

Thursday, May 19 is our 2nd Annual Walk for Wamanyu! Last year, the Walk was an overwhelming success, raising over \$6,000 for our friends in Wamanyu, Kenya. The initial goal was to raise \$2,000 so to end up with such a spectacular outcome was quite a pleasant surprise! To provide a little background, approximately six years ago, St. John's teamed up with Kenya Connect, a US based organization committed to improving the lives of children in Kenya. Kenya Connect has paired St. John's with the Mbaikini Primary School located in Wamanyu. St. John's students are pen pals with Mbaikini students and in cooperation with St. John's Episcopal Church have helped the school build a Media Center that includes books, a TV and DVD player. Other projects that we have facilitated through our joint efforts are a water tower that provides access to fresh water on campus, and a chicken coop for purposes of caring for an important sustainable food source. Last year, the funds raised were used to purchase materials for the Mbaikini Special Needs School including wheel chairs and other school supplies.

This year, funds raised will be used to build an Environmentally Friendly or Green Community Center in the middle of Wamanyu. This center will serve as a resource for the families of Wamanyu. Additionally, a portion of the proceeds will help to send Mrs. Rath (Lower School Director) to Kenya in June 2011 for the next joint St. John's Episcopal Church and Parish Day School mission trip. Mrs. Rath intends to bring her experience as an educator to the staff and students at Mbaikini. Mrs. Rath will bring back first-hand knowledge of the needs of our partner school in Kenya. She will certainly gain insight into how schools with limited resources and daily survival challenges for families maintain such an upbeat and positive community. To learn more about Kenya Connect view their website <http://www.kenyaconnect.org/index.htm>.

Students were sent home a few weeks ago with walk information and a sponsor sheet. The reason we choose to "walk" for Wamanyu is tied to the fact that the children who attend Mbaikini School walk two miles to and from school each day. Up until just a few years ago, the children had to first walk several miles to a river in order to obtain water for their journey to school and for their family's daily water needs. These are children, just like ours who are bright, capable and filled with joy and wonder. However, unlike our children, their opportunities for educational growth are limited by basic survival needs.

Here is how you can support your child on their Walk for Wamanyu.

- Send your child to school in their yellow Mbaikini t-shirt (or wear PE clothes to school the day of the walk). Early Childhood students may want to wear sneakers to school that day.
- Assist/support your child in obtaining sponsors for the walk.
- Cheer your child's class on as they participate in the Walk. A schedule is included with this newsletter.
- Volunteer to help on the day of the Walk by signing up for an hour time-slot to cheer the children on, act as a lap counter, and deliver snack.

Finally, a meeting to organize supplies for the walk will be held on Tuesday, May 17 at 4:00 pm, in Mrs. Green's room located on the 2nd floor of the Lower School wing.