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New Address!

Our BMISS mailing address has changed. Our new address is:

Building Minds in South Sudan
175 Willowcrest Drive
Rochester, New York 14618

New High School

Four classrooms were built in January under Sebastian's supervision for our Bill Cook High School! A foundation for six rooms was poured, the remaining two classrooms will be built in January 2020, with the school formally opening in February. Three teams of four architectural graduate students at RIT competed for the winning design. Sebastian and Judy Schwartz awarded the winning team with a special certificate and the other two teams received recognition certificates. The students' work was incredible and taken very seriously. It was a thrilling and winning experience for all. The cost of the school was reduced because treated wood, rather than steel, was used. The new material was not imported leading to an additional cost saving.

And Away We Go

South Sudan remains a country with few paved roads. There are no vehicles in Mayen Abun. Cars must be rented from a town many miles away and drivers must be hired. There are no set rental fees or regulations and often, the driver never arrives. There is also no way for a sick child at one of our schools to get medical attention. These situations are frustrating and transportation costs are steadily increasing. A car in South Sudan costs approximately \$8,000. We appreciate any contributions!



Building Minds in South Sudan Celebration Sunday, June 23, 2019

Appreciation – Progress – Dinner – Silent Auction
Adults \$40, Children 12 and under \$15 Kindly RSVP by June 8

Please cut out the response form below and mail together with your check payable to
Building Minds in South Sudan, 175 Willowcrest Drive, Rochester, NY 14618

Name(s) _____

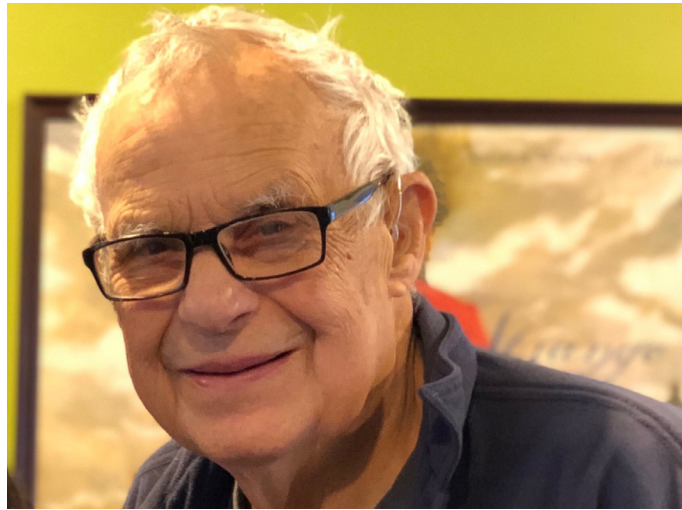
Phone _____

Email _____

Yes, I/We will attend. Number of adults (\$40 each) _____ Number of children (\$15 each) _____

No, I/We are unable to attend, but wish to donate \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____



Our Treasurer is Retiring

Jim Rees — BMISS' inaugural treasurer — is retiring from the position he has held for 10 years since our inception in 2009. Jim did the extensive work required for BMISS to become a 501(c)(3) organization, established our data and donation systems, and took care of many of our financial needs here and in South Sudan. We thank Jim for all he did to further Sebastian's and Mathon's dreams for their home village.

Sarah Solarzano, a CPA at Hevron & Hevron, is the new BMISS treasurer. Join us in welcoming Sarah to our board and to her new role.



Royal Welcome

Sebastian was joined by the Beck family for the first part of his annual visit to Mayen Abun. Upon their arrival, they were greeted by the village leaders and "robed" in capes that were hand embroidered by the women of the village. Sebastian said that this elaborate welcome was only given to very important and official dignitaries. It was a momentous experience for him and the Becks. The Becks said that their visit was the trip of a lifetime!



Bill Cook Foundation

The Bill Cook Foundation is sponsoring the female principal at our all girls primary school Majok Keen. For the safety of the girls, it is imperative to have a female principal. A female principal is also an excellent role model for the students.

Our sincerest thanks to Bill!

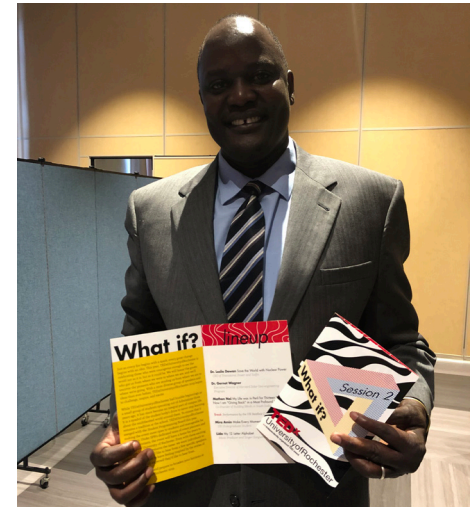


Laima's Project

Through this program, which began in 2016, BMISS has awarded sixteen \$500 microfinance grants. One of the first Laima Project businesses is a restaurant, now so successful that a second location is underway. This is our first spinoff or franchise! During his recent trip, Sebastian ate at this busy popular outdoors establishment and reports that the food is excellent.

As this program grew, we determined the need for coordination and other services. We appointed a village woman, Achel Barac Atem, to set up the three centers (Mayen Center, Wunrok and Ajong) to select more women for grants and provide business counseling for all recipients. In time these centers may also become distribution centers for some of the goods to be sold. Thanks to these changes, the process of establishing new businesses will become more efficient and the businesses themselves more effective.

In addition, six men received microfinance grants. One of the six is already in business but struggling. The grant will help him get on his feet. Traditionally, men open "corner stores" which sell foodstuff such as tea leaves, sugar, sorghum, etc. and that's what these men will do.



TEDxTALK

Building Minds in South Sudan (BMISS) was invited to be part of the TEDxTALK at the U of R. Mathon had 18 minutes to tell his story and how BMISS came about. It was a wonderful experience for him and Mathon received a standing ovation. These talks are available all over the world in a variety of ways. The hope is that with this exposure, BMISS will become a household word and many people will want to support the work of BMISS.

What's Next?

Four classrooms are ready to go for Bill Cook High School when it opens in February 2020... and there is still much more to accomplish for this school to become all that Sebastian and Mathon envision. The most urgent BMISS goal is to raise funds to build the remaining two classrooms. When completed, the high school will continue with double sessions, girls in the morning and boys in the afternoon. Other goals include funds to sponsor a principal and five of the 12 needed teachers, three sets of latrines, an office and kitchen space.