

Mrs. Spesia: Hi, I'm Lori Spesia and I'm in Malawi, East Africa visiting with my good friend Father Phillip Mbeta. Doug and I came to Malawi in 2003 and 2005 to volunteer at the Namitembo Mission.

Mrs. Spesia: I think that nobody knows better than Rotarians how small the world is and we met Fr. Philip back in Plainfield when he was studying for his doctorate at Illinois Benedictine University in Lisle. During the years he was in Lisle, and living near, he became part of the Spesia family. Upon Doug's passing a year ago, we suggested donations to Fr. Philip in Malawi. And he decided with the money that he received that he would build a family education center in his village. I am here for the ground-breaking, along with John's wife, Mary and her daughter Cecilia, my grandsons Frank and Christian, and my granddaughter Maggie. Malawi is known as the "warm heart" of Africa and that's the kind of welcome we have received the entire time we've been here. I am going to let Fr. Philip tell you a little bit about his idea for the center and where it's located and why water is really going to be such an asset for the whole project. Father Phillip...

Father Philip: Hello. I am Father Philip Mbeta, as Lori has already introduced me and the reason she is here for, together with her family, a daughter-in-law and grandchildren, is to ground-break the place where Douglas Spesia Centre will be built in Thyolo (Cho-Lo). The idea is to use the .. in his honor and his remembrance to put up a center building where people from the villages, who come to do some activities, like for example teaching kids who have no opportunity to go to kindergarten but also women like those that would travel long distances to hospital. We would make it a place where these people receive instructions and also develop in many ways. As I said, as a place where many people will be gardening, water is of prime importance. However, we did not foresee how this would come together putting up a center and have water in place. It was by God's grace that through Doug's son, John, mentioned that he could file papers introducing this need to his group, the Rotarians in Joliet, Illinois, that they could help us. Of course, I contacted the Rotarians in Malawi so maybe there could be communication and supervision of the project if it was deemed necessary and approved by the Rotarians in Joliet. So, it is a very vital need for this center to operate for without water there is no life. This water we are talking about is a borehole that will benefit not just the people coming to the center but the six villages around. It's an open place; so many people would be coming to get water. As of now, they walk long distances, down the creeks, up the hills to draw waters from the rivers, which is not hygienic and clean for drinking. But if this happens, the people will drink clean water. That will also help them not to contract or get diseases, especially those that are water-born diseases, like diarrhea or cholera. So I hope that this project, in honor of Douglas Spesia, will truly take place as they have committed themselves to doing so many ... for this project. What was needed most is water and we hope that through John and his friends or Rotarians will come to our assistance. Thank you.