

“Hope against every hope. You will never be disappointed.”

- Mother Cabrini



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High Voltage Energizes Mother Cabrini High School Students

- Sr. Mary Ann Lang, Mother Cabrini High School

Celebrity life coach and fitness guru Kathie Dolgin, best known as High Voltage, has committed herself to a yearlong health and fitness pilot program at Mother Cabrini High School. For 20 years, High Voltage has been helping thousands of people, including celebrities like NBC's Katie Couric, Kelsey Grammer, Kylie Minogue, Beverly Johnson and Downtown Julie Brown develop healthy lifestyle habits. Introduced to Mother Cabrini High School's students while participating at a luncheon, High Voltage saw a need among the young inner-city women. Says Voltage, "I felt something from the moment I walked in the school...a kinship with Mother Cabrini, who also sought to improve the lives of young women...a certain feeling that I should be there."

After discussions with school administrators about the health issues of the students, and supported by recent studies that show teenage obesity and type two diabetes on the rise, High Voltage voluntarily began the Energy Up Health and Fitness program. Held every Wednesday from 3:00pm to 4:30pm, forty students, faculty and staff join Voltage for a healthy lifestyle lecture, eating tips, intense exercise session and healthy food tastings. As Voltage stated, "We are enabling these young women to participate in a program that will impact their well-being for the rest of their lives."

High Voltage's involvement with



High Voltage (center) with Mother Cabrini High School students and Dr. Ileana Vargas-Rodriguez (right), class of 78.

the students has encouraged the high school's administration to speed up changes to the food selections offered in the cafeteria. The food services management is working with the administration and faculty to provide healthier food to support the Energy Up program and its goals.

Voltage is pleased with the response from the participants and the results showing on the scale for many of the young women. The word is getting out about the success of the program and many people outside of the high school community are showing an interest in supporting Voltage's efforts. Dr. Ileana Vargas-Rodriguez and Dr. Betsy Pheffer have visited with the students and participated in the program. Both doctors are considering a formal study based on the program.

Celebrities and corporations alike have stepped forward in support of the program. Katie Couric, Rhona Silva, the Huntington Towne House, Duomo Gym, World Foods, and Jimmy's Uptown Restaurant have all made charitable

donations to the program. Their generosity includes 23 sets of hand weights, delicious meals for the food tastings, gifts for incentive raffles for the students, and financial support. Since the outset of the program, many of the students have expressed their appreciation for the work that Voltage has been doing. In the words of Sophomore Linda Carrion, "You have improved my life

and I feel more comfortable with myself. You've been a great and positive influence on me." The entire Cabrini community joins Linda in thanking High Voltage for generously sharing her time and talent to benefit the health and well-being of the young people at Mother Cabrini High School.

Reaching Out to the Heart of the World...

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Save the Date - November 6, 2003

- Fifth Annual Cabrini Mission Foundation Gala and Awards

Reach Out to Cabrini Immigrant Services, Dobbs Ferry, NY

This quarter we would like to highlight the work of Cabrini Immigrant Services (CIS) in Dobbs Ferry, New York. Established in 1998, CIS operates from a storefront in Westchester County with the mission to provide a variety of services to immigrants of every background.

As the word "welcome" written in several languages on the CIS window reflects, Sr. Roselle Santivasi, MSC, Director of CIS explains that "our goal is to make people feel as comfortable and welcomed as possible." To date, CIS, has served immigrants from 85 different countries around the world.

Sr. Santivasi cites the incredibly varied services that CIS provides as the Center's greatest asset. From explaining a confusing bill, to helping someone complete an immigration form, to working

with local school officials on behalf of a client, CIS attempts to address all needs. One of the most practical resources offered to individuals and families at CIS are the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Each month, approximately 45 volunteers work with adult ESL students. In total, nearly one

hundred students are served throughout the year. In addition, CIS provides an after-school homework group for children enrolled in the Dobbs Ferry elementary school ESL program.

In the past few years however, ESL enrollment has increased greatly, while space and resources at the center have not. Simple additional resources such as tables, chairs, school supplies and ESL specific textbooks will greatly improve CIS's ability to serve its current students, as well as more students in the future.

Contributions to Cabrini Immigrant Services are welcomed. If you wish to make a donation to the ESL program at CIS, checks should be made out to Cabrini Mission Foundation with the letters "CIS" written in the Memo and sent in the enclosed envelope.



Storefront window of Cabrini Immigrant Services, Dobbs Ferry, NY.

Donor Highlight: Felix and Francesca Avitabile

Cabrini Mission Foundation would like to thank Felix and Francesca Avitabile, supporters of the Foundation, who recently gave a charitable gift annuity in the amount of \$10,000. Not only do the Avitabiles feel strongly about the mission of Cabrini Mission Foundation, they also have a special connection to the Cabrini institutions - their daughter, Antonia, is a Missionary Sister of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSC).

Mr. Avitabile, 76, describes his affinity for the work of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a closeness and an attachment that has lasted for over 30 years. Given that the Avitabiles are first generation Americans themselves, it is no wonder that they, as a family, identify with the legacy of Mother Cabrini. The Avitabiles especially appreciate the work that Cabrini institutions do with children

and children's issues. Noting a constant need to keep children off the street and engaged in positive activity, Mr. Avitabile cited the Save the Street Children Foundation in the



Felix and Francesca Avitabile

Philippines as a compelling and effective commitment to this issue.

In addition to the close relationship of the Avitabile family to the MSCs, another reason for the gift

of the charitable annuity is the income dividends paid to the couple. The Avitabiles were able to count the gift as a tax deduction and will be receiving an income from the donation for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Avitabile, who has also made two charitable gift annuities to the Society of Jesus, laments the fact that more people do not give to charity earlier in their lives. "Many people hold onto their money until they die and much of it goes to the government. We decided to give now and be able to decide exactly where our money goes and when," he explains.

The full amount of Felix and Francesca Avitabile's gift will support the Cabrini affiliated institutions and programs serving women, children, immigrants and the elderly throughout the Stella Maris Province.

The Role of Women in Rural Swaziland

- Diana Bos, Lay Missionary of St. Philip's Mission

The old woman, Gogo Maziya, had not slept for many nights worrying about her future. She had been widowed for three years and with low social status, no income, failing health and eight grandchildren to care for, she had much to be concerned about. As if it were not enough to see her grandchildren starving, she was to be evicted from her small hut as bulldozers were demolishing several homesteads in her area to plant sugar cane.

Maziya had been given the hut to stay in long ago and was told that one day the land would be developed, yet no attempt was made by the developers to re-locate her. Prior to the demolition, a man simply arrived one morning and started to rip the iron from her roof. Having heard about her predicament, we went to the Chief's council to ask for some land on which the youth group could build a small mud brick hut for her. The representative of the Chief was initially unhelpful and said "We treat our old people like blankets in the night. We use them when we are cold and we throw them away in the warmth of the day."

With our intervention, a small plot of land was obtained and youth group members constructed a small hut for the woman. Her burden has further been eased as three of her younger grandchildren are now at Cabrini's St. Philip's Hostel for Children.

However, for every positive story involving Swazi women there are many more negative ones. There is no doubt that Swaziland is a male-dominated society. From birth, male babies are often preferred to female babies because of the low social status of females. From an early age, girls are taught to be submissive and obedient to males, and women carry

the load in the homestead. They cook, work in the fields and are generally responsible for their children's education (there is no free education in Swaziland). With the disintegration of the extended family due to the AIDS pandemic, many young mothers do not have the time or resources to learn about early childhood care and development, and there are very few public health programs which offer such information.



A Swazi woman holds her son.

Furthermore, Swazi women tend to start having children at a very early age - around 15 years. These women not only give birth young, but also often. Data from the Swaziland 2003 Yearbook shows that the average fertility rate is over 5.5 births per female.

Because the Swazi women are socialized through cultural taboos, religion and other social mechanisms to accept sexual subordination and even sexual oppression, (domestic violence against women appears to be common), women are unable to exercise the basic right to decide freely on sexual activities. This makes them more vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV/AIDS.

Throughout their lives and especially now with a persistent drought, Swazi women are faced with food insecurity, inadequate diet, recurrent infections, poor health care, and a heavy workload. All this is exacerbated by gender inequities. Mothers will give most of the food to others and eat the crumbs while the men eat first and get the choice pieces of meat. The main nutritional deficiencies in

women across sub-Saharan Africa are vitamin A, iron and iodine. These deficiencies contribute to increased maternal and infant morbidity and mortality.

A Swazi woman's lot is not easy from the cradle to the grave. One way I believe we can change the gender imbalance in Swazi society is through the education of girls from an early age. In this way, girls and young women can be empowered to be more assertive and realize that they have choices in life. Through education they will have increased control over their sexual and reproductive health, lives and rights.

Additionally, mothers can be trained in health issues and self-sustaining and income-producing activities such as small vegetable gardening and drought resistant crops. In this way, young girls like Gogo Maziya's granddaughters will have a better chance to lead a more fulfilling, healthy life.

One of our goals at St. Philip's Hostel for Children is to educate young girls in such a manner as to give them the knowledge, abilities and choices their mothers were never afforded. In our small way, we are helping to break the cycle of patriarchy and oppression that continues to plague many of the women of Swaziland.



Traditional married Swazi women dancing.

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The Cabrini legacy is alive and active today through the sponsored institutions and ministries of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. **Cabrini Mission Foundation** is a partnership of religious and lay supporters committed to serving at the forefront of social action in the new millennium through Cabrini-sponsored works of health care, education, social services and human promotion. These works express a lifelong commitment to the dignity, nurturing and acceptance of the human person - in a society that is not always welcoming, where needs are not always met.

The Foundation places particular emphasis on carrying forward Mother Cabrini's commitment to serving the unmet needs of women, children, immigrants, and the elderly by maintaining appropriate philanthropic support of national fund raising, endowment and donor programs.

Reaching Out to the Heart of the World

President's UPDATE by Sr. Lucille Souza, MSC



I recently attended a candlelight vigil in Union Square, New York City. That evening, I was joined by thousands of peaceful, reverent, hopeful people, gathered together in

the darkness to symbolize the hope that peace could somehow be achieved. As Mother Cabrini exclaimed, "hope against every hope. You will never be disappointed." It's difficult not to focus on the many disquieting events occurring around the world today, but witnessing the multitude of people gathered in Union Square, unified in their call for peace, I was truly inspired. Many times, the most powerful expression is one of silence.

While it seems the war in Iraq is over and the reconstruction has begun, it is clear that much work remains. For me, Mother Cabrini's call for hope never resonated more

truly than now. America and Americans must reach out in a spirit of cooperation with the global community and embrace a generosity and tolerance to the Muslim and Arab communities, both abroad and at home.

This quarter's newsletter highlights the work of Cabrini Immigrant Services, in Dobbs Ferry, New York. CIS's invaluable work is highly consistent with the life and work of Mother Cabrini, the patroness of immigrants. As a constant traveler herself, Mother Cabrini surely relied on the kindness of others to guide her and teach her the languages and customs of the local community. In turn, Mother Cabrini made it part of her mission to reach out to immigrants from all parts of the globe, offering them as much help as possible. In this spirit, Cabrini Immigrant Services is an integral part of the mission of the Cabrini network of institutions and programs.

Let me take this opportunity

to thank all those who receive and read this newsletter. The quarterly Cabrini Mission Foundation newsletter gives us the chance to bring the heartening stories of the Cabrini affiliated institutions and programs into the lives of our supporters. Similarly, I would like to recognize all those whose sacrificial gifts, be they five dollars or 5,000 dollars, allow the Cabrini Mission Foundation to continue "reaching out to the heart of the world." It is your spirit and generosity which fuels our mission.

God Bless,
Sr. Lucille Souza, MSC

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disappointed."
-Mother Cabrini*