



ISSUE 11

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Songs of Hope, Songs of Home

Annual Benefit Concert for Mozambique, 7:30 pm June 15, Alix Goolden Hall

The Gettin' Higher Choir presents its 23rd benefit concert for Mozambique on Saturday, June 15 at the Alix Goolden Performance Hall in Victoria. The concert will feature guest artist soul-folk singer Samara Jade, and the choir will also present selections from its wide repertoire, from African folk songs to Leonard Cohen, contemporary folk to Verdi. This is the first Mozambique fundraiser for co-directors Dick Jackson and Cathy Baker, who are proud to continue the choir's support for Mozambique. As Dick said, "The choir's longstanding relationship with The Caia Connection gives us a powerful sense of what is happening in Mozambique, and the opportunity to help where we can. Our hearts go out to our friends in Mozambique who have faced so much. By coming together for this benefit concert, we hope to do our small part to let them know they are not alone." Tickets are \$25 (\$15 for students), available at Alix Goolden Hall Box Office, Munro's Books, Ivy's Book Shop in Oak Bay, James Bay Coffee & Books, Dig This (Broadmead), Alexander Mackie Lodge (Langford), and online at ticketfly.com. All concert proceeds are for The Caia Connection.



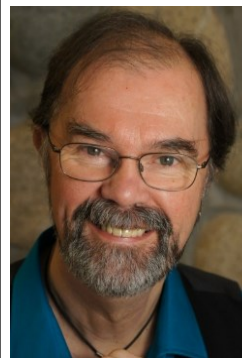
Reflections on Resilience by Sarah Petrescu

It's hard to believe that 11 years ago I was sitting in the back of a pick-up truck trying to reach a small village in rural Mozambique during a massive flood, to write about what is now The Caia Connection for Victoria's Times Colonist newspaper. In the time since, I've married, had a child, changed careers and settled into a comfortable life – but I am forever changed and connected to that short time spent in Mozambique with Perpetua and Joseph Alfazema, Gabriel Miandica and all the resilient people who shared their stories.

I will never forget the grandparents of children orphaned by AIDS who gathered to support each other at Kuwungisana, the palliative care team on bikes, the young mother, Raima, who was battling breast cancer and HIV with a malnourished child, or the people using donated mosquito nets to fish in floodwaters because food was more important than malaria risk. I will also never forget the neighbours who supported each other to get HIV-testing and take anti-retrovirals, the proud faces of the children in their school uniforms playing with their homemade soccer balls, the stories told through songs at gatherings of all sorts, the incredible school, health, garden, and valimba music programs in Kapasseni village.

The strength and resilience of the people in Mozambique, and those helping them from near and afar, shone through in the newspaper stories and inspired incredible interest. It was also incredible to see firsthand how buoyed the communities in Mozambique are by the Canadian friends who have supported them with funding, innovative ideas, and well-wishes. It is a relationship that has transformed lives and communities, and that is a lifeline in difficult times of droughts, diseases, flooding, and cyclones. So, a heartfelt thanks to everyone, especially to our friends in Mozambique working tirelessly to help each other through the latest natural disasters, and to all in Victoria and beyond who have donated money and time to assist them.

Wavelengths Community Choir Fundraisers



Directed by Denis Donnelly, Wavelengths celebrates Pete Seeger, with their guest Mark Hellman performing songs from his acclaimed tribute to Pete. The choir will also do songs from Africa, Cuba, Scotland, and French Canada, and by Paul Simon, Harry Belafonte, and others. Concerts are **Saturday, June 29** at 7:30 and **Sunday, June 30**, at 2:00 at the Charlie White Theatre in Sidney. Proceeds to The Caia Connection. Tickets are \$25, at the box office, by phone at (250) 656-0275, or online <https://tickets.marywinspear.ca>

Photo: Immediately after Cyclone Idai hit Mozambique, we sent \$27,000 for emergency supplies distributed to families in Kapasseni and nearby communities. These funds were crucial, as other aid was delayed by the government's focus on helping the main cities first.

In Loving Memory of Joseph Alfazema

On May 11, 2019, The Caia Connection lost a founding member and pillar of work and inspiration. Joseph passed away peacefully with his family by his side in Edmonton, after battling prostate cancer. He was 68.

Born in Kapasseni when the country was under Portuguese rule, Joseph fled to Kenya on foot during the independence war. He came to Victoria as a refugee in 1984, sponsored Perpetua to join him, and they had three children – Mazalari, Rafael, and Sara. In 1998, the family returned to Kapasseni and saw the devastation of war – a lack of food, roads, schools, hospitals, and churches. Seeing the suffering, and grateful for assistance they received as refugees, the Alfazemas came back to Victoria, started the Kapasseni Project, and partnered with Redeemer Lutheran Church and the Gettin' Higher Choir to raise funds for Kapasseni.

The first benefit concert raised \$10,000, which was enough to build a school. Each year since, concerts have raised funds for education, health, hospice, HIV education, food security, music, and families in poverty. In 2006 Joseph became a Lutheran pastor, and provided spiritual support and leadership for many struggling people. Recently, he and Perpetua returned to Canada with four adopted children – Tumayeni, Pinto, Sara, and Perpetua.

One of Joseph's final wishes was for an expansion of the Seven Mountains school that Kuwangisana built 15 years ago for traumatized children in the town of Sena, where many families were affected by HIV/AIDS. School days start with drumming, dancing, singing, and meals provided by grandmothers. It is so popular that the classrooms are bursting at the seams and more need to be built. May Joseph's love and dedication continue to inspire us all.



Perpetua and Joseph in 2006, following his graduation from the Lutheran seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario. Joseph served as pastor for nine communities in Mozambique, while Perpetua managed Kuwangisana, providing care to people with HIV/AIDS as well as orphans and vulnerable children.

Joseph's funeral was held in Edmonton on May 18. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Joseph Alfazema Memorial Fund, for new classrooms at Seven Mountains school. The fund is on the Canada Helps website at this link: www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/the-caia-connection/campaign/joseph-alfazema-memorial-fund



Perpetua and Joseph in 2008, with AIDS orphans Victor and Nhao, who they cared for in their own home in Sena.



Joseph and Perpetua at their home in Sena in 2010.



After the cyclone, Kuwangisana director Gabriel Miandica went to Kapasseni to distribute emergency supplies of rice, maize (corn), beans, oil, sugar, salt and soap.

Emergency Response Update

This March, Cyclone Idai tore through Mozambique, leaving a path of destruction with damaged homes, ruined crops and flooding that brought deadly water-borne illnesses. It was one of the worst cyclones on record. The coastal hub city Beira was largely destroyed. Communities in Caia District, where Kapasseni and Sena are located, were cut off from help and food. We immediately reached out to our supporters for help and sent \$27,000 for emergency supplies – helping to provide food for over 1,000 families. These funds were crucial, as other assistance was delayed by the government's focus on helping the main cities first.

Over the past few months, The Caia Connection and Kuwangisana staff on the ground have worked tirelessly to make sure hundreds of families are getting access to food and water, and taking stock of the damage. "Most of the houses there are built with local materials and are not spared when it comes to strong winds," Job Saeni reported from Kapasseni, where he and Kuwangisana director Gabriel Miandica distributed emergency food. "Too much joy and relief," Job said as people received supplies. The next steps will be to rebuild damaged buildings and roofs. Classes at the school resumed and the kids were thrilled to receive new textbooks for Grade 9. The valimba music program is bringing some levity and joy to a dire situation. The roads are still a challenge for people to travel to school and hospitals, and for relief providers to access rural areas.

The Caia Connection thanks everyone who reached out to support the relief efforts, with funds and encouragement. "We are so grateful and thankful for the support of everyone who donated and helped," said Perpetua Alfazema. "There is still much work to be done and we will continue to help the people there and to help our programs stay strong."

Thanks to the Gettin' Higher Choir! Their concerts last June raised \$12,517 for Kuwangisana and \$2,345 for the Denis Donnelly and Siobhan Robinsong Distance Learning Centre, which is the new distance high school in Kapasseni. Members of the GHC and the High Noon Choir also took collections among themselves and donated \$3,620 for scholarships to enable Kapasseni children to continue to go to high school and on to post-secondary education.

New Opportunities for Education

by Gabriel Miandica

It is an exciting time in Kapasseni village as students began Grade 8 and 9 in 2019 at the Denis Donnelly and Siobhan Robinsong Distance Learning Centre. By providing distance learning opportunities we are honouring the wishes of local families to keep children in the community so it can grow and thrive. Kapasseni will be a model for other communities in rural Mozambique and the Ministry of Education has been very supportive.

The distance learning students are currently in a small classroom until the new building is finished. Construction is progressing in the larger learning and computer lab but there have been some challenges. The builders have been determined to keep going even though rain was making it difficult to get supplies to Kapasseni. They used bicycles and motorcycles to transport materials and the community helped by carrying materials to the school. Then when the cyclone hit in March, all work came to a halt as people dealt with the emergency situation and looked after their families. Luckily, the school building was not damaged and work has resumed. The next phase is to get the desks, computers and solar equipment installed so the new classroom will be ready for students to begin Grade 10.

The distance learning curriculum in Mozambique is developed for Grades 10 to 12. Our hope is to see this expand so the entire community can take courses online. We have an opportunity to acquire donated computers but would need funding to have a program in place for next year. We need to cover the costs of computer monitors, furniture, solar panels, batteries and installation.



The distance learning students are using a small classroom until the new building is finished.

Community Water Needs – An issue affecting students and their families in Kapasseni is the problem of salty water in wells. There is a water catchment system for the schools and the community but it is not sufficient in the dry season. Engineers, community leaders, and researchers have done assessments and found that the only lasting solution will be to install a water system to pump water from the closest river. This is essential to the schools, the health centre, and community development. The plan is for this project to use solar power and green implementation.

Nursing Students Update

When Cyclone Idai hit Beira, 10 nursing students supported by The Caia Connection were in the city at the residence they share during their studies. Part of the building's roof was torn off in the storm, but the students took cover, and luckily no one was harmed. After the cyclone some of the students left for practicums outside the city, and others stayed to continue their studies and to help with recovery efforts. We are extremely proud of their dedication and bravery to continue studying and assisting others during and after this severe natural disaster.

Seven are graduating in June 2019 – Abel, Aibo, Domingos, Regina, Mateus, Manuel, and Ardicha. Regina, Manuel and Mateus are doing final practicums at the district hospital in Nhamatanda, 100 km from Beira. Abel, Aibo, Domingos, and Ardicha are doing final practicums in Beira Hospital. We offer our congratulations and best wishes for job placements.



Abel, Aibo, Domingos, and Ardicha have been supported by The Caia Connection in their nursing studies. They were in Beira when the cyclone destroyed most of the city.

Our Funding Needs In 2019

The priority areas are education, water security, culture, and community development.

Denis Donnelly and Siobhan Robinsong Distance Learning Centre – Kapasseni's first high school. Funds are needed for computers, books, school supplies, solar panels, and furniture, as the building is nearing completion.

Joseph Alfazema Memorial Fund – Donations can be made to our building fund in loving memory of Joseph, which will build more classrooms for Seven Mountains school for orphans and vulnerable children in Sena.

Emergency Disaster Relief – Funds have been sent to help purchase food, water treatment, purchase cooking utensils, tools, seeds, and help with building repairs.

Scholarships – We provide scholarships averaging \$2,500 for Kapasseni students in post-secondary education in Beira. This helps with tuition, books, room & board, travel, supplies, and a small amount for the house mother and security. In addition we also support Kapasseni students who go to Murraca for high school – this will be a need for at least one more year. A donation of \$350 pays for a year in Murraca.

Water Security – Donations are needed for installing a water pipeline to Kapasseni village, as the water from local wells has become too salty for people to drink.

Economic Development – Donations can be made for the moringa processing plant that will develop export capacity.

Traditional Music – Donations to the traditional music program provide instruments, teachers, and travel costs.

About The Caia Connection – We fundraise to support the non-profit **Kuwangisana Organization** in the Caia District of Sofala Province in Mozambique. Kuwangisana was founded in 2006 by Perpetua Alfazema and means "For the better health and wellbeing of all". Kuwangisana programs support and empower people in rural Mozambique to obtain education, health services, and human rights. For background on these projects, see two great films on YouTube: [Journey to Kapasseni](#), and [Return to Kapasseni](#) (click to play).

2019 Budget

Projected Funds (\$ Canadian)

Emergency relief donations	\$ 27,000
General donations	127,000
Joseph Alfazema Memorial Fund	20,000
Choir 2019 concerts	10,000
Total	\$184,000

Projected Expenditures (\$ Canadian)

Emergency relief	\$ 27,000
Seven Mountains School classrooms	20,000
Kapasseni Distance Learning Centre	47,000
Scholarships	44,000
Water supply project	32,000
Moringa tree project	10,000
Traditional Music Program	4,000
Total	\$184,000

Notes:

- (1) If more funds are received we will be able to increase our funding for several of these goals.
- (2) The Caia Connection is run entirely by volunteers.

Donations and Contact

We are a registered charity and Canadian tax receipts are available. There are three ways to donate:

1. **Cheques payable to The Caia Connection**, sent to: 560 Boblaw Place, Victoria, B.C., Canada V9C 3Z1
Tax receipts will be mailed to you.
2. **Donations of stocks**. To discuss, please contact our board member Blaise Salmon at: bsalmon@shaw.ca
3. To donate online, go to [Canada Helps](#) on our website www.caiaconnection.org

For more info, contact: Carol Kerr at (250) 478-9296, Siobhan Robinsong at (250) 386-3181 or email us at:

caiaconnection@gmail.com or
kuwangisanaproject@gmail.com