

INCISAL

KNOWLEDGE SUCCESS LIFE

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SPRING 2013

ARMY OF ONE
How Dr. Richard Coslett
Serves His Country

TEST-DRIVING THE
NEW MERCEDES

INSIDE THE REBIRTH
OF DENTAL SCHOOLS

**HOW TO
HELP YOUR
PRACTICE:**

- * MANAGE
EMPLOYEES
WISELY
- * OPTIMIZE
LIGHT CURING
- * MASTER
SOCIAL MEDIA

DR. FRANK ANDOLINO
Top-notch orthodontics, an
innovative nonprofit — and *Incisal*
Edge's Humanitarian of the Year

**DOING WELL,
DOING GOOD**

Healing young Africans' cleft palates, helping
America's neediest: How dentists are leveraging
their influence to **CHANGE THE WORLD**

The
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agent

DR. FRANK ANDOLINO runs a successful orthodontics practice in New York. But what makes him proudest is the help that he and his charitable foundation bring to impoverished African villages. This dual dedication helps explain why we've named him *Incisal Edge's* Humanitarian of the Year.

BY ELIZABETH DILTS

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY MATTHEW FURMAN



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ONYANGO WAS A BICYCLE MECHANIC

who lacked something crucial: a bicycle mechanic's tools. Orphaned at a young age, Onyango dropped out of school to learn the trade from his uncle in the Kenyan town of Nakuru. He picked up the skill quickly, but when he returned to his hometown, he was forced to turn away any customer with a problem more serious than a flat tire or broken chain.

In August 2011, a small nonprofit called Kageno gave Onyango, who had completed its business-training classes at the local recreation center, a microfinance loan of 4,500 Kenyan shillings, about \$52. He used the money to buy tools, and by winter he was repairing spokes and balancing heel rims. Within a few months, he earned enough to pay off the first loan and take out a second, with which he bought more tools and expanded his business to include motorcycle maintenance.

This past summer, Onyango was at last able to afford a bridal dowry and get married — and few people were prouder than New York City orthodontist Dr. Frank Andolino. "I think you can always make an impact," says Dr. Andolino, who founded Kageno 10 years ago and is its executive director. "More often than not, people know how to solve their problems but don't have the means to do it."

Kageno currently provides medical, educational, vocational and environmental assistance at three village projects in Kenya and Rwanda. With an annual budget under \$400,000 and just one full-time employee, the group nonetheless builds hospitals, schools and rec centers. Its hundreds of volunteers plant trees to rehabilitate eroded soil and teach sustainable farming. They

run nursery schools and hire HIV-positive local women to cook the children's breakfast porridge. They provide microfinance loans like the ones that have spurred Onyango's business, and teach men to make fuel briquettes out of trash.

"The Kageno model covers all the bases," says Candice Wexler, a board member, emphasizing that 90 percent of donations go to support project activities. "If helping abused women motivates you, Kageno does that. If educating children does it for you, they do that, too."

And if you're an environmentalist looking to diversify developing-world crops and encourage the use of biofuels? Dr. Andolino does that himself. "Community development is multifaceted," says the 52-year-old, whose practice, Andolino Orthodontics, is in Midtown Manhattan. That, he explains, is why he decided on this charitable model after having volunteered with other groups for decades. "I can give AIDS victims antiretroviral medicine to improve their symptoms, but if they don't have food they can't take the drugs, and if they don't have money they can't keep getting the drugs. We can't just pour money into communities. We're looking for sustainable ways to intervene."

Kageno means "a place of hope" in Dholuo, a Kenyan dialect, and Dr. Andolino's dream was to create hope in small villages by talking with community leaders to ascertain their needs, then providing help through comprehensive programs. He also wanted to do so in a way that aligned with the efforts of world leaders. Just one problem: He didn't know any world leaders. So he began to improvise.

"With every aspect of the program, I looked to organizations I felt were the best and contacted them," Dr. Andolino says. "You don't want to reinvent the wheel, and you also don't want to provide a service that has already been done and wasn't successful."

Kageno was established at the same time as the United Nations' Millennium Village, which was designed to address inequalities stemming from the rise of globalization. Jeffrey Sachs, the Columbia University professor who was Millennium Village's chief architect, was reinventing how the U.N. financed development. Mean-

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while, Dr. Paul Farmer, a Harvard physician and the founder of Partners in Health, was persuading American politicians (Bill Clinton among them) to fund his missions to provide, as he says, "First World health care to Third World patients."

Dr. Andolino, who graduated from Georgetown University's School of Dentistry and then did his orthodontic and dentofacial orthopedics residency at Columbia, has always been an avid learner. So he tracked down Sachs and Farmer, probing them for ideas.

He encountered Farmer after a lecture he gave at Princeton; Farmer has since become a close mentor who sits on Kageno's advisory board, assisting with its health-care efforts. Dr. Andolino likewise talked with a few of his patients who are involved with the Robin Hood Foundation; they subsequently helped design the baseline study and metrics that Kageno uses to analyze the impact of donors' investments — a system Dr. Andolino shared with Millennium Village project fellows, who put it to work.

Dr. Andolino still remembers the Sunday he first visited Banda, a remote community of about 5,000 people in the mountainous rainforest of southern Rwanda, where Kageno would eventually set up a project. He and his group encountered several very drunk men who gazed at them with evident hostility.

Pressing on, Dr. Andolino and his volunteers met with some residents in a field. With the help of a local translator, Dr. Andolino asked what

Banda's greatest needs were. At the top of everyone's list: a hospital. At the time, women were often forced to walk up to 12 hours to the nearest hospital to give birth.

Within a year, Kageno had built a hospital in Banda; it's now staffed with nurses and doctors, mostly from the village, who are trained and paid by Kageno.

The hospital began hosting support groups for HIV-positive women, and it soon became clear that almost all of them lacked money for medical care. So when Kageno moved on to the community's next request — building a nursery school — Dr. Andolino hired the women to work as cooks in the school's kitchen.

Initially, the women would cook porridge using butane tanks, but the fuel was expensive and wasteful. Dr. Andolino had read about biofuels made from animal dung, which were being used by the Masai tribe in eastern Kenya, and once again tracked down the leading expert on the topic to learn more. Soon, Kageno was training men in the village to make fuel briquettes from their trash — wood shavings and ash, mostly — to use for cooking and to sell.

Recently, Kageno built a new community center in Banda. It's used for weddings and funerals — and, last summer, for a cooking contest. All dishes were to be judged on taste, nutritional value, use of local ingredients and cleanliness of preparation. (Volunteers had previously taught lessons about proper kitchen hygiene.)

Dr. Andolino was delighted, if a little worried. "I told the volunteer he was taking a big risk," he says, referring to the man who tasted all the dishes and judged the winner. "You really had to trust that they used clean methods when cooking." That risk — like most of the risks Dr. Andolino and Kageno have taken — was well worth it. "The food was amazing, and people loved it," he recalls. "They were really proud of what they made." ■

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For more information about Kageno, please visit kageno.org, call 212-227-0509 or e-mail frank@kageno.org.