

International Food Festival for the Schools of Africa

By Laura Hornbeck, Regional Coordinator for WFWP Texas

On Thursday evening, December 14, 2006, approximately 55 people filled a large meeting room at the Center for Community Cooperation in Dallas, Texas. The occasion was a food festival and silent auction benefiting the WFWP Schools of Africa Project.

Emcee Ester Davis, a local talk-show host and community activist, opened the program after a prayer was offered for the delicious food. Diners were treated to delicacies from around the world, including Mexico, China, the Philippines, Turkey, Korea, and Japan.

While feasting on the buffet, guests enjoyed entertainment offered by a drummer known as "Baba Kwasi." Baba is popular at local schools, where he performs an inspirational medley of African drumming and chanting, urging students to know, "You are somebody SPECIAL."



*Baba Kwasi,
African drummer*

Laura Hornbeck, Regional Coordinator of WFWP, gave a 20-minute presentation about the schools in Africa which WFWP, USA, is sponsoring. The Texas event benefited the



Handow Secondary School in the Lugari district of western Kenya. This is about six hours from the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, and it is an area where the people face a shortage of schools. Dormitory facilities are available for students during the school week, so they do not have to make the long trek home each day. Photos were shown of the new cafeteria and library, which have been funded through WFWP International.

More entertainment followed from a quartet of young women calling itself "Flirt!". They are affiliated with the international singing group Sweet Adelines and sing everything a cappella, meaning no accompaniment. The intricate harmonies created through their melodious voices had everyone enthralled. Some Christmas songs were included in their medley and they wore Santa hats to celebrate the season.



*Emcee Ester Davis, center,
with the Flirt! quartet*



Yoshiko Halsey

Then the lovely Yoshiko Halsey, a recent arrival and newlywed from Japan, sang two songs, one in Japanese and one in English. She is classically trained to sing opera and her voice really filled the room. Accompaniment was provided by Mrs. Fumiyo Ito, a local piano teacher and member of WFWP.

Throughout the evening, guests circulated around the tables of silent auction items, including handmade iron candlesticks, vintage rhinestone jewelry, quilted wall hangings, and gift baskets of perfume and toiletries. People were Christmas shopping and helping the Schools of Africa at the same time: a win-win situation!



Some of the Silent Auction items

The biggest single source of funds for the Texas benefit was a queen-sized, handmade quilt in the “Ozark Maple Leaf” design. Its multicolored, intricate beauty made the raffle tickets easy to sell at \$2 apiece. At exactly 9 pm, one ticket from among hundreds was drawn. The lucky winner was Mrs. Pauline Chen of Richardson, Texas.



“Ozark Maple Leaf” quilt



Debbie Sand, quilter

The creator of the quilt, Debby Sand, said she had felt called by God to start work on the quilt the previous year, even though she was not sure for what purpose. When she heard about the WFWP Schools of Africa benefit, she immediately offered her quilt. When the proceeds were tallied, Debby's quilt raised more than \$1,000! Total net proceeds for the benefit were approximately \$2600.

Local supporters of the benefit included Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, head of the Honorary Host Committee; Mike and Najma Ghouse, directors of Foundation for Pluralism; Fred and Debra Jones, youth guidance experts; Alexis and Marzuq Jaami, interfaith leaders; and members of the Chinese and Korean communities of Dallas. Ester Davis, emcee of the event, spoke admiringly of the dedication of all WFWP members. "It was a labor of love," she said, "and it was a great success."