



At the groundbreaking for the new and permanent St. Al's school building in Kibera slum, Nairobi, Bill Koloseike encourages recent graduates who are moving onto college.

Serving Wherever the Need Is Greatest

by Kelly McLaughlin

Bill Koloseike first came into contact with the Jesuits in college. He attended Marquette University for two years before transferring to Loyola University Chicago where he graduated with a degree in business in 1951. Four years later, after trying his hand at multiple industry jobs, Bill got married and opened his first car dealership—on the same day.

Fifty-three years, four children, ten grandchildren, and nine “Bill Kay” car dealerships later, Bill has enjoyed success and adventure in his life. An avid traveler, volunteer, philanthropist, and motivational speaker, he was reintroduced to the Jesuits a few years ago when he picked up a church bulletin after Mass at St. Margaret Mary's Parish in Naperville, Illinois. Inside was a mention of a volunteer opportunity through the Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC), a Jesuit ministry that provides men and women, aged 50 and older, opportunities to serve others, address social injustice, and transform lives. Bill contacted the Chicago chapter of IVC and went through the application process to become a member. Soon after, he was placed at Family Focus in Aurora, Illinois, which is a comprehensive family support system for Spanish-speaking families that provides everything from after-school programs to counseling. Bill teaches English there twice a week and serves as a motivation for those he educates, reiterating to them that hard work and education go hand in hand.

“Bill's work at Family Focus is both dedicated and remarkable,” says George Sullivan, director of IVC Chicago. “He was chagrined that he did not speak Spanish, the language most familiar to the Family Focus staff and those they serve, so he asked Gonzalo Arroyo, executive director of Family Focus, to find a tutor. Now, Bill is able to communicate more easily with his coworkers and those he serves.”

What has kept Bill returning to offer his Mondays and Wednesdays to the families of Aurora for the past three years is not only the people he works with, but the unique element of spiritual reflection that is provided through IVC. Bill believes that one of the most heartening aspects of IVC is the

periodical spiritual retreat that members attend. It is the program's goal that God's presence is felt and personal transformation occurs during these retreats and one-on-one monthly sessions with a spiritual reflector.

“My experience at IVC has deepened my spiritual life,” says Bill. “I really enjoy the retreats that give me the opportunity to reflect on my experiences. When my wife died four years ago, I was feeling lost. That's when I decided to devote the rest of my life to God. IVC has helped me to do that.”

Recently, Bill visited one of the ministries he supports—St. Aloysius Gonzaga Secondary School, in Nairobi, Kenya. Co-founded in 2004 by Fr. Terry Charlton, SJ, and the Christian Life Community, St. Al's is the world's first high school for AIDS orphans. After four years in makeshift classrooms in Kibera slums, the school broke ground on the site of its new and permanent location. Bill attended the groundbreaking ceremony to offer assistance wherever needed.

Fr. Charlton notes that Bill has been an excellent partner with St. Al's. “During his visit, Bill spoke at the groundbreaking for the permanent school and went on to pitch in and give inspiring motivational talks to our students on retreat. They were challenged by his call to them to follow their deepest desires. Like so many others, Bill is a partner who makes our work not only possible, but also pleasant.”

“I don't just want to write checks,” says Bill, “I want to go do something—I want to be a part of it.”

And a part of it, he is. ■



Bill Koloseike and several family members celebrated Mass with Fr. Terry Charlton, SJ, in memory of Bill's late wife Shirley: Fr. Terry Charlton, SJ; Nina Moore; John, Ginny, and Judy Spellman; Bill Koloseike; Blake, Bill Jr. and Jan Koloseike