

# Students/Faculty 'Adopt' Orphans of Ugandan War

By Johanna Kremer & Sally Nugent, *Moeller Parent*

THIS YEAR, 30 MENTOR GROUPS of students and faculty members are each sponsoring an orphan in UNIFAT (Upper Nile Institute for Appropriate Technology), the school in Northern Uganda that Moeller adopted last year. Each group has committed

students. More than 350 students from 15 high schools throughout Cincinnati participated to learn about the plight of the Ugandan children. Moeller alum Michael Zimmer '67 and his wife Jill — who first connected Moeller with UNIFAT and

personal friend of Abitimo's named Jolie, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee from Uganda who runs a school mentoring program in Gulu," said Connie Ring, Moeller math teacher and Invisible Children/Unified for UNIFAT moderator. "Jolie was impressed with the commitment our students have to UNIFAT and praised them for their hard work and dedication."

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:** There are many ways to help, but the website [www.unifiedforunifat.com](http://www.unifiedforunifat.com) is a great place to start. You can also contact Connie Ring directly at [CRing@Moeller.org](mailto:CRing@Moeller.org) for information about how you can support Moeller students in their "Unified" endeavors.



Students of Abitimo Odongkara's school in Northern Uganda proudly display their Moeller Mentor Group sponsors.

to raising \$300, which will cover the child's tuition, uniform, food, shelter, and medical care for an entire year.

**UNIFAT:** Currently, there are more than 1,500 students enrolled at UNIFAT, serving PreK-6th grade. Since there are no public schools in Uganda, cost is always an issue, especially for orphans. For these children, education is their only hope for the future — education and the school's founder, Abitimo Odongkara.

**ABITIMO ODONGKARA:** Abitimo single-handedly built UNIFAT back in 1985 with 10 students under a tree, and she continues to work countless hours to keep it going. She is 73 years old. Over the past two decades, the school has experienced challenges caused by rebel activities, hunger, and an outbreak of Ebola. Despite these difficulties, the school maintains high standards of learning and has built a reputation of excellence throughout the country.

**ONE UGANDA:** Earlier this past year, Abitimo visited Moeller to participate in ONE UGANDA, a city-wide social justice weekend event sponsored by the Moeller

Obitimo after learning of the students' efforts to support the Invisible Children movement — generously flew Abitimo in for the event. The ONE UGANDA attendees heard her amazing story first hand, and she inspired them to become involved, reminding them of the power they have to make a positive change in the world. The next ONE UGANDA overnight will take place in February 2008. For further details, see [www.unifiedforunifat.com](http://www.unifiedforunifat.com). This website, which is designed and updated by a Moeller alum, Will Tardio '07, also provides information about how to sponsor a child and shows pictures of recent events, such as Invisible Children's "Displace Me" event last spring.

**DISPLACE ME:** More than 100 Cincinnati students participated in Invisible Children's Displace Me event in Chicago. Led by Moeller students and teachers, the students built and slept in cardboard shanties in the heart of the city, along with 5,000 youth from around the nation. The event raised awareness about those living in IDP camps (Internally Displaced Persons) in Gulu, Uganda. "At the event, our students met a

*Editor's Note: The last two issues of Moeller Magazine (spring/summer 2006 & fall/winter 2006)\* have highlighted our students' involvement in the Invisible Children movement, a grassroots effort by American youth to end the abduction and abuse of Ugandan children perpetrated by a rebel army. Few stories have generated as much interest as our students' involvement in this cause, and few social justice issues have touched the Men of Moeller like this one. The leadership they have provided is hard to overstate, for like a stone making ripples in a pond, the rings of their efforts are ever-expanding as they continue to inspire their peers throughout the city to get involved and initiate their own efforts. To date, Moeller has shown the Invisible Children: Rough Cut video to literally thousands of students and parents, and 15 area high schools are currently supporting the Invisible Children movement. At Moeller, one woman, Connie Ring, a math teacher, has single-handedly rallied the students and helped them organize. She is the "wind beneath their wings" — a true Moeller Crusader. While our teachers are unsung heroes each in their own way, she's teaching our students to soar in a unique way, a perfect model of our founder Blessed William Joseph Chaminade's vision to educate for service, peace, and justice.*

\* These articles are available in the [www.unifiedforunifat.com](http://www.unifiedforunifat.com) "Press" section.