

## How You Can Help

H.E.A.R. Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization that seeks to empower individuals and organizations within the structure of relief work, educational programs and health projects in order to encourage independence and sustainability for those less fortunate.

Please consider donating to any one of HEAR's many worthy programs, either through our website or by mail.

**HEAR Foundation**  
health, education & relief  
578 Sunset Ridge Road  
Northfield, Illinois 60093  
(312) 795 7846  
(312) 795 7509  
[www.hearfoundation.org](http://www.hearfoundation.org)

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578 Sunset Ridge Road  
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# HEAR US

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## HEAR begins support of ecological education program in Vermont

Expanding the ways in which it defines and supports educational opportunities, HEAR donated to a Vermont organization focusing on ecological learning in the greater Northern Forest region of the state. Serving one of the areas identified by the USDA as a Rural Economic Action Plan Zone, Siskin Ecological Adventures provides poor youth with the opportunity to explore their natural communities, build teamwork and self-esteem and learn about their regional traditions of forest and river exploration.

Siskin is able to operate year-round.  
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## HEAR extends its involvement to West Africa

In the month of April, 2008, HEAR contributed to the Women's Empowerment Center of Freetown, Sierra Leone. The Center, which opened in August of 2007, hopes to encourage increased female representation in governmental and economic spheres of life.

HEAR's donation will go towards administrating the foundational projects of the center, which include business enterprise workshops and micro-credit loans. By focusing on the most impoverished women of the region, those affected most adversely by recent wars, the Center empowers those in need towards economic independence for their families as well as their country.

HEAR became involved because our goal of supporting educational opportunities in the United States and abroad is reflected in the Center's mission. We are enthusiastic about expanding our involvement to Africa, especially for a program that is demonstrably efficient and valuable to the women of Sierra Leone.

## Singer Tocco finishing last semester at Interlochen

With one semester finished and the second already underway, singer and actress Alexandrea Tocco is preparing to complete her program at Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan. During her time at this specialized arts school, whose tuition was fully funded by HEAR, Ms. Tocco was privileged to receive dedicated vocal and theater training under some of the most qualified teachers in the field. She has performed and starred in a number of different works at Interlochen thus far, bringing her into contact with other talented students and teachers who are sure to nurture her future career.

In preparation for her secondary education Ms. Tocco has been applying to schools all over the country for musical theater, a feat she is certainly prepared for after the nearly nine months of professional training she received at Interlochen. She is hoping to hear from NYU and Boston University especially, but is also considering University of Michigan and Carnegie Mellon. HEAR hopes to continue its financial support of this incredibly gifted young American artist through her future educational endeavors: stay tuned!

HEAR Assists Latin American Medical Providers Annual Medical Trip

During the week that the LAMP team stayed in Jalapa, working at a Guatemalan national hospital, the doctors, a dentist and a surgical team attended to patients continuously, free of charge. The LAMP team, comprised of 74 volunteers, was able to see over 2,200 patients, dispense over 4,000 prescriptions, perform 92 surgeries and offer a sympathetic ear to patients, many of whom had never seen a doctor.

Additionally, two special teams of doctors and pharmacists traveled to surrounding villages to attend to those who were unable to make the often lengthy and difficult journey to the national hospital.



HEAR set many goals when it became involved with the girl's home of Martha and Mary in Jalapa, Guatemala. Through the generous contributions of HEAR donors and the hard work of a dedicated group of volunteers, we have been able to begin working towards solutions to the many challenges the children face.

**Housing.** The most pressing problem is ensuring proper housing for the over one hundred girls under the home's care. Previously, the youngest girls and caretakers were forced to live in structures that should have been condemned or abandoned. There was simply no room for these girls at the newer facilities and they were forced to continue to live in an unsafe and over-crowded environment.

Now, as a result of HEAR's efforts, a new second floor for the girls' home's primary dormitory is near completion, with enough space to house all of the girls and their caretakers. We anticipate that

within the next month they will be moved into the safer and structurally sound residence.

**Adequate Supply of Water.** The availability of adequate, clean water has always been a problem at the home. Previously, the municipal water supply available to the girl's home had been rationed.

A new well is currently being constructed so that the girls have a reliable and independent source of water. While this does not address the issue of safe drinking water as most water sources in Guatemala have some contaminants (including the municipal water supply), it will go a long way towards allowing the orphanage to raise and feed animals, grow vegetables, and become self-sustaining.

**Facilities.** In addition to dormitory and basic living structures, the home contains a number of adjunct buildings meant for teaching the girls and for occupational training. Many of these buildings were previously empty,

## HEAR Girl's Home Project in Jalapa Successfully Underway

Construction on a second floor, a new well, and flourishing occupational training projects continue to serve the girls and young women of Martha and Mary's Girl's Home

like a perfectly preserved ghost town. There were brand new classrooms, computers, sewing machines in facilities for occupational training, but they were completely empty of students. The equipment and machines were not only unused, but many remained in their boxes. Without money for materials, supplies, and teachers, the home was unable to utilize the resources at their disposal.

During 2007 and 2008, teams of volunteers made four trips to the girl's home to teach basic computer skills, sewing skills and jewelry making. In the future, the training in these skills will be accompanied by instruction in

**"We want these young women to be economically independent."**

practical business concepts with the ultimate goal being the independent production of goods for the girls' own use and for resale, which will result in badly needed revenue for the home. This is critical for the home's future as they do not receive support from any agency, governmental body or religious organization and many times must rely on going door-to-door for donations to buy their daily food. They can now produce high quality items such as pillows, purses, earrings and bracelets for sale. Possible future training being discussed is commercial baking project and hair styling courses.

We want these young women to be economically independent and see this as the first of many steps towards meeting that goal. With your help, HEAR will continue to support the home until it is self-sustaining.



## ENHANCE health science scholarship recipients selected

For the past two years, HEAR has provided a large portion of the scholarship money awarded by ENHANCE Educational Foundation to inner-city student scholarship applicants. These scholarships go to inner-city Chicago youth with a demonstrated interest in medical science.

After assessing dozens of applications for the ENHANCE medical science scholarship program, one student is awarded \$25,000.00 towards his or her college education in medicine. This special student, awarded the

scholarship due to a number of factors, will begin college the following year upon successful completion of high school.

A combination of volunteer commitments, community involvement, job experience, and grades were evaluated by a team of professionals in the medical, education, and other fields. This committee then interviewed a small percentage of the many students who initially applied for the scholarships; from these the ultimate winner was chosen. A number of

runner-up scholarships were also awarded in the amount of \$2,500.00 each.

All of these students demonstrated a unique tenacity for learning and a dedication not only to the medical sciences but to their communities as well. From church volunteer to soup kitchen server, these students confirmed their commitment to service in all forms, even while adverse economic conditions worked against their academic and social success. We wish them all well in their first year in college.

## Basketball Camp 2007

For a small group of inner-city Chicago adolescents, leaving the city for basketball summer camp was the first time they had crossed city limits. It was also often the first contact these young men had with those outside of their neighborhood. Just as important, they were able to learn more about and play their favorite sport: basketball.

We are grateful that we were able to support these athletes in their desire to attend the camp. It was our second year doing so.



## Ecological program cont.

and therefore maintain a consistent presence in the lives of Vermont youth, as much through field trips as through summer camps, after-school programs and other long-term activities. Due to stagnant employment, market isolation and lack of access to economic suppliers, the counties served by Siskin are in need of programs that teach, encourage, and build. With HEAR's donation, Siskin was able to buy a number of expensive equipment items, thereby facilitating the continuation of forest ecology, habitat management and orienteering classes, as well as many others.

