



**GOING FOR THE GOAL: Dr. Tommy Clark, DC '92 and DMS '01, was the main speaker at this year's Dartmouth Convocation. He founded Grassroot Soccer, a nonprofit that uses professional soccer players to help prevent AIDS among children in Africa.**

## Bringing a bit of green, and hope, to Kenya

When the people of Lwala, Kenya, sold their cows, goats, and chickens to raise \$900 for one of their “sons” to fly to the U.S. to attend Dartmouth College, they couldn't have anticipated how he'd repay their faith in him.

In 2007, that “son”—Milton Ochieng', DC '04—and his brother Fred, DC '05, opened Lwala's first clinic, which has since provided health care to 25,000 patients. The Ochieng' brothers (there's an apostrophe at the end of their name in their native language, Dholuo) established the clinic while attending medical school in the U.S.

**Walk:** The young men built the clinic to honor their parents, who died of AIDS—their mother in 2004 and their father in 2005. They wanted to fulfill their father's dream that isolated Lwala—a six-hour walk from the nearest hospital—would someday have its own health-care facility. Milton first realized it might be possible to build a clinic when he helped other Dartmouth students build one in Nicaragua on a trip with Dartmouth's Tucker Foundation in 2001. The experience “gave me the inspiration that made me think, ‘Boy, I could actually do this in Kenya,’” says Milton.

After graduating from Dartmouth, the brothers enrolled in Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in Nashville, Tenn. In the summer after his first year, Milton returned to Lwala and began to build a clinic with the help of his village. The fund-rais-

ing and construction efforts over the next two years are featured in an award-winning documentary film, *Sons of Lwala*, which had its New England premiere at Dartmouth in October.

**Funds:** Many people—including singer Bruce Springsteen, former U.S. Senator Dr. Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), and students of all ages—have helped to raise funds for the clinic.

It is now providing primary, maternal, pediatric, and HIV/AIDS care to Lwala's 1,500 residents, as well as to thousands of people in the surrounding area; 85% of patients receive care at no charge.

In a locale where once a pregnant woman died in a wheelbarrow as she was being pushed to the distant hospital, 31 babies have been born in the new clinic. Construction has now begun on a new building for maternity care and HIV/AIDS treatment, thanks to approximately \$30,000

raised from a DMS event called Dance for a Dream—organized by Shailvi Gupta, DMS '10—and from gifts given in memory of Deborah Miller, a DHMC nurse-midwife who died in a car accident in 2008.

Dr. Peter Wright, a DMS '65 and a pediatric infectious disease specialist who came to Dartmouth from Vanderbilt in 2007, has been an advisor to the brothers. Others have built clinics in

**The village of Lwala is a six-hour walk from the nearest hospital.**

resource-poor places, but Wright says “it's absolutely unique to do in the context of being medical students.”

Milton acknowledges that balancing medical school with overseeing the construction and operation of the clinic “has been a big, big challenge.” But “knowing that I have a whole network of people who are willing to help has been a great source of comfort,” he adds. Milton is now a first-year resident at Barnes-Jewish Hospital in St. Louis.

“We've met so many special

people here at Dartmouth who've been willing to . . . believe [in] us,” agrees Fred, now a third-year medical student at Vanderbilt. “It's a powerful thing to have these special people surround you.”

When the time came to paint the clinic's roof, choosing green “was just natural” due to all the Dartmouth involvement, says Milton. A Hanover, N.H.-based nonprofit called the Lwala Community Alliance now supports the clinic (see [lwalacommunityalliance.org](http://lwalacommunityalliance.org)). Its director is Joel Wickre, DC '03, and its president is Dr. William Young, a retired DHMC ob-gyn who met Milton on the 2001 Nicaragua trip. The Young family has hosted the brothers in their home many times.

**Baby:** On a trip back to Kenya during their 2007-08 Christmas vacation, Milton, Fred, and their sister Flo, then in nursing school, delivered a breech baby at the Lwala clinic. Fred read instructions from a textbook while an obstetrician—a parent of a Dartmouth student—coached the trio over the phone. “That's the most scared I've ever been in my whole life,” says Milton, “knowing that for that lady, she felt that Fred and I and Flo . . . were her only source of hope at that moment.” Most amazing, however, is not that the siblings delivered the baby successfully, but that the infant is the granddaughter of the woman who died in the wheelbarrow.

Thanks to the clinic, the sons and daughters of Lwala can now receive health care where they need it—in their own village.

KATHERINE VONDERHAAR



**Wearing Dartmouth t-shirts, Milton Ochieng' (left) and Joel Wickre (right), celebrated the 2007 opening of the appropriately green-roofed clinic in Lwala, Kenya.**