

# **OMPACO**

## **Organization for Medical and Psychological Assistance For Children Overseas**

Dear Friends,

Many greetings from OMPACO. This Newsletter will bring you up to date with our activities over the past year. First of all, many thanks to all of you who responded both financially and with great interest in what OMPACO is doing to help balance children's health worldwide.

In the Fall of 2010, we received a request from Ms. Ella Mgalla for OMPACO to run a training program in autism spectrum disorders (ASD) for teachers in Dar es Salaam. The Ministry of Education had opened and staffed special needs classrooms in the three districts in Dar es Salaam and were looking for help in this endeavor. We began to gather ideas and specialists to form a Team for this project.

In April 2011 OMPACO was represented at a symposium on ASD at Hunter College in New York City. Nilofer Naqvi, a doctoral student in psychology, had a table with brochures and information about OMPACO's work in Dar es Salaam at the Autism Unit. This was an opportunity for her to describe OMPACO's work and goals for those interested in work with children with ASD overseas.

To raise funds for the Training Program in Dar es Salaam, OMPACO held a Spring Fair in a St. Brigid's Church Hall in Lexington. Our Board Members and neighbors worked long and hard and were joined by members of another Beads4Dreams, a non-profit organization, who make jewelry with supplies from Uganda and send the profits of their work back to Uganda to support women and children afflicted with HIV-AIDS.

With proceeds from the Fair we were able to purchase two plane tickets to Tanzania for the training program. Again, our thanks to all who made this work the success it was.

Andy Racine (Board member/director) travelled to Dareda Hospital/Nurses Training School with his daughter Sophie to bring a donation of lap top computers for the Nurses' Training School. Sophie stayed on to teach the students and staff how to use the computers in planning their work in the public health clinics they run for mothers and children.

Our training program was very successful and gratifying for all who took part. There were 30-35 teachers for 5 days; we spent a day in a seminar with parents of children with ASD and spoke to their caregivers as well. We spoke at the weekly conference at the Department of Psychiatry at Muhimbili Medical Center, where I had worked for four years. It was a marvelous visit. On our next to last day, Nilofer, Amanda and I joined the meeting of the Parents' Organization for Children with Autism (NACA) re-named National Association for People with Autism Tanzania. We at OMPACO

hope to be able to facilitate the ongoing association of the Ministry of Education and the Department of Psychiatry in Dar es Salaam.

In a side trip to Dareda Hospital we saw the rehabbed maternity wing which OMPACO helped finance through your generosity. At the Patrick Winter Primary School we met with Teachers and Village Leaders to discuss how OMPACO could continue to help the children with special needs. They will soon finish the last classrooms for the children and will set up the carousel for them (similar to the one in Dar es Salaam at the Unit).They have already requested help for volunteer special need teachers. Any volunteers?

All these projects and proposals will be in the website at [www.ompaco.org](http://www.ompaco.org) so please have a look and see what and where and how much your continued interest and financial assistance have brought to OMPACO in our quest in helping balance children's health worldwide.

In 2012 OMPACO will be 10 years old. We look forward to a special celebration and hope you will share it with us around the foundation date November 22.

Wishing you all a happy Thanksgiving, a joyful holiday season and a prosperous new year,  
I remain for OMPACO,

Yours sincerely,

Martha Collins, M.D., M.P.H.  
President OMPACO  
November 16, 2011