

MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF HUMANITY

The Mentor

Newsletter of the Muhammad Ali Center

Vol. 1, No. 1

Summer 2002



Breaking Ground for a Welcoming Place

**ALI CENTER TEAMS WITH
UNITED NATIONS, SHINE, AND
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE TO
ADVANCE THE LEVEL OF
HUMANITY WORLDWIDE**



Breaking Ground

CITY OF LOUISVILLE BREAKS GROUND ON PHASE ONE OF THE MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER

PHOTO BY DAVID LOTTES

IT WAS AN EVENT marked by colorful multi-cultural performances, local pride, heartfelt gratification—and even a few magic tricks by the Champ himself. June 11, 2002 was a day that Lonnie and Muhammad Ali had “anticipated for many years.” In the sizzling summer heat of Louisville, amidst a crowd of over 200 people, Mayor Dave Armstrong—along with Lonnie and Muhammad Ali, and Chairwoman Ina Bond—broke ground for Phase I of the city’s new facility.

Phase I of the Muhammad Ali Center will encompass a \$7.5 million, 450-space parking garage owned by

Lonnie and Muhammad Ali, Mayor Dave Armstrong, and Board Chair Ina Bond break ground on Phase I of the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville.



PHOTO BY DAVID LOTTES



Mayor Dave Armstrong presents Muhammad and Lonnie Ali with a city proclamation.

the Parking Authority of River City (PARC) and a one-acre public plaza. The plaza will include an entry atrium from historic Main Street, dramatic upper level views of the Ohio River, and will be connected to the city’s Belvedere and Riverfront Plaza via a new pedestrian bridge across Sixth Street; the plaza will also contain an outdoor amphitheater.

Phase II of the project—which will begin in about a year—consists of the five-and-a-half story Muhammad Ali Center.

The groundbreaking site is different than originally announced. Rather than being built atop the existing Riverfront Plaza garage just across the street, the Center will be developed on property that had been dormant for years and which the City had gained control of in February 2002. As a result of this change, the design of the Center was also altered in order to take advantage of the increased ground space gained from the new location. This opportunity

led to a revised capital project cost of \$41 million and a re-design that better blended with the downtown architecture.

Though the amount of square footage dedicated to the Center’s exhibits has not changed at all, the exhibits will now be housed on two floors instead of three, making them

“THE FIRST TURN OF DIRT WILL LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR A STRIKING PIECE OF ARCHITECTURE THAT WILL BECOME A GREAT ADDITION TO THE COMMUNITY” AND “BE AN ACTIVE CENTER FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATION AND DEVELOPMENT WHICH THE REST OF THE WORLD CAN SHARE.”

—Lonnie Ali

more accessible to visitors.

Lonnie Ali, speaking for the couple said, “The first turn of dirt will lay the groundwork for a striking piece of architecture that will become a great addition to the community” and “be an active center for conflict resolution and individual motivation and development which the rest of the world can share.”

“It will become a place where its physical space has no boundaries,” said Ina Bond, Chairwoman of the Muhammad Ali Center, and “it will reach and inspire people everywhere, and make a difference in this world.”

When completed, the Center is expected to attract 400,000 visitors a year to the City. Mayor Armstrong said the Center “will be the crowning jewel in downtown development.”



The Imani Dance Company and other performers entertained the crowds before the Groundbreaking ceremony began.

PHOTO BY DAVID LOTTES



PHOTO BY DAVID LOTTES



RENDERINGS BY BEYER BLINDER BELLE ARCHITECTS

A Welcoming Place

NEW ALI CENTER ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PLANS ARE UNVEILED

WHEN ONE thinks of Muhammad Ali, you think of life itself—constant motion, and far-reaching, long-lasting significance. It is these same components that characterize the current design of the Muhammad Ali Center. The design goals have always been to have the various elements of the building—its site, shape, height, materials, texture, and graphics—be a physical interpretation for the themes represented by the Center, as well as those that embody the heart and soul of Muhammad Ali.

At an April 11 press conference at Louisville’s Office of the Mayor, Lonnie and Muhammad Ali proudly unveiled the Center’s new building designs, which they feel presents a tone that is complementary to the mission of the Center.

“We had always wanted the Center to be a welcoming place,” said Lonnie Ali, “and we feel that the architectural expression reveals a warmth and openness about it.” Ali added that the design team had taken great care in “creating a space that is as unique as Muhammad himself... and that’s pretty unique,” she said with a smile.

THE NEW DESIGNS ADDRESS THESE IDEALS IN SEVERAL WAYS:

ENTRANCE PLAZAS

At each entrance to the Center—whether at the street level off Sixth Street, the main level from the plaza, or the bridge from the Belvedere—visitors will be greeted by a captivating entrance—warm masonry building materials or transparent glazing. The main plaza, with views overlooking the Ohio River, also will include a relaxing, contemplative garden.

CONTEXT

The building is situated in an ideal location that will provide an inclusive context for both the historic downtown, as well as the magnificent Ohio River. It is sized so as to take advantage of the dramatic site of the main plaza and to coalesce with the landscape of neighboring buildings and the pedestrian activity within the plaza.

EXTERIOR

Rather than simply attaching images to the façade of the building, the boldness, strength, and softness of

Muhammad Ali is better represented by having these images themselves form the exterior of the building. A combination of graphics, projections, screening, and lighting will be used for dramatic presentation on three sides of the building.

OLYMPIC TORCH

The Center’s major icon is a large three-story circular “torch” that hangs over the lobby and then “explodes” out of the top of the building. The smooth, metallic, circular shape of the Torch will evoke images of the sleek, young Ali; the rising and then

expanding out of the building will symbolize the incredible journey of this man, as he too was not limited by artificial boundaries.

ROOF

The Center will be capped by a soaring roof that will characterize a reaching out across the River, providing the final indication that—like Muhammad Ali—one’s aspirations need not be limited by any geographic boundary, or any lack of spirit.

The architects are Beyer Blinder Belle Architects, in consultation with Lee H. Skolnick, as well as Bravura, a local architectural firm. Garage designers are Bravura Architects, in consultation with Beyer Blinder Belle. The Exhibit Developer for the Center is Formations, Inc., and Executive Designer is Lee H. Skolnick Architecture and Design Partnership. Chief Curator is Dr. Susan Shaffer Nahmias.

Ina Bond, Chairwoman of the Center noted that “The talent, tenacity, and sensitivity of these extraordinary firms is undeniable—for each curve and corner and every square inch of the building site was developed with thought for our mission and for future generations.”

Mayor Dave Armstrong added his own comments about the sustainability of the Center as a downtown attraction and as an anchor for the city’s tourism. He said, “I couldn’t be more pleased that we are able to help develop this rich property and to honor a hometown hero.”

Honored Sponsor

CENTER NAMES MORTON’S OF CHICAGO ASSOCIATE CORPORATE SPONSOR

IMMEDIATELY following the Phase I groundbreaking, the Imani Dance Company led over 200 guests to a special reception at *Morton’s of Chicago*, just a couple blocks from the site. There, Lonnie and Muhammad Ali recognized Morton’s as an “Associate Corporate Sponsor” and thanked the restaurant group for advancing the Center’s mission.

The affiliation between the Louisville Morton’s and the Ali Center dates back to June 2001 when the restaurant opened with a benefit dinner for the Center. The groundbreaking also served as Morton’s first anniversary party for the Louisville restaurant.

“We’re thrilled that Muhammad Ali chose to honor us in this way,” said Roger Drake, Vice President of Communication for Morton’s



PHOTO BY DAVID LOTTES

Muhammad Ali presents the “Associate Corporate Sponsor” award to Morton’s of Chicago executives Rick Weber and Roger Drake, while wife Lonnie looks on.

Restaurant Group. “The Champ has been a friend and a guest of Morton’s restaurants all over the world for many years and we’re just happy that we have been able to get involved to help make the Center a reality.”

The Associate Corporate Sponsorship status is a special recognition designed to acknowledge corporations whose contributions and/or resources advance the Center’s mission or development.



OPERATING BOARD

- Ina Brown Bond, *Chair*
 Lonnie Ali, *Vice-Chair*
 Eleanor Miller, *Vice-Chair*
 Larry Townsend, *Vice-Chair*
 Malcolm B. Chancey, Jr.,
Secretary/Treasurer
- Robert Allison
 Mayor David L. Armstrong
 David Blue
 David P. Calzi
 Governor John Y. Brown, Jr.
 Dr. Stephen Daeschner
 Ron Dukes
 Sandra Anne Frazier
 Michael N. Harreld
 Robert K. Holmes, Jr.
 Alice Houston
 Jefferson County Judge/Executive,
 Rebecca Jackson
 Charlie Johnson
 George King, Sr.
 Lenny Lyles
 Governor Paul Patton
 Wayne Perkey
 John Ramsey
 Lindy B. Richardson
 Taylor Rice
 Dr. Sam Robinson
 Karl F. Schmitt, Jr.
 John Swarts
 Jim Wehrle
 Ex-Officio: Michael J. Fox,
President & CEO

NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

- Seth Abraham, *CEO & President of Madison Square Gardens*
 Howard Bingham, *Photographer*
 Horner G. Cablish, III, *CPA, Cablish, Gentile, and Gay*
 Bob Costas, *NBC Sports*
 Billy Crystal, *Actor & Comedian*
 Governor Mario Cuomo
 Dick Ebersol, *NBC Sports*
 Dr. Vartan Gregorian,
President of Carnegie Corporation
 Larry King, *Broadcast Journalist*
 Sean McManus, *CBS Sports*
 A. Jerrold Perenchio,
Chartwell Partners, LLC
 Anthony Pratt, *Pratt Industries*
 Diane Sawyer, *ABC News*
 John Schnatter, *Papa John's International*
 Robin Williams, *Actor & Comedian*

Promises Kept

CENTER'S FIRST COMMUNITY-WIDE EVENT LIVED UP TO ITS PROMISES

THERE IS LITTLE else more compelling or heart wrenching than hearing children talk candidly about living in a world where conflict is as common as a trip to the local store. And there is little else more hopeful than to hear these same children speak about the power and possibilities of common understanding and of tolerating differences. This intriguing mix of emotion and timeliness of subject matter led the Muhammad Ali Center to choose to sponsor its first community-wide program, *Promises*.

The Center teamed up with Baxter Avenue Theatres in Louisville to co-sponsor *Promises*, an Academy Award Nominee for Best Documentary Feature. Two of the showings, which ran from June 7-13, were followed by moderated panel discussions with Carlos Bolado, the film's co-director and editor, as well as child development experts.

Promises is about seven children in Jerusalem living 20 minutes apart, but divided by a lifetime of conflict. Through the intervention of the producers, these Israeli and Palestinian children were able to meet, and to share experiences and dialogue.

Bolado, who lives in Berkeley, California, came to Louisville to introduce the documentary and to participate in the program. Immediately following the film, he talked about his experiences with and observations of

Carlos Bolado, co-director and editor of *Promises* participated in the public program at Baxter Avenue Theatres.



PHOTO BY STAFF MEMBER MARTHA GATES

the children in the film. He was then joined by a panel of child development specialists

who talked about the impact that societal conflict has on children.

The event also included the presentation to the Ali Center of a humanitarian mural entitled *A Thread of Peace and Hope* by eighth grade students at Lassiter Middle School. The 4' x 4' 2" mural features sixteen humanitarians who were researched and chosen by the students. It includes the faces of Jimmy Carter, Mother Teresa, Princess Diana, Muhammad Ali, and others.

The message of *Promises* is closely aligned to the Center's mission of promoting respect, hope, and understanding—all of which are strong components for acceptance, and eventually peace. While this roadmap to peace begins within our own families and our own communities, it oftentimes begins with children.



COWBOY PICTURES

***Promises* is a documentary about seven children in Jerusalem living 20 minutes apart divided by a lifetime of conflict and the story of a few who dared to meet.**

It is the hope of the Center that individuals in this country and beyond see this movie, reflect on its message, and become more aware of our commonalities as human beings.

For more information, visit www.promisesproject.org.

Partners for Teens

ALI CENTER AND SHiNE LAUNCH CLUB PROGRAM FOR TEENS

THE MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER and SHiNE (Seeking Harmony in Neighborhoods Everyday) are planning their first joint initiative that is slated for launch in October. The SHiNE Club Program will be piloted in several communities nationwide, including New York City, Los Angeles, and Louisville, Kentucky. The Program seeks to empower youth by encouraging social action at a community level.

SHiNE serves as the main youth partner for the Muhammad Ali Center, and is an organization that fosters communication, empowerment, and social action among teens. SHiNE implements programs that appeal to teens by using sports, music, art, and technology to encourage social action and non-violent solutions to problems that youth face today.

The launch event will include teens from several cities around the



nation, communicating via teleconference and the Internet. This teen summit will assemble participants from diverse backgrounds and inspire them to consider and discuss issues of importance to them and their communities.

The Club Program will give teens an opportunity to put their efforts into resolving issues of importance to them at a local level. Each club's activity will be structured by online

curriculum developed by SHiNE. Members will be guided through the process of choosing an important issue in their community, and then given ideas and tools to help them find and implement an appropriate solution to the problem.

The Program will also enlist the expertise and support of like-minded organizations nationwide, especially those with a large teen population.

The beauty of this Program lies in the possibilities of teens around the country being able to identify and solve real problems—making their immediate world a better place in which to live, and motivating them to be a better person.

Both the Muhammad Ali Center and SHiNE believe in the power of this Program by giving teens the encouragement and support to make a difference in their communities. For more up-to-date information, please visit www.alicenter.org or www.shine.org.

Partners for Children

MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER PARTNERS WITH UNITED NATIONS ON SCHOOLS FOR GLOBAL PEACE

EACH AND EVERY DAY, thousands of our world's children and youth are murdered, mutilated, raped, tortured, orphaned, left homeless, and enslaved as tolerated acts of war.

Today, the horrors of violence and conflict have increasingly become part of our common reality, whether in Afghanistan, the Middle East, New York City, or even within our own

the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, in co-sponsorship with the Muhammad Ali Center, launched a special program to help spare the lives of children from the ravages of war. The event took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.

Among the participants were children from areas of conflict; Academy Award winning composer Stephen Schwartz; the LaGuardia High School Chorus; and Miya Ali, daughter of United Nations "Messenger of Peace", Muhammad Ali. Miya proudly read the foreword from the United Nations' second- and newly released-book entitled *Thomas and Deng-Paradise Burning*, which was written by her father.

Other Program sponsors include the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Global Kids, For Our Children's Sake, Save the Children UK, and WITNESS.

The Schools for Global Peace Program is designed to educate young people on the plight of their peers caught in armed conflict and to establish a worldwide network of peace, understanding, tolerance, and love.

Schools completing the Program—which includes comprehensive lesson plans for teachers in schools around the world and writing and role-playing activities for children—will be designated as Global Peace Schools by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children

Thomas & Deng-Paradise Burning

FOREWORD BY MUHAMMAD ALI

Sometimes when we hear about war and starvation and prejudice, we think that it doesn't affect us if it is not happening in our village. But we are mistaken in our thinking this way. The same hopes and dreams are shared by young people everywhere.

A child in Japan and a child in Somalia both want the same love, attention, and peace.

Here is my challenge to you as you read this book: Open your minds, listen with your heart. Your brothers and sisters around the world are depending on you to courageously stand up against injustice, hatred and all of the evil elements that inspire brutality against innocent people.

You, in your speech, and in your actions, can inspire peace. Start with your own family, your neighbors, your classmates, start with the Golden Rule . . . treat others as you would like to be treated—with respect, with tolerance.

The next time you learn about the problems facing young people, think of Thomas and Deng. I hope that their story will compel you to take a stand in union with young people the world over, that violence and prejudice against the innocent will never be tolerated. My friends, you are all of our tomorrows. I not only believe in your ability to lead us into a brighter future, I'm counting on it.

Muhammad Ali, 2002



hometowns. For children—who have always represented our highest hopes for the future—the reality of violence has not only left emotional and physical scars, but it has robbed them of their own futures.

On April 24, the United Nations Office of the Special Representative of

and Armed Conflict. The Program will give young people a chance to learn, express themselves, and take action in helping their peers who are trapped in terror.

Marie, In the Shadow of the Lion, the first-ever novel published by the United Nations, will also be featured with a curriculum developed around the messages it contains.

Partners for World Peace

ALI CENTER & UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE FORM NEW PARTNERSHIP

MUHAMMAD ALI'S personal values and ideals are fundamental elements in promoting hope, respect, and understanding for the collective goal of a more peaceful world. It became evident then, that the Muhammad Ali Center and the Muhammad Ali Institute for Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution at the University of Louisville would become partners on common themes and events.

The Institute is dedicated to promoting the vision of a world community where conflict is resolved peacefully, as well as developing programs that focus on the academic issues of conflict resolution. Drawing strength from Ali's worldwide recognition as an ambassador of peace and champion of humanitarian efforts, the Institute undertakes initiatives to sup-

port the resolution of conflict, promote human dignity, further peace and justice, and prevent violence in local, state, national, and international communities. These initiatives are undertaken collaboratively with the Muhammad Ali Center.

Already, the Institute and the Center have worked together in co-sponsoring international speakers, in publicizing the *Promises* event, and have joined efforts with community leaders to develop a program for local students in commemoration of September 11th.

The Institute will focus on four prevalent areas:

- Furthering multi-cultural understanding in urban settings;
- Advancing the boundaries of knowledge regarding conflict management;

- Bringing dispute-resolution skills to strife-torn communities; and
- Serving as an active problem-solving forum

The Muhammad Ali Institute for Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution is directed by Professor Michael Fowler, a graduate of Dartmouth College, The University of Virginia, and Harvard Law School.

Holly Wallace is Assistant Director of the Institute. She is a graduate of Goucher College, the University of Chicago, and the Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville.

Nancy Cunningham, in conjunction with the university's Center for Safe Urban School Communities, serves as the Institute's Associate Director.

A Great Friend

ALI CENTER MOURNS LOSS OF DICK SCHAAP, ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

Dick Schaap, valued member of the Muhammad Ali Center's National Advisory Board, passed away on December 21, 2001. He was 67.

Schaap's work in journalism began more than 50 years ago, and for most of that time, he was an avid follower of Muhammad Ali's career.

"Dick Schaap befriended me 41 years ago shortly before I boarded a New York flight to Rome to compete in the 1960 Olympic Games," said Ali. "He was a young struggling reporter, eager to get a good story, but just as eager to know the skinny teenager he was assigned to interview."

Ali added that Dick was "a peaceful man who always chose to look on the bright side of life and the good side of people," and that he and Lonnie will hold him "dear in our memories all the remainder of our lives."



PHOTO BY STAFF MEMBER MARTHA GATES

JCC pre-schoolers get a lesson on personal greatness from Muhammad Ali Center and JCC Staffs.

Be The Greatest You Can Be

ALI CENTER LAUNCHES PILOT PROGRAM FOR PRE-SCHOOLERS

IN PART, the Muhammad Ali Center's mission is about inspiring children everywhere to be as great as they can be. Recently, approximately fifty 3- and 4-year-old children at Louisville's Jewish Community Center received a lesson on personal greatness by Muhammad Ali Center and Jewish Community Center staff members. The program, "Be The Greatest You Can Be," is designed to boost confidence and to encourage awareness and respect among pre-school children.

The program, presented by Fronda Yancy, Associate Educator and Public Programmer for the Center, and Kathy Dreszer of the JCC, focused on cultural differences, respect for one another, self-confidence, happiness, pride, motivation, and humanitarianism through the living examples of Muhammad Ali. The curriculum also introduced children to the concept of conflict resolution through role-playing, singing, and problem solving.

Yancy says "this type of program is extremely important for children at such a young age because it will help mold their way of thinking, so that they are better equipped going forward to lead a more positive and peaceful life."

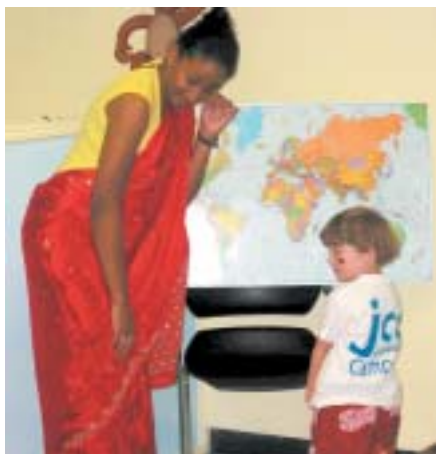


PHOTO BY STAFF MEMBER MARTHA GATES

Muhammad Ali Center intern, Sara Bonner, points out India on the map and shows off her "sari," a traditional Indian dress.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Michael J. Fox, President & CEO

PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD are expressing great interest in the Muhammad Ali Center and invariably articulate not only deep fondness and respect for Muhammad Ali, but also an abiding curiosity as to what the Center will be offering guests.

I am pleased to tell them that even now, in pre-construction phase, the Center is developing online and community-based programming, a one-of-a-kind interactive web site, specially-tailored curricula for schools around the world, and local, national, and international partnerships. Partnerships are vital to the world-wide reach of the Center, and we have now established partnerships with the United Nations (agency on Children and Armed Conflict); University of Louisville's Muhammad Ali Institute for Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution, SHiNE (New York City-based Seeking Harmony in Neighborhoods Everyday), and we are in partnership development with the Commonwealth of Nations, which represents 54 nations around the world.

Since the vision of the Center is to become a 'global gathering place' for people to meet online and in person to learn about and celebrate the strength of the human spirit and the interconnectedness of our lives, we plan to utilize 93,000 square feet of public space with every possible forum to encourage that outcome.

Visitors will be enveloped in Ali's inspirational story. A dramatic multimedia presentation will set the stage for Ali's life story, and at certain points in the story, participants will find themselves transported to Louisville in the '50's and '60's, for a multi-sensory encounter with the communities and cultures of the time.

The Center will not simply tell the tale of one man's journey; it will invite participants to carve their own path. To accomplish that, they will be offered educational classrooms and distance learning facilities, an orientation theater, interactive multimedia, talk-back stations, technological personalized "guides", an auditorium, five exploratory galleries, a temporary gallery, a library with archives, function rooms for up to 300 people, a retail shop, and café.

Interactive environments will offer a variety of hands-on activities that could lead to the discovery of a perhaps unknown aptitude or interest. Elsewhere, visitors may choose to challenge themselves against the physical standards that Ali set for himself and then, explore the steps to personal greatness — motivation, goal setting, and practice, practice, practice. They will encounter examples from individuals in other walks of life in a celebration of diversity and direction and learn more about how they and Ali overcame obstacles to meeting their goals.

The Muhammad Ali Center will embrace Ali's fame and boxing career, but will reach far beyond to his beliefs and convictions. He found a dream and worked tirelessly to make it real; he defined his beliefs and stood fast by them; he observed inequities in the human condition and took action to make a difference. By offering opportunities to engage in new experiences, interaction, and dialogue, the Center hopes to generate a revitalized level of hope, respect and understanding, not only for Muhammad Ali, but for ourselves and each other.

Michael J. Fox, President & CEO

World Rhythms

GENERAL ELECTRIC FUND GRANT HELPS ALI CENTER PROVIDE WORLD RHYTHMS-REAL PEOPLE PROGRAM TO LOCAL STUDENTS

THE MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER, in conjunction with the Kentucky Center for the Arts and the Jefferson County Public Schools, is currently immersed in a three-year initiative entitled *World Rhythms-Real People*, a comprehensive multi-cultural educational program.

Made possible by a grant from The General Electric Fund, *World Rhythms-Real People* is designed to address the personal nature of multi-cultural understanding and the interdependent personal living skills which each student needs in an increasingly diverse society. The program operates in four schools in the Jefferson County Public School System including Fern Creek Elementary, Conway Middle, Newburg Middle, and Western High schools.

World Rhythms-Real People offers a multi-dimensional educational experience that explores both music and dance of various cultures, as well as a personal glimpse of these same cultures. Students participating in the

program attend four concerts at the Kentucky Center for the Arts, which are preceded by a classroom gathering where they listen to and learn from speakers from the various cultures being highlighted by the concert series. Speakers provide an account of the differences and similarities between his or her homeland and those living in the United States. Students are encouraged not only to recognize the differences, but to appreciate and embrace those common bonds that tie us all together as human beings. This year, the educational program impacted approximately 700 children.

Countries featured during this in-



PHOTO BY STAFF MEMBER MARTHA GATES

Sponsored by the General Electric Fund, the *World Rhythms-Real People* Program exposed children in four Jefferson County Public Schools last year to other cultures through a multi-dimensional performing arts concert series.

augural year include China, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, and Mali. Next school year students will explore Chinese, Latin American, South African and Native American cultures.

For more information about this program, contact Fronda Yancy at (502) 584-9254 or by email, fyancy@alicenter.org.



DEAR ALI LETTERS

LETTERS

Dear Ali,

In 1977 I was hired to teach in a one-room schoolhouse on a Navajo reservation in New Mexico. Most of my students were extremely poor and most had no family to take care of them. They had juvenile records or were mentally ill; frequently, they were both. They were the lost souls in a lost society.

One of my many jobs was school librarian. I was really frustrated about how to get the students to read something. Anything! They had no interest in any of my suggestions. So the school dipped into its budget and went to a book distributor in Albuquerque. There was a dollar amount set on the books they could buy. Their students were allowed to pick out a book of their own to read and keep and at the same time I selected some for the school library. Because I was from Louisville and had grown up with the legacy of Cassius Clay and Muhammad Ali, I chose a rather expensive biography with many wonderful photos. It was to be checked out but returned so other students could share it. It wasn't until then, when the students discovered I was from the same town as Muhammad Ali, that I became accepted.

To my surprise, that book was stolen every week and never returned. Each week I would go and buy another one and it would get stolen. I didn't want to encourage their delinquency but I was very glad these students, who had never owned a thing in their life, admired someone enough to want the book for their very own, especially someone with such ideals and courage. I gladly replaced the book every week for months. There must be twenty copies floating around the reservation. What surprised me most of all was how these students, many of whom were politically militant, were so impressed with an African-American. Muhammad Ali truly transcended race, age, and gender. He was a man for all the people of the world. For the poor, forgotten, discarded human beings who we as a nation allow to suffer, Muhammad Ali was a beacon of hope. He had courage, conviction, and pride. What better role model could my pupils have.

He made my students feel like they WERE somebody important after all. That they could have a dream and accomplish it. That they could make a difference in this world. His story gave my students and opportunity to see that life didn't have to be filled with misery, pain, and hopelessness. That they could rise above it all and not sink into the despair that surrounded them. He made my students feel proud. For that I will always be grateful.

Lisa Austin



PHOTO BY JOHN LAIR

THE **MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER** IS VERY GRATEFUL TO THOSE WHO HAVE GENEROUSLY CONTRIBUTED RESOURCES IN ORDER TO HELP TURN MUHAMMAD AND LONNIE'S DREAM INTO A REALITY.

- The Muhammad Ali Center Staff Contacts**
- Michael J. Fox, *President/ CEO*
 - Barry Alberts, *Project Director*
 - Arricka Dunsford, *Deputy Director for Marketing and Development*
 - Martha Gates, *Special Projects Assistant*
 - Jeanie Kahnke, *Deputy Director for Public Relations and Publicity*
 - Lisa Limanni, *Assistant to the President*
 - Sharon Manley, *Controller*
 - Joyce Mitchem, *Receptionist*
 - Gail Morris, *Executive Coordinator*
 - Zhalda Penn, *Graphic Designer/Communications Asst.*
 - Frona Yancy, *Associate Educator/Public Programmer*

The Mentor

Editor: Jeanie B. Kahnke
 Design: Denise Webb/MONTAGE, INC.
 Production Assistant: Zhalda Penn

Contact Information:
 Jeanie B. Kahnke (502) 584-9254
 jkahnke@alicenter.org

Dear Ali,

I am a brain injury survivor. They told me I was in a coma for two weeks. I had to re-learn how to walk and to talk. One of the things I had to learn was how to skip rope. Mr. Ali always made this look so easy. Every time this task was set before me I thought "Ali can do this, so can I." Although, I still tend to trip over my own feet, I am trying very hard to be an asset not a burden to society. I am attending school to become a registered nurse. Each morning I thank God for another day of life. I also wish to thank you, Muhammad Ali. Your inspiration dared me to dream.

Lynn Meredith

Dear Mr. Ali,

I am a white South African male, age 28. I grew up on a game farm near the west coast of the Cape Province. We didn't have TV when I was still at school, so I had little exposure to your career - only what I could get my hands on to read, but followed your every move loyally as far as possible.

In my youth, it was a much different political situation as you know, so, thinking about it today, it is actually strange that I had such a spontaneous affinity towards your character (seeming that You were not in any way boosted by the media in our country.) But thank You for being all that you are and more importantly, maintaining it through all the difficult times. You are truly a modern day Hero, sir. No one I know of has ever shown so much commitment to their cause and believe in our era or the one before that.

Thank You for your message of peace and hope, for the insight and wisdom you bring to not only the oppressed, but also give to the oppressor. You shook up the world sir but much more difficult to do. You actually changed it.

You are my idol and my Mentor. If it is God's will I will visit the Ali - Centre in Louisville in 2004 - that will be one of the biggest moments of my life.

THANK YOU,
 PIETER VAN ZYL

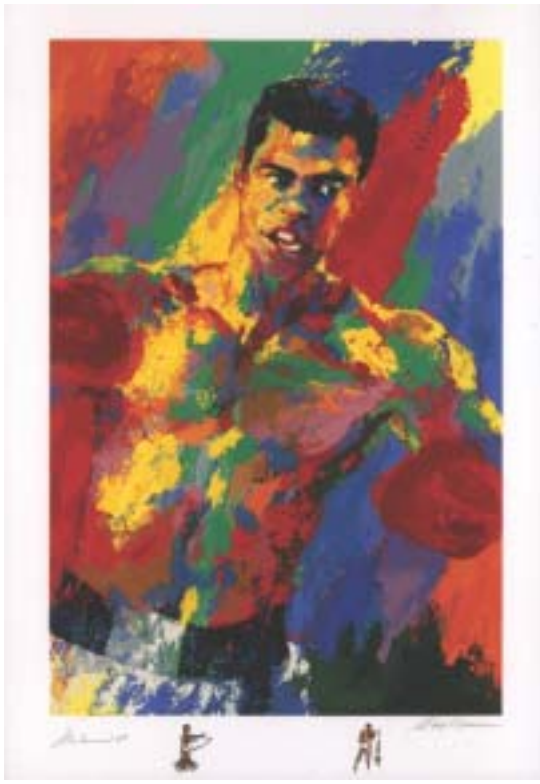
Athlete of the Century

LIMITED EDITION OF NEIMAN SERIGRAPH BENEFITS ALI CENTER

THROUGHOUT HIS career, world-renowned artist LeRoy Neiman has painted dozens of sports legends for countless events—from the Olympics to the Superbowl to the Kentucky Derby. Now, as a tribute to his friend of nearly 40 years, he has created a brilliant original painting entitled *Muhammad Ali—Athlete of the Century*.

This special limited edition serigraph print has been produced and signed by both Muhammad Ali and LeRoy Neiman. Each serigraph measures 42" x 28" and contains 45 individually applied colors. The entire dual signed and numbered edition is comprised of 850 prints.

In support of the Muhammad Ali Center's mission, Knoedler Publishing—Neiman's worldwide publisher—has agreed to donate a significant portion of the proceeds from the sale of the serigraphs to the Muhammad Ali Center. Each serigraph print sells for \$8,000. For more information, contact the Center at (502) 584-9254.



© LEROY NEIMAN, INC.



The Mentor

The Newsletter of the Muhammad Ali Center

Summer 2002, Vol. 1 No. 1

2

Breaking Ground

3

A Welcoming Place
Honored Sponsor

4

Promises Kept
Partners for Teens

5

Partners for Children
Partners for World Peace

6

Be the Greatest You Can Be
World Rhythms
Message from the President

7

Dear Ali
Athlete of the Century

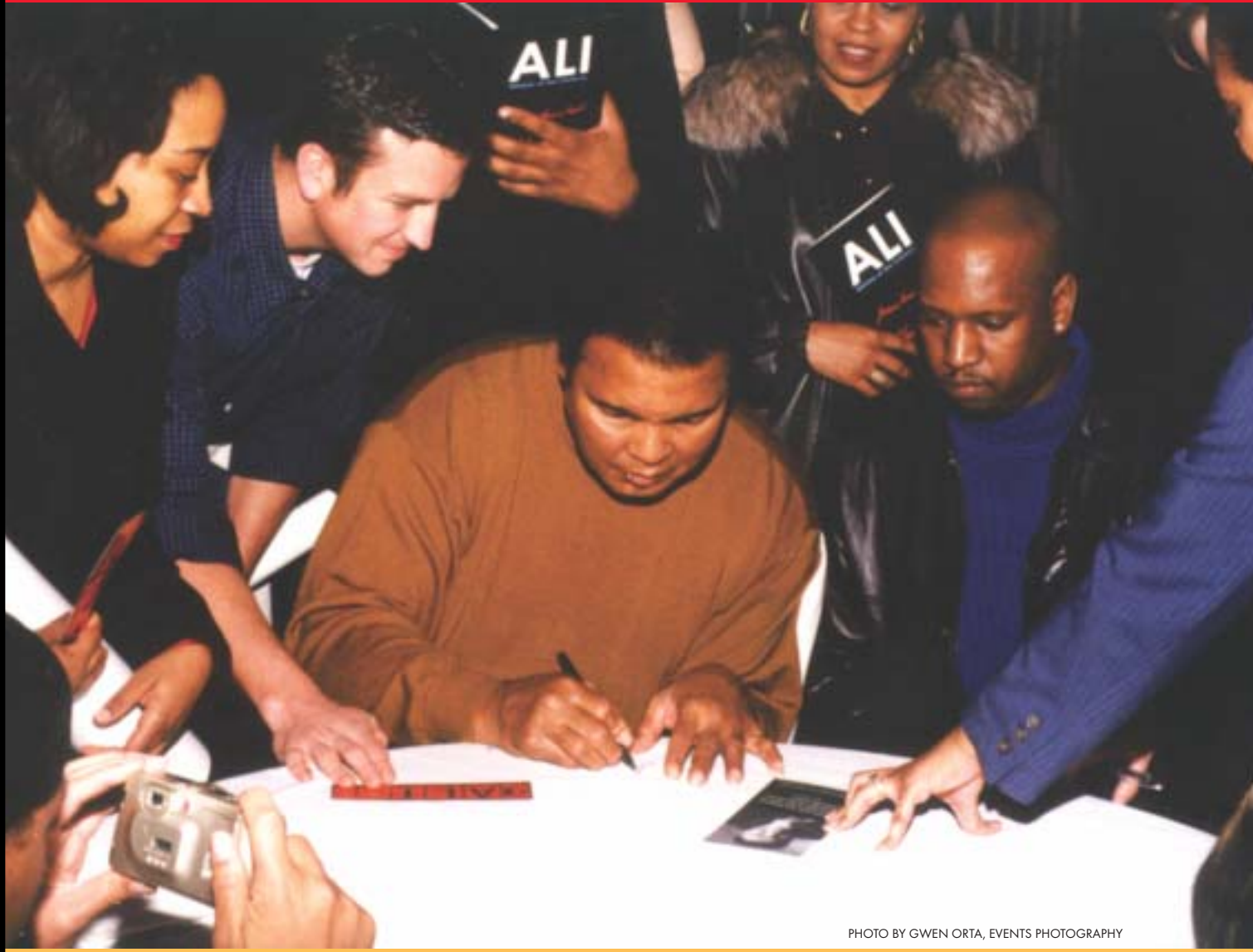


PHOTO BY GWEN ORTA, EVENTS PHOTOGRAPHY

Muhammad Ali is surrounded by fans as he signs autographs at the recent Ali premiere in Louisville.

Ali Premieres Coast-to-Coast

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE around the country got their first glimpse of the Columbia Pictures screening of Michael Mann's *Ali*, starring Will Smith, at a series of premieres that benefited the Muhammad Ali Center. Special premiere events were held in Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Louisville.

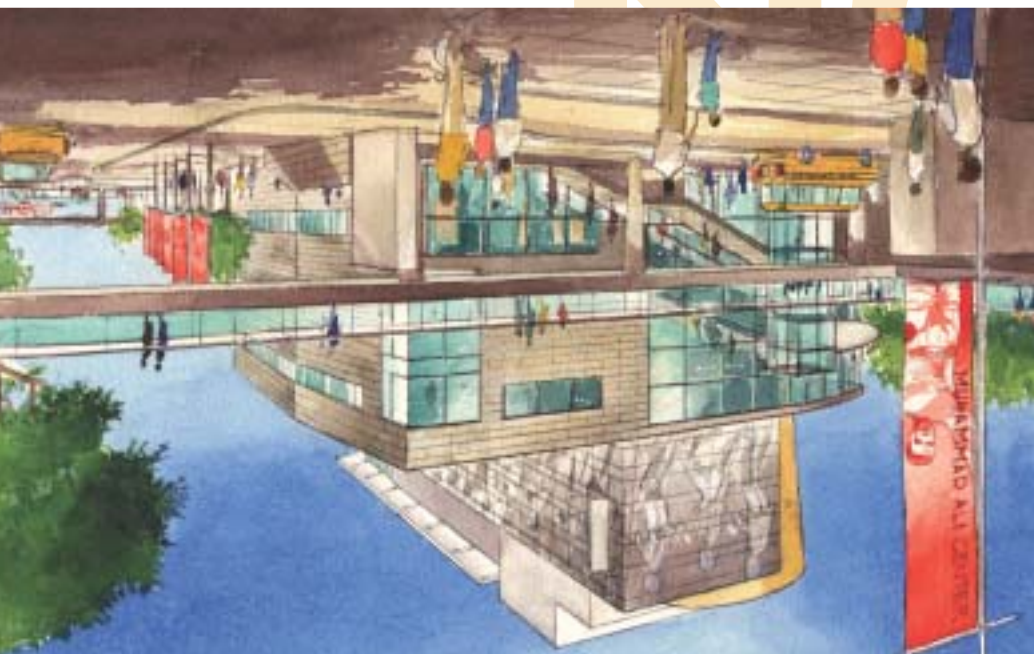
Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Louisville, KY
Permit 1319

The Muhammad Ali Center
One Riverfront Plaza, Suite 1702
Louisville, KY 40202
(502) 584-9254



ON THE COVER: © JOSÉ ORTEGA/SIS

RENDERINGS BY BEYER BLINDER BELLE ARCHITECTS



MISSION

The mission of the Muhammad Ali Center is to preserve and share the legacy and ideals of Muhammad Ali, to promote respect, hope and understanding, and to inspire adults and children everywhere to be as great as they can be.

MISSION OF THE MUHAMMAD ALI CENTER