

THE BEAD

News and Stories from BeadforLife

July 2007

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"When my child died, of course I cried. Nothing can ever take his place in my heart. But I can not stop my ears from hearing the birds sing at dawn."

~Member of BeadforLife

"I can not stop my ears from hearing the birds sing at dawn." This phrase says so much about the women in BeadforLife. They experience incredible and repeated losses and suffering and at the same time they are present for the beauty of a simple moment. They do not lose their ability to laugh and dance, exuberant and participating in joy as well as sorrow. The beaders are resilient and without self-pity. To work with them buoys my spirit. There is a brightness of offering themselves to this moment that shines out from their eyes and gives life.

Last week when we dedicated the new houses in our village beaders pulled me to my feet to dance in a circle with laughter and fun. What, I ponder, is the deep well that these women drink from?

I believe that these words are a teaching to all of us, *"I can not stop my ears to hear the singing birds at dawn."*

In these past weeks we have been honored to be featured in the NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams in the [Making a Difference](#) feature. We were also pleased to be in Vanity Fair's current issue on Africa. See our [Take Action](#) section. Welcome to new Bead Circle friends who join us in eradicating extreme poverty one bead at a time!

Torkin



Tekisoka Paola



Opio Nicholas

Kakwanzi Power!

Paola is 65. She lives with four grandchildren who are orphans from AIDS. Each day she would make her way to St. Joseph's church and have a brief conversation with a priest there. He would hand her a one thousand shilling note (.70 cents) She would kneel down in respectful gratitude. With this small money she would feed her family ground corn meal steamed to make posho. There was no money for anything else.

Now Paola is rolling beads. Paola is one of fifty members of our newest group "Kakwanzi Power". Kakwanzi means "precious bead" and the fact that the women wanted to add the word "power" to their name gives an idea of the determination and hard work that characterizes this group. They are full of hope and industry. The group has one man, Nicholas, who came to our office after his little wooden home was bulldozed to make way for a new student apartment building. Arriving around lunchtime I asked him if he had eaten that day. "Food is finished for me" he replied simply.

We fed him.

Last week at the third sale of the Kakwanzi group Paola made 165,000 shillings (\$100). She was ecstatic and crying. Holding the money over her head she said she was going to put her grandchildren into school.

All of the members in the Kakwanzi Power group were recruited from the Infectious Disease Institute, an outstanding AIDS clinic, research, and training center. All were living on less than two dollars a day. This precious bead group will specialize in making loose beads so that those among us who love to make jewelry and crafts can now use BeadforLife paper beads. These should be back in our webstore by the end of July.



Welcome Kakwanzi Power to your journey out of poverty.

Our Incredible Village

In late June we gathered to dedicate and bless 17 homes that had recently been completed in our new village, a collaboration between BeadforLife and Habitat for Humanity. The simple dedication included Habitat for Humanity giving a Bible, BeadforLife presenting a mango tree, and a Reverend offering a prayer for health, prosperity, and joy for the home. To our Muslim homeowners we presented a Koran. The day was incredibly heartfelt, bringing us to tears of joy.

[See the Village here.](#)

Accomplished so far:

- ~ 18 acres purchased and surveyed
- ~ 27 homes finished
- ~ gardens planted at 20 homes
- ~ 10 homes under construction
- ~ Two wells dug and producing cool clean water
- ~ Cornerstone Community Building complete
- ~ Community garden dug, planted, and growing
- ~ A Global Village team from Ireland brought 21 students to work on the village.



Photo Essay by Charles Steinberg and Campbell Meyer

Take Action

Learn about the Good News from Africa

(and see BeadforLife in Vanity Fair)

Most of what we hear about Africa from today's media is bad news, corruption, conflict and despair. Yet Africa is a diverse and vibrant continent with 53 different countries, incredibly rich cultures, and citizens continuing to positively shape their futures.

This month, Take Action by educating yourself about the success stories and hopeful opportunities that Africa has to offer, and reject the common myth that Africa is a hopeless place. A great place to begin is with the July issue of Vanity Fair magazine, devoted entirely to Africa.

Read about citizens creating inspiring change, African entrepreneurship, and cultural vibrancy. Look for BeadforLife in the Fan Fair section on page 72. We are honored to be included in this issue that highlights Africa activists like Bono, Desmond Tutu, Jeff Sachs, Oprah and many others. Learn more about the Millennium Village in Uganda, which BeadforLife helps fund (Letter from Africa, page 140), or get to know African citizen leaders (Spirit of Africa, Page 176). Tell others about the innovation and excitement that exists across the broad continent that many people think is lost.

This issue of Vanity Fair will only be on the newsstands for another week, so get your copy soon.

[Click here to see the magazine.](#)



Shopping is Giving The Long Strand Necklaces

As we spring into summer, add a little bit of flair to your wardrobe with a BeadforLife long-strand necklace. Long necklaces are versatile and can be worn hanging below your neckline, doubled over for two strands at your collarbone, or twisted many times around your wrist for a chunky fun look. They are great for women of any age, and come in all the colors of the rainbow.



Long Strand Necklaces are \$15 – at that price you can buy a few to mix and match. We hope when you wear your necklace, you will feel the love and optimism of the woman who rolled the beads, knowing that the money she earned would help her entire family rise above poverty.

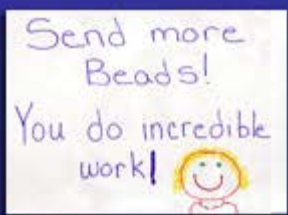
Letters from the Bead Circle

Greetings Beaders and BeadforLife members:

I recently sold jewelry at our University's International Day - a day celebrating multiculturalism and diversity on our campus. I received many positive comments about the beauty of the beads and the good work that BeadforLife is accomplishing as it helps women lift their families out of poverty.

Right after the BeadforLife event my husband suddenly passed away. The necklace and earrings he'd purchased for me became so much more valuable. As I packed away the unsold beads to return to BeadforLife, I found myself fingering all of them lovingly as if they were rosary beads, and I wondered if the beaders said prayers as they made them. I feel intrinsically connected with all of those women who have faced loss and sadness beyond the imaginable. I wear my necklace whenever I feel sad and alone, and when I need strength to face new challenges. I imagine the trials the beaders face and know that I am not alone - we are a sisterhood and we are strong. Thank you.

Kathy Ruppel, M.L.S., Newtown, PA



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