

Southie nun works Rwanda miracle

By Christine McConville | Tuesday, February 26, 2008 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | [Local Coverage](#)

It's a long way from South Boston to Rwanda.

But for 60 Hub residents who are there to celebrate the opening of a new girls boarding school this week, it was a journey that started years ago when an activist nun showed a Rwandan governor a thriving after-school program in a former convent off of E Street.

Eight years later, Sister Ann Fox is in Rwanda, preparing to celebrate the opening of the Maranyundo School along with dozens of local volunteers and dignitaries, including Boston's first lady, Angela Menino.

"It has been an amazing experience," said architect Miriam Tuchman, one of the many Bostonians who donated time, money and professional services to make this project happen.

Tuchman, an architect with the project management company RF Walsh, spent countless Friday mornings in the conference room of a former convent on E Street, poring over plans for the school's classrooms, science laboratory and dormitories. Her company picked up the tab.



Yesterday, RF Walsh Project Management President Jack Hobbs said the firm was happy to contribute.

"Sister Ann is a very honest and sincere person, and that's how she accomplishes things," he said.

The school got its start back in 2000, when Fox, who is not affiliated with a religious order, participated in a Women Waging Peace conference at Harvard University.

She met Aloisea Inyumba, the then provincial governor of Kigali, Rwanda. After learning that the war-ravaged country needed schools, Fox began tapping into her Rolodex.

Supporters came flocking.

Some donated time, and others, money. Many donated expertise. For example, Boston-based space planner Jill Costello, landscape designer Jennifer Jones and attorney Janet Rickershauser all pitched in.

Wentworth Institute of Technology Professor Patricia Boge Kendall helped design a solar energy component for the school. Bricklayers and structural engineers helped, too.

Because the Rwandan government donated the land, the nine-building campus cost only \$640,000, and much of that money was donated by Bostonians.

Ed Merritt, president of Mount Washington Bank, which helped with some of the project's international money deals, credited Fox's persuasiveness.

"Sister Ann is very difficult to say no to," he said. "You've just got to find a way to help the cause."

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