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CINDY CANTRELL | PEOPLE

The Boston Globe

Statuesque improvement

By Cindy Cantrell | October 7, 2007

Obscured by an estimated 50 years of damage from tree sap, organic material, acid rain, and New England winters, a recently restored marble statue has gained new life and attention in Concord.

Ivan Myjer and Miroslav Maler of Arlington-based Building and Monument Conservation worked for nearly two weeks last month to restore the reproduction of Michelangelo's La Pieta of St. Peter's Basilica in a grove of pine trees near the rectory of the Holy Family Parish in Concord.

"I'd describe the deterioration as moderate," said Myjer, an Arlington resident who wanted to be a sculptor before he "found my way to making a living" with Building and Monument Conservation. "I do a lot of work in cemeteries, so I've seen worse."

While Myjer repaired cracks and cleaned and treated the statue's discolored Carrara marble, Maler carved a new thumb to replace the missing digit on Mary's left hand. The project was paid for by artist **Robin Masi** of Concord, who donated the money to the parish in memory of her father, **Joseph L. Masi**, who died in May. Masi wrote about her visit to the original Pieta at age 8 with her father in her book "Dad, The Pieta and Me."

"A lot of people came by to chat; they said they hadn't really noticed the sculpture before since it had turned green and was tucked away in the trees," said Myjer, whose previous restoration projects have included the Forefathers' Monument in Plymouth and the stonework at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City. "It's nice to do something for people who are so appreciative. It makes you feel like your work really matters."

RACE TO BUILD ORPHANAGE: As a member of Grace Community Church in Chelmsford, **John Feehrer** of Westford has traveled twice to Kenya, where he has witnessed the devastation that AIDS and other diseases have inflicted on families.

"Our faith is often distracted by our material possessions and busy schedules, whereas Kenya is a poor country where people struggle to make enough money to survive," Feehrer said. "We help them financially, but they help us by showing how to trust in God for every need."

Feehrer, a member of the church's board of elders, is organizing and participating in the fourth annual Grace Race Oct. 20 to benefit the construction and staffing of an orphanage in Kenya. Funds from

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previous 5-mile run/walks have helped Grace Community Church's sister organization, Naivasha Kenya Assemblies of God, purchase five acres of land for the facility, which will provide room, board, education, and job training.

Proceeds from this year's event will go toward the cost of drilling a hole and providing a pump for a well, in addition to installing electricity on the property. The cost of this phase is estimated at \$15,000, according to Feehrer, while the entire project could top \$180,000. Grace Community Church members also sponsor orphans for \$700 to \$900 a year, he said, depending on their age.

Grace Race registration will take place at 8:30 a.m. on race day, with participants leaving Grace Community Church, 275 Billerica Road in Chelmsford, at 10 a.m. To register online or learn more, visit Gracerace.net.

PEACE AWARD: When Lexington resident **David Fairman** was an undergraduate student at Harvard University, he traveled to India, where he was taken aback by how villagers' lives were so monetarily poor but culturally rich.

"The experience changed my life," Fairman said. "I had enjoyed a privileged upbringing on Long Island. I came back puzzling over how the world can be so unequal."

Determined to help the poor in the United States, Fairman discovered he had a skill and passion for mediation after working as a landlord-tenant mediator in Somerville. Since then, he has dedicated his career to mediating public policy, social services, and development disputes both domestically and overseas.

Now managing director of international programs at the Consensus Building Institute in Cambridge, Fairman was recently presented with the Rotary Club of Lexington's first World Peace and Understanding Award.

"For any of us who are sure we're in the right and someone else is in the wrong," Fairman said, "it's useful to step back and decide what we really want to achieve and how much we care about the relationship beyond this set of issues. It's common sense, but it's amazing how smart people can let emotions blind them to what's really important."

People items may be submitted to cantrell@globe.com. ■

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