

Press Release

Event: US Gallagher receives the Gallagher Global Award 2013

Date: 13th Sept 2013

Venue: Loch Altan Hotel, Gortahork, Co. Donegal, Ireland.

At the Gala Dinner Dance of the 2nd Gallagher Global Gathering in Ostan Loch Altan, Gortahork, Co.Donegal, Ireland, the inaugural Gallagher Global Award was presented to Marybeth Gallagher from California, currently living and working as a volunteer in Namibia.

This followed a worldwide search, which resulted in nominations being received from all over the world. These were the adjudicated on by an independent (non-Gallagher) panel of judges, which included Jim Miley, Project Director, the Gathering Ireland. Despite other very strong nominations, Marybeth was more than a worthy recipient of the award.

The presentation dance was the culmination of a week-long gathering of the Gallagher Clan from four continents, which was launched by Parish Priest of Gortahork, Fr.Sean Ó Gallachóir, last Friday the 6th. The ten day long event has seen Gallaghers descend on the west Donegal Gaeltacht from as far away as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US.

MaryBeth is currently a volunteer, serving AIDS orphans and other dependent children in Windhoek, Namibia. She works at the Bernard Nordcamp Center (BNC) in the suburb of Katatura, adjacent to Windhoek, where the poorest people live. She has been working there since January, 2005. Prior to that she had served overseas in Bangladesh and El Salvador.

From the time she was a teenager, MaryBeth has given of herself tirelessly in the service of others. In High School and in College she always had time to volunteer with children, coaching the younger ones in athletics, and through the Big Brother, Big Sister organization, as a mentor for young girls who were in need of companionship and guidance.

Upon graduation from college in 1986, MaryBeth joined the Jesuit Volunteers, and was assigned to an inner city school in San Francisco. She remained at St. Dominic's School for ten years, first as a classroom assistant and after-school coach, and later as a 2nd grade teacher. To this day, her former students testify as to the positive affect 'Miss Gallagher' has had on their adult lives.

After ten years in San Francisco, MaryBeth reluctantly left her position at St. Dominic's to pursue her life-long dream of serving the poor overseas. As a lay missioner with Maryknoll, the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, she worked for six years in the barrio of San Ramon in the capitol city of San Salvador, El Salvador. Her work there was mostly devoted to the children, especially the girls, who were sadly neglected. Against many odds, she organized girls soccer (football) teams in order to give the girls some recreation and time off from the often onerous chores with which they were burdened. MaryBeth's philosophy is that in order for children to grow into responsible adults, they need lots of love and guidance, and instruction in life-skills, such as courtesy, cooperation and respect for others, which can be learned through participation in team sports. This philosophy also carried over to her subsequent work teaching at a school in Dacca, Bangladesh, and now in Namibia.

MaryBeth began her work in Katatura by organizing soccer teams for girls and later for boys. This program is now participated in by 500 children every Saturday, and Marybeth has turned over the running of this program to older teens and local adults whom she has trained and encouraged over the years. Some of the girls in her program qualified for the Namibian National Team, and participated in the Norway Cup games in 2009.

A few years ago, with donations of racquets and other equipment, and with help from local Tennis clubs, Marybeth has enabled children from the township to learn and participate in tennis matches, both locally and on a national level.

But realizing that the only way these children will break out of the cycle of poverty and addiction is through education, MaryBeth has gradually brought the activities at the BNC from disorganized

to organized play, to educational games, to homework help and now to a full-fledged after-school enrichment center where children have formal classroom instruction in English and Math, as well as individual help with their school homework. The children participating in this program have seen their grades improve tremendously, with many now entering the better High Schools in Windhoek. Many of these children are able to enrol in their neighbourhood schools with financial support from sponsors here in the US as well as abroad, all recruited by MaryBeth. She has also led workshops for teachers in classroom management and

In addition to her work with the children at the BNC, MaryBeth finds time to help a school for handicapped children, in the town of Rehoboth, Namibia, purchase a van to bring the children to that center for care, therapy and instruction. She has done this with the help of Rotary Clubs in Namibia and the US.

She has also provided help and marketing outlets for crafts made by women in their homes, thus enabling them to support and educate their children.

MaryBeth has served this past year as president of the Windhoek Auas Rotary Club, and has encouraged many of the Rotarians both in the US and Namibia, to become involved in helping with these and many other projects.

Her work is supported by individuals and groups all over the world, from Australia and New Zealand to Europe, the US and Canada. Volunteers serve from two weeks to three months.

To learn more about Marybeth and her work I recommend the following sites: They can be accessed by copying and pasting the following into your browser. (Or just go into google and type in: MaryBeth Gallagher Namibia to reach all the sites and many more).

<http://vimeo.com/12618632> (this is a 15 minute documentary on MaryBeth and her work at the BNC)

www.independent.co.uk/travel/africa/to-find-windhoeks-soul-visit-katutura-805080.html

<http://www.stanthony.org/index.php/serving-lost-souls-in-africa-st-anthony-prayers/>

http://www.ecdgroup.com/docs/lib_004444049.pdf (this is a downloadable copy of MaryBeth's book)

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