

2010

# JACKSON COUNTY FAIR

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## SPECIAL SECTION

# MAQUOKETA SENTINEL-PRESS

Section B

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Contributed photo

**Seventeen members of Maquoketa's club hOpe, three teachers and three community chaperones pose with villagers from the Maasai Mara in Kenya, Africa. The students and adults spent eight days in Kenya, volunteering their time and labor to help build a school, clear fields, and interact with youths there.**

## Community service taken to Kenya

**By KELLY GERLACH**

Culture shock could not stop a passionate and determined group of 23 Maquoketa students and adults from helping build a school in Kenya.

Members of club hOpe, a community service group at Maquoketa Community High School, spent eight days in the African country, seeking to make a difference in Kenyans' lives. The trip profoundly changed their lives as well.

The trip to Kenya has been about two years in the making and not without reservations from numerous parents, adults, and even the Maquoketa Community School District.

club hOpe's numerous activities and fundraisers in the community and around the area – hosting pOwer hOurs to collect food for the local food pantry, band-aid drives, river cleanup, yard cleanups, and senior center visits to name a few – captured the attention of Me to We and Free the Children, both world aid organizations. Club adviser Mindy Orris said club hOpe was asked to participate in one of their overseas volunteer experiences.

"We chose the destination of Kenya because that was the area of the world we had been given to study for the O Ambassador Program."

Those traveling to Kenya would do some sightseeing along the way, visit a giraffe sanctuary, test their bartering skills in a huge outdoor marketplace. But the heart of their mission was to help build a school for girls, share bits of their American culture, and absorb bits of the African culture.

Kenya is not exactly a tourist destination, particularly not for a group of 17 high school students, three teachers, and three community members.

"The process of this trip was a lot of work for me and at times was quite stressful. Many people questioned my sanity a few times regarding why I would ever want to take kids to a place like this or why I was putting in so much time for this trip when I wasn't even getting paid for the efforts," Mindy said.

"While many hardships occurred over the course of the two years, I would go through every second of it again without a second thought because watching the faces of our Maquoketa students playing in the school yard with the kids from Emorijoy School - I knew all the time and hard work was all worth it," Mindy said.

"I really had to convince my parents (to let me go)," said Alecia Bramer.

The school district was a bit more skeptical, concerned about student safety and welfare, liability, etc. The board even met with Mindy, students making the trip, and others to seriously discuss if the Kenya trip would even take place.

"The Skype (video call made via an online computer program) meeting really helped. They let parents and everyone see pictures of where we were staying, what we would be doing, what we wanted to accomplish," Sheila said.

"I think we all kind of knew this trip was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and knew we wouldn't be handed it again," Ella Lindstrom said of her decision to go to Kenya. Her mother, Sheila, and sister, Marlee, also made the trip.

"We didn't go just because we wanted to go to Africa," added Caitlin McLaughlin. "We wanted to go because we wanted to make a difference."

They couldn't just sign up for the trip. All 17

■ **KENYA,**  
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## Work session scheduled to consider offer by Drew

**By DOUGLAS MELVOLD**

A Maquoketa entrepreneur has offered to purchase the former S&H Fabricating building in Maquoketa's Timber City Industrial Park and to move his biodiesel fuel manufacturing plant into it.

Gary and Marilyn Drew offered to purchase the 53,000-square-foot building for \$208,000.

The Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Aug. 24, tabled action and scheduled a work session for their next meeting, on Tuesday, Aug. 31, to discuss the offer at greater length.

Board Chairman Steve Flynn was absent from Tuesday's meeting. Board members said they didn't want to make a decision without first discussing the issue among all three supervisors.

The Drews' offer was delivered to the board at their Aug. 17 meeting in a sealed envelope by their son-in-law, Dustin Edwards. The supervisors did not open the envelope during the meeting and took no action on it other than to say they would refer it to county Attorney Chris Raker and discuss it this week.

Stacy Driscoll, Jackson County economic development director, read the offer at the Tuesday board meeting. As part of the offer, the Drews asked that the supervisors act on it by the next day, Wednesday, Aug. 25.

When the supervisors said they couldn't meet that deadline for several reasons, they tabled a decision and asked Driscoll to contact the Drews.

The offer included a \$500 check as an advance payment to be refunded if the supervisors reject the offer. If they accept, the balance would be paid in full by Jan. 1, 2011.

In an interview later this week, Gary Drew said he would extend the deadline to Sept. 30.

Although the offer didn't specify what he planned to do with the building, Drew said this week he would move his business, Energy Tec LLC, from its present location north of Maquoketa into the building to expand its production of biodiesel fuel.

The plant currently is located on rural property at the northwest corner of 233rd Avenue and 92nd Street 3 1/2 miles northwest of Maquoketa.

The supervisors are familiar with the operation and its current location, as they approved a zoning change for the property in July of 2009 after discussing it extensively.

Drew then agreed to comply with several conditions as part of the rezoning.

He agreed to limit production at that location to two million gallons per year. He also agreed to take security measures, including installing industrial chain link fencing by Jan. 1, 2011 and that all storage containers have spill containment.

Drew said he has five employees now. He said he would hire additional employees if he were to move into the building and estimated he would

■ **OFFER,**  
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**PUBLIC NOTICES**

- A. Dean Bowman probate
- Delwood School Board - August 16, 2010 meeting
- Central Iowa Power Coop. - Official Notice
- EIRUSS - August 25, 2010 meeting

**OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER**

- Jackson County
- City of Maquoketa
- City of Andrew
- City of Baldwin
- City of Monmouth
- City of Delmar
- Delwood School District
- Maquoketa School District