnership with the Sierra Leone police to replicate the model in three other provincial headquarters. The official naming ceremony will take place in December 2007.

About Miracle Corners of the World (MCW) MCW was founded in 1999 as a non-profit organization serving youth around the world, primarily through programs of Youth Leadership Training, Community Center Development, and Healthcare Outreach. MCW's mission is to empower youth worldwide to become positive agents of change in order to help improve their own lives and contribute to their communities. MCW achieves its mission by working in close cooperation with a diverse network of public and private sector partners. For more information on MCW, visit www.miraclecorners.org.

About MCW Youth Centers During the last six years, MCW has created a replicable community development model that mobilizes global and local resources to build self-sustaining youth villages in disadvantaged areas. Each village is income-generating, thanks to MCW's small business development training programs. In 2001, MCW built its first youth center in the densely populated area of Majengo in Tanzania's Kilimanjaro region. Today, the urban center is led by members of the "Perfect Brothers Youth Group." The Arusha center served as a model for the construction of a second youth center in rural Songea in the southwest quadrant of the country in 2005. This center includes housing units, a pharmacy, and a medical clinic, from which MCW provides oral healthcare services to the community. In early 2007, the center opened an IT center in downtown Songea with support from Microsoft.

About MCW-Sierra Leone MCW-SL was established in 2007 to oversee the construction and development of the new MCW Mwakawago Youth Resource Center in Kissy, East Freetown, Sierra Leone. The center's aim is to empower youth to lead productive lives through entrepreneurial training, particularly in the areas of computer training, small business development, pre-school education, and after-school programs. MCW-SL is managed by a Board of Directors, which is chaired by Samuel Pieh, Executive Director of the Christian Health Organization. Inspector General of the Sierra Leone Police-Mr Brima Acha Kamara serves as honorary chair and former UNAMSIL employed Kabba Sesay serves as General Secretary. Advisory board members include Patricia Brown and Kwame Anno-kumi Project.



Photos courtesy of Paul Dixon. Top: MCW Executive Director Eddie Bergman addresses audience at opening ceremony. Bottom: The welcome sign of the new MCW Mwakawago Youth Resource Center.

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