



Photos: Janice Blickhan

Local Action Has Global Impact

By Tricia DeBoo, TDS Volunteer, 12/09/09

In October 2009 Dr. Thurmaier met with a newly formed youth group at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in DeKalb, Illinois. He told the young people about the work that Tanzania Development Support is doing in Nyegina and described the hardships that children and teens half a world away must endure on a daily basis. He explained how difficult it is for young people, especially girls, to attend school.

Education opportunities are usually reserved for boys, and families often do not have the financial means to send their daughters to school. Dr. Thurmaier emphasized that education is the most powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty.

The members of the youth group decided to raise funds that could be sent to the Nyegina Secondary School for the purpose of providing a \$500 one year scholarship for one girl. Their first project was to rake leaves. Over the course of three weekends 12 young people and 5 adults raked leaves for about 15 homeowners who donated money for their efforts. When the work was done and the tallies were totaled, the youth had raised nearly \$1,000.00! It was almost enough to provide a two-year scholarship for one girl or one year for two girls.



This was a very positive experience for the youth in the group and they are now feeling a sense of connection with the students at Nyegina Secondary School. They recognize and appreciate the opportunity to share the abundance of our country with those who have so little. They are inspired to raise additional funds and to become pen pals with students at the Secondary School. Being pen pals will create a personal connection while offering the students in Nyegina an opportunity to sharpen their skills using English, which is their third language. The members of the youth group plan to reach out to other local church youth groups and invite them to join this effort. They want to share the opportunity to change the lives of people their own age who live on the other side of the globe.