

Ugandan Runner Teams with Local Organization for Hospital Fundraiser

SAN DIEGO — Moses Mpanga, an elite distance runner from Uganda, has run his way to success in the United States and around the world.

But Mpanga, who can boast a third-place team finish at the 2001 World Cross Country Championships, is now applying his passion for running to a cause very close to his heart — the children of Uganda.

He will take part in the upcoming Run4Innocents, a fundraiser that will be held June 5 at the San Diego Rock 'n' Roll Half Marathon. Hosted by Holy Innocents Children's Hospital Uganda, Inc., a San Diego-based nonprofit, the fundraiser will benefit the only dedicated children's hospital in Uganda.

Upon hearing about Run4Innocents and Holy Innocents Children's Hospital, Mpanga said he was touched by the compassion of the many San Diego organizations and individuals supporting the hospital and the children.

"I've been blessed," he said, "and the only way to thank God for this is by blessing other people. The children at Holy Innocents Children's Hospital are going to be future leaders, presidents, ministers, doctors. We are shaping the world by helping them survive.

"I believe true success is measured by how many people are better off because I lived," he said.

In the race to save the children of his country, Mpanga and scores of other caring individuals are lacing up their shoes for

Run4Innocents. Some will run, while others will walk the distance. Together, they will seek to touch the lives of tens of thousands of children.

Holy Innocents Children's Hospital Uganda, Inc. is an all-volunteer organization that is working to improve the health of all the children of Mbarara, southwestern Uganda, through better medical care and prevention. It is nonprofit, non-sectarian and non-political.

Holy Innocents Children's Hospital grew out of a dream of Uganda Archbishop Paul Bakyenga. In 2006, he told a group of San Diegans that in Uganda, one child in seven dies before age 5 from malaria, dysentery, respiratory infection and other treatable diseases.

He explained that the Catholic Church has run adult hospitals in Uganda for 50 years. The archdiocese wanted to build a children's hospital, but did not have sufficient funds.

In 2007, a group of San Diegans formed Holy Innocents Children's Hospital Uganda, Inc., and by July 2009 the hospital's outpatient facility and 60-bed inpatient wing opened for all the children of the community, regardless of faith or creed. Since then, thousands of children have been treated, and countless lives have been saved.

Mpanga was born in Kampala, the capital city of Uganda, and soon moved to Mbarara, where he grew up only a few miles from the present-day location of Holy Innocents Children's Hospital.

He first jumped on the track at age 12 and



DEBORAH BURKE

RUN4INNOCENTS: *Elite distance runner Moses Mpanga will be running this summer to raise funds for Holy Innocents Children's Hospital.*

became a national champion only two years later. Specializing in the 1500, 5000 and 10,000 meters, he represented Uganda at several world championships. He captained his country's national team to win medals at the international level.

His proudest moment was seeing his country's flag raised after his team took the bronze medal at the 2001 World Cross Country Championships in Belgium.

"When I heard about Run4Innocents and Holy Innocents Children's Hospital, Inc., I was thrilled to learn that someone

from America would take such compassionate steps, to volunteer their time, money and support for my homeland's children who are in need," said Mpanga, who currently runs professionally for the Santa Monica Track Club in Los Angeles.

He added that "to support my own country and village is the ultimate opportunity."

For more information on how to join Mpanga at Run4Innocents or to donate to Holy Innocents Children's Hospital, visit www.HolyInnocentsUganda.org or email info@HolyInnocentsUganda.org.

The Southern Cross

Diocesan Pastoral Council



THE SOUTHERN CROSS

Annette and Tom Moore of St. Therese Parish smile during a meeting of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. At the meeting, held Feb. 19 at the diocesan Pastoral Center, the couple concluded their two-year term as council representatives. They had represented the El Cajon Deanery.

The highlight of the meeting was a discussion of priestly and religious vocations, during which council members expressed their admiration for the role of priests and consecrated religious within the Church.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is an advisory body that meets twice a year to discuss pastoral matters with Bishop Robert H. Brom and offer practical suggestions.

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