



Greetings from the Ko-Falen Cultural Center!

We want to share with you news of our successful year.



Thanks to the generous donations from you, our supporters, we were able to purchase and save the section of the Mango Grove adjacent to the Center! With the proceeds from the wildly successful Mango Madness Dance Party held in Portland last September *and* your generous donations, we made an initial payment of \$16,000. We will pay the remainder \$8000 for the grove over these next two years through proceeds from our now **Annual Mango Madness Dance Party**. Save the

date now (Saturday, Sept. 26th) to join us this year in honor of Mali Independence Day to dance, eat and drink a toast to our Mango Grove! Ko-Falen's compound doors open onto this old grove, creating a wonderful backdrop for the daily workshops held there. While the canopy provides shade, the open atmosphere creates a natural gathering place for the entire neighborhood to celebrate events and holidays together.



Mango Madness Dance Party 2008 in Portland, Oregon

This winter, Wagué returned to Mali to participate in a Public Affairs Program for the US Embassy in Mali, presenting English storytelling sessions in schools in Bamako. In addition to presenting stories from his award winning series, published by Scholastic, Inc and Groundwood Books, Diakite added new tales. He stressed the importance of storytelling in valuing Malian heritage, and encouraged students to take their education seriously.



Wagué also worked on a USAID project to record for radio traditional and contemporary Malian tales with morals to help preserve this valuable tradition of storytelling that is slowly fading away.

Wagué inspires English students at a girls' school in Bamako, Mali

Our first year as an official non-profit organization with a mission to bring people from the US and Mali together for cross-cultural experiences has been incredibly rewarding. The Malian artists and communities we have worked with have valued the connections and friendships that were made. Our friends from the US have created personal and business relationships that are deep and long-lasting. Their connections will continue to inspire work on both sides of the Atlantic to create understanding and respect among people. *Textile Artist Haby Diakité works with Julie and Christine*



We now have Workshop Sessions planned for our Winter 2009/10 Season at Ko-Falen. *Start planning now to join us!* Read more about workshops on the back of this newsletter and on-line at: www.ko-falen.org where you can download applications and contracts to register.

Mudcloth Instructor Seydou Coulibaly

Finally, we invite you to read about our 2009 fundraising campaign included in this mailing. Please join us in honoring and supporting the families of Malian Artisans pursuing their crafts during these challenging times.



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