

South Holland family helps across the globe



By Sue Bero
Times Correspondent | Friday, March 20, 2009

Nche Onyema, of South Holland, shares her family's vision for improving health conditions and learning opportunities in the African country of Nigeria.

In 2005, the family established the GEANCO Foundation to develop and manage world class medical, educational and athletic facilities in Nigeria. It partners with Mayer Brown law and Ernst and Young accounting firms in Chicago to raise funds in Chicago, California, Washington, D.C., New York and Nigeria so far.

An immediate goal of the foundation is to raise \$600,000 for a feasibility study in Nigeria. The foundation already has 300 acres of tropical jungle given as a grant from Nigeria for a hospital that will be named Augustine Memorial Hospital, in memory of Onyema's grandfather.

"It was something I was born with," she said. "It started with discussions around the kitchen table and drawings on napkins.

"Nigeria is where my family comes from and I can't see how I can live in the states and be ignorant to the situations in a place my parents call home.

"The need is so great. It has such a high rate of HIV and AIDS and malaria which is preventable and treatable."

Onyema hopes people will support the foundation. More information is available at www.geanco.org.

"We realize it's during these hard times that the suffering and hopeless need us the most and so people

will change their thinking from hard to see to believe to believing it to see it come true," she said. More information is available at www.geanco.org.

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