

The Kellermann Foundation Newsletter

SPECIAL ISSUE: All About Volunteers

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How Volunteers Matter

Contributed by Carol Kellermann

Scott and I felt very alone when we worked at a mission hospital in Nepal in the 1970's. Why was our experience in Uganda so different years later? The answer to this lies with our volunteers. Volunteers help us carry a vision to stand with the Batwa. The faith, prayers, talents, ideas, enthusiasm, and financial support of these dedicated people help develop and maintain programs, build houses, buy land, promote health, get grants, see situations in different ways, and find new solutions. On our own it would have been overwhelming to persevere without someone standing with us.

Years ago I read an article that said "prisoner escapes using a rope made out of dental floss." The article did not go into detail but I was intrigued by the thought. That is how I view the work of volunteers... Together we make many strands and can do something that alone we could never imagine or hope to accomplish. We are woven together and become a part of something amazing that brings new life to southwestern Uganda and to ourselves.

Thank you, volunteers!

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What I Learned at Bwindi

Contributed by
Rachel Kinney

Rachel Kinney volunteered with the Batwa Development Program (BDP) at Bwindi from September through December, 2012.

Rev. Hope Mfite (BDP Education Officer) and I worked closely together at the BDP. Always kind and thoughtful, her daily greeting was a smile and the traditional "Agandi." One day Rev. Hope told me that Samari, a Mutwa woman studying at our Batwa Women's Center, would like me to be a Godmother to her baby girl. I was both honored and surprised at the request. Samari and I had interacted together often at the Women's Center. I had learned that she liked pictures; she often requested I take her photo and was one of my best subjects! We had learned how to sew, knit, weave, and make jewelry together; I gave her sips of my coffee. I didn't know at the time the position this earned me in her family. I was honored to be asked to be a Godmother, and I accepted. At the baptism and naming ceremony, Samari chose to name her baby girl after my mother. Baby Cindy may never know her name-sake, but I hold this honor so sacred.

I came to Bwindi to create a Business Plan for the Batwa Women's Center. The Women's Center program teaches the Batwa women income-generation and life skills while they earn income to help sustain their families. The Batwa, the BDP staff, and I collaborated to determine an actionable course and the necessary steps to keep this program moving forward in a logical and systematic way.

I also had the chance to initiate other activities. We set up a speaker series on topics such as child health, income generation, relationships, and family planning. We had sessions for the Batwa women to learn to write their names. We learned how to make jewelry from paper and magazines. Before I left, we celebrated all the skills that the women had learned; all the ladies brought their families, and we had a feast!

My interactions with the Batwa taught me as much, if not more, than I have taught them. Most volunteers hope to bring increased value and teach the recipients something to improve their lives. The reality is that volunteers learn more from the Batwa than we could ever have



Rachel knitting with a Mutwa woman



Rachel and Rev. Hope (center) visit Batwa friends

imagined. I learned about giving. These women shared food with me that they had brought from home when they have so little. I learned about compassion. The ladies came with their children each day. No matter whose child it was, a Mutwa woman would pick a crying child up to comfort him or her. I learned about trust. Many volunteers visit Bwindi, but the Batwa did not treat me as just another volunteer; they embraced me and brought me into their lives and their hearts, sharing their food, their lives and their families. I learned about love. I am leaving this country feeling love for the people that I didn't anticipate. The love that the Ugandans give to volunteers and visitors is something that I have never experienced. And the love that the Batwa feel for each other and for those who help them is beautiful. I will forever hold a piece of Uganda and the Batwa in my heart.

I look forward to my return....

An Anthropologist's Viewpoint

Contributed by Janelle Christensen

I am a medical anthropologist. Last summer I completed a second master's degree in Public Health at Bwindi Community Hospital (BCH), traveling with my father, John Christensen, a retired R.N., who participated in a triage project. At BCH, I designed and implemented a public health project with the assistance of Rev. Sam Bigaruka (head of Community Health) and two other volunteers who were there at the same time (Suny Gill and Katie Carter).

I was deeply impressed by the services provided to the Batwa and non-Batwa (Bakiga), but there remain many needs. I noticed a lack of mosquito nets in family homes and in boarding schools; the hospital lacked funds to provide them. Malaria remains the top cause for hospital admissions for children in the area. My research also revealed health disparities between schools that provide lunch and those that do not; those without the resources for school lunches had many underweight children. Dr. Leonard Tutaryebwa (head of Pediatrics) gave me even deeper insight into these prevalent problems. My respect for BCH staff forged deep friendships in a short time, and I felt a need to dedicate myself to a shared cause.



Janelle instructing children at a school garden



Janelle measuring a child

Upon my return, I began an email campaign to secure mosquito nets for distribution in Bwindi. Buy-a-Net of Canada donated 5,000 nets (at a value of \$10,000). In addition, I secured funding for a school lunch and garden project from the Kiwanis Club of Riviera Beach, Florida.

As an anthropologist, it is clear to me that the injustice of the Batwa's expulsion from the

forest and their continued lack of access remains the greatest structural challenge to their health. In spite of this, BCH has made great strides in enhancing the health of the local populations. I look forward to continuing to partner with them, the Kellermann Foundation, and the Batwa Development Program.

What Can One Person Do to Help?

An interview by Carol Kellermann

Carol Kellermann recently interviewed volunteer Sarah Lowe, who created a Biking for Bed Nets fundraiser while she was a high school senior. In areas with malaria like southwest Uganda, bed nets save many lives, especially among children. Thank you, Sarah, for raising funds to bring hope and health to Uganda!

1. Who are you?

My name is Sarah Lowe, from Nevada City, a small town in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California. I grew up skiing, biking, hiking and fishing with my family and I always loved being outside. I graduated from high school in 2012 and am now attending Oregon State University.

2. What inspired you to hold this fundraiser?

I have known the Kellermann family for as long as I can remember. Dr. Scott always talked to me about volunteering. During my senior year of high school the opportunity arose to help.

3. Tell me about your fundraiser.

My fundraiser was called Biking for Bed Nets. The goal was to raise as much money as I could for the Kellermann Foundation to buy and distribute bed nets to families in Uganda. I wrote letters to friends and family asking them to sponsor me for every mile I rode my bike, and I used an app on my phone called Strava to record all of my rides.



4. What was it like organizing it?

At first it was difficult to think of a way to help. Then I realized how easy it would be for me to incorporate something I already loved doing with raising money, which for me, was biking. It was easy for me to just pick my bike up and start riding, which also made the project really fun. Having the support of my friends and family made it even better.

5. What kind of response did you have from others?

Very positive—people in the community were eager to help.

6. How much money did you raise?

I raised \$651, which will provide bed nets to more than 50 families. I hope it will save many lives!

7. How did your project make you feel?

It made me feel great to be able to do something for the Kellermann Foundation.

8. What would you want to tell other young adults?

It's easier to get involved than you think. You don't have to travel the world to make a difference; just get your community involved, and your enthusiasm and focus will do the rest.

New Year's Resolution

Contributed by Cheryl Kiddoo

Like most people, January is the time of year when I catch my breath and take a little bit of time to make plans for the upcoming year. I particularly like to focus on one area of great fulfillment for me; my volunteer work. Since the summer of 2011, one of my focus charities has been the Kellermann Foundation and Bwindi Community Hospital. My daughter Sarah and I were very fortunate to spend a week volunteering at the hospital after a trip to Uganda to track mountain gorillas in the nearby Impenetrable Forest. While the experience with the gorillas was unforgettable, it was the work we did at the hospital which has remained the indelible memory from that trip, and it is the people whom I met that are the reason I have continued to support the Kellermann Foundation with my time, energy, and money.

What I have learned is that the small gifts I have to share of time and talent are rewarded tenfold by the grace and gratitude of the



Sarah volunteering on the Pediatric Ward at BCH

people in the Bwindi. I learned that if you travel to Uganda, you can volunteer in one of the multitude of ways open to people of all ages (like building a home for the Batwa, teaching women at the Batwa Women's Center a craft to sell, or working alongside the community outreach staff as an extra set of helping hands). While this is an

experience beyond compare, there are also countless ways to help here in the United States. Visiting Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs and spreading the word about the incredible work of the Kellermann Foundation is one way to help; hosting a small gathering of friends or co-workers at your home and offering Batwa crafts for sale is another. I plan to come up with a couple of ways to continue my support this year, and I know that it is a New Year's resolution that will be easy to keep.



Baby at Bwindi Community Hospital

St. John's School, Dallas

During a visit from Dr. Scott & Carol in October, students at St. John's Episcopal School were heartened by stories of the Batwa pygmies.

To support the efforts in Uganda, the student council held a fundraiser for the Kellermann Foundation. In exchange for a \$5 contribution to benefit the Nina Waits School at Mukongoro, middle school students were allowed to wear a costume to school on Halloween instead of their usual uniform.

StuCo President Ali Simenc said, "Raising money for the Kellermann Foundation was a great project to support and educate the children of Uganda, but we also had fun while showing the compassionate spirit of our school."

St. John's Episcopal School is a pre-K through eighth grade co-educational school in East Dallas committed to academic excellence, worship, inclusiveness and community service.



Scott and Carol Kellermann (center) with St. John's chaplain Michael Mills and parent Robin Johnston

BatwaBaskets: Telling the Story

The BatwaBaskets ministry at the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Richardson, Texas, has supported the Kellermann Foundation since 2007. Baskets made by Batwa artisans are sold at church events and craft sales in the Dallas area and throughout the U.S. Proceeds from the sales support the Batwa Development Program. Pam MacPherson recently told us why she volunteers for this ministry.

"Two of my friends returned from a mission trip to southwestern Uganda overwhelmed with the poverty and need of the Batwa pygmies. They wanted to help, and in fact felt called to serve. Their passion in telling the story of the Batwa



Pam selling BatwaBaskets

drew me in. I felt God was calling me to serve, too. But how?

When the opportunity to sell Batwa baskets arose, I thought, 'I can do that, I can talk to people and tell the story.' Not ever being comfortable initiating conversations with persons unknown, I knew I was being called to step out of my comfort zone. After two seasons of selling, I have had many amazing conversations with so many people. I have been more blessed by this experience than any help I have given."

Thank you, Pam, for your commitment to making a difference!

The Kellermann Foundation

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Did a story in this issue inspire you?
Here are some ways to help!

In the U.S.

- Provide general office assistance—Dallas area
- Give a presentation at your civic organization, church, or school—or invite us to visit
- Sell BatwaBaskets at an event or craft fair
- Hold an in-home fundraising event
- Create a special event
- “Like” our Facebook pages
- Been to Bwindi? Write a review on Trip Advisor

In Uganda

With Bwindi Community Hospital

- Marketing/PR, IT solutions
- Assist with specific hospital departments
- Specialized medical teaching

With the Batwa Development Program

- Interview/videotape Batwa elders for language/ culture preservation
- Agriculture instruction, school gardens project
- Assist with education or women’s programs

With the Bwindi Nursing School

- RN-level curriculum development
- Equipment planning/procurement

Email volunteer@kellermannfoundation.org

to learn more.

Dallas Event Committee

Our **Hope and Health in Uganda 2012** event held on October 16th in Dallas, Texas, was a great success. It was made possible by our Dallas Event Committee volunteers: Sherrie Abney, Clare Howard, Amanda Human, Gayle Porter, and Jim and Cindy Waits.

Special thanks are also due to Diane Stanton. Bishop James Stanton, Scott and Carol Kellermann, and the Dallas Country Club, as well as our major sponsors:



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