

THE BEAD

News and Stories from BeadforLife

Winter 2008

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~ I raise my hands to all the women in BeadforLife with this wish; "May your hearts, your pocketbooks, and your bellies have all that they can hold in goodness, health and prosperity!"

Sandra Marlowe
Singer/Performing Artist/Teacher
Member of the Bead Circle

A Direct Road out of Poverty

"I am strong. I am ready to be a man. I want to work. But I sit day after day. There is no work. Not even digging in the dirt. What will become of me?" A young man, about 20 years old I estimate, sits in the hot sun in front of a tin refugee hut in a camp of 4,000 huts. His despair is palpable. Imagine, I thought to myself, how bleak life would be if, as a 20 year old, I thought there was no opportunity, no work, no way to contribute to my family. Uganda has a very high unemployment rate and many young people grow up without real opportunities to go to school or to learn a trade. Their hopes are crushed by idleness or the most difficult or menial jobs like crushing stones in a rock quarry. This is the tenacious cycle of a lifetime of extreme poverty that continues for 40 percent of all of the people on this planet.



Idle men

One of the most effective ways out of poverty is for an individual to acquire a skill that is marketable. BeadforLife's response to this is the creation of the Vocational Training Program for out-of-school youth between the ages of 16-26. We are enrolling approximately a dozen students each month of whom 65 percent are young women. The students are studying only professions where there are jobs: computer technicians, bakers and chefs, drivers, auto mechanics, beauticians, electricians, carpenters, nurses, and counselors. Currently we have about 80 young people in vocational training. Another 65 have already graduated and most of these are working. Nineteen more await sponsorship.



The noise outside my window from exuberant young people reminds me that it is Friday Afternoon Club. This is a once a month mini workshop-flirt fest - practice life skills- dance club. The kids love it since it is a chance to make new friends in a fun atmosphere. We use creativity-based exercises to increase the students' self-esteem, cultivate their leadership skills, work with gender issues, and prepare them for successfully finding and keeping a job. We always sing and dance and have a soda, which is a special treat. This gives a small glimpse into poverty, where a soda is a rare and anticipated experience. Each student leaves with transportation money for the next month, and determination to use this precious opportunity to make a life for themselves.

These young people encourage us to go forward partnering with them on their journey out of poverty. They join me in greeting and appreciating you who make it possible through your support of BeadforLife.

Happy winter season.

Torkin Wakefield

Director, BeadforLife



Vocational Students at the Friday Afternoon Club

Meet Prossy Nerima



"I can type faster than most people who have both hands."

You do not notice Prossy's curled stiff hand hanging listlessly in her lap because her bright sunny smile draws you to her open, lovely face. Prossy's energy sparkles with hope of a future. Her friendly attitude makes it easy to ask her about her life.

At 20, Prossy has already lived through many hardships. Her mother died when she was 3, leaving Prossy's oldest sister, age 15, to take care of her and her 6 siblings.

"She has been like a mother to me. When I'm sad I like to think my mother lives in my sister."

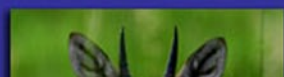


At 15, Prossy suffered a stroke which paralyzed her right arm. During this time of medical care she was diagnosed with HIV, which she must have contracted from her mother at birth. The shock of her diagnosis and the effects of her stroke kept her from completing her high school exams. "I was so down that I felt like dying dead. But my people helped me and I recovered from the shock." She is still in rehabilitative therapy and hopes to regain the use of her right arm. In the meantime she has learned to use her left hand to write, type and take care of herself. She jokes, "I can type faster than most people who use both hands."



Through BeadforLife, Prossy has found a sponsor, see Dave Ensign below, and has enrolled at the YMCA for Guidance and Counseling. "I would like to work for a charity or a hospital as long as it is working with people with HIV. I know how hard it is. I know what they are going through so I can help them overcome their problems." We have no doubt that Prossy will be a very effective and kind counselor once she finishes her training.

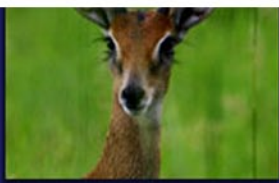
Prossy emanates excitement and gratitude when she smiles broadly and says, "I would like to thank my sponsor for being a light in my life and for making me smile again. He gave me that smile that I had lost so long ago."



Meet Dave Ensign, Prossy's sponsor

"When I achieved a dream of mine to qualify for the Boston Marathon, I wanted to do something to help others. In October of 2006, I watched a slide-show of work that Dr. Charles Steinberg and his wife Torkin Wakefield have been doing in Uganda to help eradicate poverty and battle AIDS. I decided I wanted to help by running the Boston Marathon to benefit BeadforLife.

I arranged for my employer, Cisco Systems, Inc., to create a matching gift campaign for my run. I got sponsors from Cisco employees and other individual contributors, and together we raised over \$6400. BeadForLife chose six young Ugandan women to benefit directly from these funds.



I have considered it a great honor and a source of inspiration to be able to help out in the education of these women. They have sent me cards with personal messages, and I have greatly enjoyed hearing from them. I look forward to the day when I can visit Uganda to meet the Marathon Kids in person." ~ Dave Ensign



The Marathon Kids

Take Action! Sponsor a student for vocational training

By sponsoring a young person for vocational training you are helping an entire family out of poverty. You might want to join together with your friends or family to sponsor a student. You will receive a letter and photo from your student telling you about themselves and their studies and hopes.

To learn more about the program visit our website at www.beadforlife.org/vocation.html. There you can meet the young adults waiting for sponsorship. To inquire directly about this program please email sponsorship@beadforlife.org. We will be glad to answer questions and help you find just the right student.



A few BeadforLife highlights from 2007

- The Village collaboration with Habitat for Humanity. 51 houses built, two wells dug and producing beautiful water, a community building, a refuse center, and a soccer field.
- Welcomed many new party and event hostesses.
- Health Program: Developed malaria diagnosis and treatment coupons, as well as a family planning coupon program, sponsored an HIV testing program for children, distributed mosquito nets and glasses.
- Partnered with Uganda Child Cancer Foundation and the International Hospital Kampala, Hope Ward to provide medical care to impoverished people/children.
- School Sponsorship Program: 52 students, many orphans who live at boarding schools, are sponsored for primary and secondary school.
- Currently have 293 members who each employ 3-5 others.
- Vocational Training Program booming.
- Had a wonderful opportunity of a 2-minute NBC Evening News piece.
- Partnered with the United Nations Development Project at the Millennium Village in Uganda.
- Sold lots of beads to people who want to buy something that helps others.





Dear BeadforLife,

In the first instance I would like to thank BeadforLife for changing my life because you really delivered me from a valley deep with mud. I will make an opportunity on everything that comes from this big chance.

May BeadforLife have a long life and blow on more than 100 candles while helping needy people in life. May the doors of success be unlocked to me as I work hard to show you I will make success. I cannot complete my feelings of thanks on this small sheet of paper. No one has loved me this way.

Mirembe Silvia
Vocational Training Student
Studying computers at Aptech Computer School

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Shopping is Giving! Remember Valentine's Day

Remember Valentine's Day with the beautiful jewelry of BeadforLife with your loved ones. BeadforLife offers one of a kind, handmade jewelry at very affordable prices.

The stories of strength and perseverance of our beaders are spread by those who wear our jewelry. If you are unsure of what to buy for the special women in your life you can always purchase a gift certificate and let her do the shopping!



Ideal Valentine Gifts:

- [Jewelry Bags](#) come in beautiful Spring pinks and purples \$15
- [Bangle Bracelets](#) are simple and beautiful \$5
- Try a [5-strand necklace](#) in red for a valentine's look.
- [Gift Certificates](#) now available in our web store; let your loved ones choose their own special items (*prices range between \$10- \$100*)

*Check out these and other items at our [web store](#):
Your gift gives twice; once to the lucky recipient and once to the woman who made the beads.*

Letters From the Bead Circle:

If you have something you want to share with the Bead Circle please send your letter to: torkin@beadforlife.org

Dear Torkin,

This is a long overdue note to tell you how much I enjoyed and was impressed by my visit to the BeadforLife village in Uganda. The collaboration between BeadforLife and Habitat is a wonderful witness to what people can do if they're given a chance. When we think about community transformation and giving a hand up rather than a hand out, it looks a lot like that village, with attention to shelter, water, sanitation and opportunities to earn a living wage.

My wife and girls wear their bracelets and necklaces with pride and I've told the story of my visit and how impressed I was by the women I met.

Thank you for your leadership and compassion. I hope we'll have the chance to meet in person one day.

Blessings,
Jonathan
Jonathan T.M. Reckford
CEO, Habitat for Humanity International