

The Kellermann Foundation Newsletter

STARS Impact Award to Bwindi Hospital!

Bwindi Community Hospital (BCH) has been selected as the 2011 STARS Impact Award recipient in the category of Health by the STARS Foundation. Eight organizations across the Africa/Middle East and Asia/Pacific regions were selected for an Award from 976 applicants across 60 countries.

Being named for this award is a major honor that will bring BCH recognition from around the world and shows its place as one of the most outstanding hospitals in sub-Saharan Africa. We congratulate them for this wonderful achievement!

"At BCH, it is our pleasure to be associated with the STARS Foundation and being winners of the STARS Health Impact Award 2011. Our hearty thanks go to the entire foundation staff for having considered BCH for this prestigious award that, I believe, will take us to another level of health care delivery," says Dr. Birungi

Mutahunga, Medical Superintendent.

The STARS Foundation improves the lives of disadvantaged children around the world by supporting organizations that meet their health, education and protection needs.



Dr. Kellermann, BCH founder, & Dr. Birungi, BCH Medical Superintendent, with STARS representative Samia Zoued

More about Bwindi Community Hospital!

We are pleased to partner with BCH by attaching their September newsletter. Click [here](#) to enjoy it!

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Batwa Women's Center

In January 2011, eight Seattle-area artists visited Bwindi to hold workshops with local Batwa artisans as part of the Visiting Artists Program. These volunteers, led by artist Marsha Conn, worked with the Batwa to teach them new, sustainable skills that they can use to help produce income for their families. (To learn more about the wonderful VAP program, visit www.batwaartist.com.)

Marsha was struck by the Batwa artists' need for a space where they could come to work, visit, and learn together. Her efforts planted the seed for the creation of the Batwa Women's Center. With the support of California artist Susan Steinbarth, the Batwa Development Program team, and the staff and board of the Kellermann Foundation, this project is quickly becoming a reality!



Marsha Conn & Evelyne Habasa, Crafts Mgr.



Proposed Batwa Women's Center: conceptual drawing by Susan Steinbarth

The Batwa Women's Center will be a 1,008-sq-foot building situated behind the Batwa Craft Banda near the gate to the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. The vision for the center is that it will be a flexible space that provides a warm and comfortable place where women and girls may gather for:

- Education and training: workshops, classes and seminars in the arts (crafts, dancing, drama, storytelling), vocational (language, business) and adult education
- The exchange of ideas
- Interaction with tourists
- Work space and storage for crafts in process, materials and completed crafts
- Sleeping space for those women who must travel long distances to the center
- Other uses such as a play area for the children

Thanks to a very generous gift from Marsha Conn, we are well on our way to reaching the \$16,955 goal for Phase I of construction. We hope to complete fundraising by early in January 2012, with construction beginning soon thereafter.

If you are interested in learning more about the project, email or call our office and ask for the **Batwa Women's Center brochure**. We will be happy to email or mail you a copy.



Carol's Corner

Thoughts from Carol Kellermann

Kokunda means love. Once you meet Kokunda Sylvia you realize why, as she is a very kind and loving person. One would never suspect that Sylvia also has a backbone of steel. Raised in poverty by her single mother (her father died when she was young), Sylvia is the only one in her family who has gone all the way through school. She is now in university.

For a poor child in Africa, making it into college is not easy. For Batwa pygmies like Sylvia and her family, it is especially difficult. Whenever Sylvia's mother got a little money, she would save it for Sylvia's education; she wanted something better for her daughter. Sylvia remembers going through trash to see if anyone had thrown away their old shoes, because she needed them to go to school. Then Sylvia got into the Bishop's Primary School, a boarding school where her fees and clothing were paid for by donors. Her dream of having her own shoes came true. Even better, she was given an opportunity to succeed that would have been impossible without donors' generosity and support from wise teachers.

Sylvia says, "After lunch the Batwa were always hungry and would run off to the forest looking for passion fruits, mangoes, and guavas, missing their classes." Through the intervention of Rev. Hope, the Head Teacher at the Bishop's Primary School, Sylvia stopped this practice and became more serious about her studies. Sylvia states that this is why she didn't fail when others did. She says she never received the harassment from other students and teachers that some of the Batwa did, because she loved everyone and they loved her back. It never mattered that she was a Mutwa.*

"When I was going to do my final exams for primary school, my desire was to do well. I loved studying, and I also loved the Lord, so I fasted, prayed and studied and then did my exams. When the results came out, I got the first grade." After this success, Sylvia was able to attend a private high school in Kabale, Bishop Kivengere School. She had one friend there from her primary school who helped her adjust, and Rev. Hope came to visit when she could. Unfortunately, while Sylvia was there she got very sick with malaria, becoming so anemic that she had to be hospitalized. She had spent two weeks at the hospital waiting for blood when Scott and I happened to come through the area. We learned that Sylvia needed blood, and thankfully I was able to donate some for her. The next day she went back to school.

*Mutwa is the singular form of Batwa.

Kokunda Means Love: Accomplishing Much with Little



Kokunda Sylvia, first Mutwa student at UCU Mukono, and an example for her people

Not long after, when Sylvia went home during her holidays, she was kidnapped by a would-be suitor in the village. He and his family tried to force Sylvia to marry him. When they realized that their attempts were futile, they said, "She is no longer a Batwa." Sylvia felt uncomfortable going to the village for a long time after that.

Sylvia's most recent hurdle was becoming pregnant and facing the struggles of single motherhood while trying to finish school and get into University. The father was of a different tribal group and worked at the Bwindi Impenetrable Park. The Batwa Development Program's (BDP's) all-Batwa Executive Committee called the father in and demanded child support. It was a tense meeting, but it ended with a landmark agreement, one of the first of its kind, in which a father from another tribe agreed to give support to his part-Mutwa child. This support enabled Sylvia to rent an apartment in Kampala and hire someone to look after her child while she studied.

Sylvia never gave up, despite the obstacles in her path. Many people in addition to the BDP team helped sustain her, including Rev. Hope and her American sponsor, Judy Goldman, who wrote her, encouraged her, and supported her studies. Now Sylvia has the distinction of being the first Mutwa student to study at Uganda Christian University at Mukono, considered by many to be the best university in Uganda. During Sylvia's time off between semesters, she works at the BDP, where she helps with

bookkeeping duties and assists the education branch of the BDP, visiting schools and encouraging students to continue their studies.

At the first annual meeting of the BDP, Sylvia gave a complicated budget report in front of a large crowd of 700 Batwa, government officials, and other educated tribal people who work for NGOs in Uganda. A hush came over the crowd when this tiny young woman began to speak with a clear and powerful voice. The Batwa people listened not only with their ears, but also with their hearts and minds, so proud of one of their own. Others at the meeting were amazed to see how confident Sylvia was and how well she spoke: "She's one of the Batwa, you say?!" Long ago, Sylvia had said she wanted to be a lawyer. At that moment, I saw the possibility. Afterwards, everyone was talking about Sylvia's presence. I knew that whatever she decided to do she would do it well.

Sylvia's accomplishments are the rewards of years of hard work bolstered by financial, spiritual, and emotional input from others. In Sylvia we see the investment in an individual and a tribal group beginning to pay off. She has become an advocate for her people, a symbol of the potential for her tribe, the young woman whose name means love, supported with a backbone of steel.

THANK YOU to all who have made Sylvia's achievements possible and to all who are helping other Batwa achieve their goals. Your support will change the lives of generations.

Volunteers in Action: Saving a Language and Saving Sight

This July, Irene Vogel, professor of Linguistics and Cognitive Science at the University of Delaware, spent two weeks in Bwindi documenting Rutwa, the original language of the Batwa. She was assisted by undergraduate student Matt Herman and her daughter Rachel Abrams, a high school senior. Since the Batwa were forced out of their ancestral home in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in 1992, they have lost much of their heritage, including their language, as they have adopted the local language, Rukiga. There are only a few elders left with any recollection of the Rutwa language, so time is of the essence!

Irene, Matt, and Rachel, with the invaluable support and assistance of the Batwa Development Program (BDP) team, made phonetic



James giving word for "ear"



Flora teaching Irene pronunciation

transcriptions and audio and video recordings of interviews with seven elders living around Buhoma. They also hiked about 7 hours to the Batwa settlement at Nteko, where they found two more Rutwa-speaking elders. The elders provided the Rutwa names of many items, including foods, animals and plants they knew in the forest. Irene learned the amazing fact that Rutwa has about 5 different names for honey made from different insects. Irene and Rachel hope to return to Bwindi soon to make more inclusive recordings.

In addition to their linguistic work, Irene and Rachel also helped by bringing along 60 pairs of reading glasses donated by the Reading Glass Project (www.readingglassproject.com), an organization that provides reading glasses to

artisans in underdeveloped countries who support their families by doing handcrafts and artwork. At Nteko, 10 artisans were fitted with glasses, with the help of the nurse Sebastian. Words are inadequate to describe the joy of observing the Batwa's excitement at suddenly seeing their weaving work so clearly. The remaining glasses have been distributed to Batwa in other remote areas.

If any of our readers are planning a trip to a place where the Reading Glass Project could help out, they would be happy to assist. For more information, please contact Jackie Hunsicker at jackie@readingglassproject.com.



Nora enjoying her new glasses

BatwaBaskets

An active group of volunteers at the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Richardson, Texas, is working hard to help provide funds for the Batwa. When Batwa artisans make their beautiful baskets and other wares, they are purchased by the Batwa Development Program at a Fair Trade price. Some are sold in the Batwa Craft Banda at Bwindi, while others are brought to the U.S. by volunteers and mission partners. The BatwaBaskets team sorts and tags the baskets, dolls, and other crafts and sells them at

churches, craft fairs, and school events throughout the Dallas metroplex. All the proceeds are returned to Uganda through the Kellermann Foundation to support education, healthcare, and community programs.

This fall the BatwaBaskets team will participate in over 20 days of sales at 13 different venues. They hope to raise over \$12,000 in 2011. Volunteers in California are also selling baskets at schools, events, and art galleries. The funds raised pay for all the Batwa's healthcare and help with other projects.

Interested in joining the current BatwaBaskets team or beginning one in your area? We will supply you with the baskets and all the information you need to get started. Contact the Kellermann Foundation by email at info@kellermannfoundation.org or call our office for more information at 214-519-9279.

Join in on the fun!



Some members of the BatwaBaskets team sort baskets

Tidbits

- The Kellermann Foundation is pleased to welcome Dorothy Nakaweesi Gonsalves to the staff as our part-time Marketing and PR Coordinator. Dorothy is a native Ugandan, now living in California, who is married to Kellermann Foundation supporter/volunteer Stephen "Blackie" Gonsalves. She brings a wealth of experience, energy, and fresh ideas to the organization. Welcome aboard, Dorothy!
- Many thanks to all who have contributed to our Batwa education appeal. We are over halfway to our goal of \$19,900 to help keep Batwa children in school!
- CORRECTION: In our July newsletter, the article on the MedShare container shipment to Bwindi Hospital omitted the Reno Rotary Club and the Rotary Club of Reno Central from the list of major donors. Our apologies for the error.
- The acclaimed Destination East Africa magazine published Scott Kellermann's article about the Batwa pygmies and the Batwa Experience ("Keepers of the Forest") in its September issue.

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Supporting the Batwa pygmies
and Bwindi Community Hospital
in southwest Uganda



Planning a trip to Bwindi?

Include a visit to the [Batwa Experience](http://www.batwaexperience.com) living history encounter.
You will be sure to receive a warm welcome!

[Donate](#)

Would you like to receive a printed copy of our newsletter? [Click here](#)
or visit www.kellermannfoundation.org to sign up now.

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*Give a gift that makes a difference
this holiday season.*

The Kellermann Foundation

presents

LIVING GIFTS

Giving opportunities that change lives

For your donation of \$25.00 or more, your gift recipient will receive a hand-crafted woven ornament made in Uganda and a card announcing that you've honored him or her with a living gift. Gift donations are tax-deductible in the U.S.

More information coming soon!



Volunteer Corner

The Batwa Development Program is in need of a long-term volunteer or volunteers to help with education programs, Batwa outreach, and organizational/administrative duties. The role can be filled by a Christian individual or couple with experience in teaching, administration, marketing, business, and/or religious vocation, with the ability to stay for at least one year.

Are you being called?

For more information, contact the Kellermann Foundation office at info@kellermannfoundation.org or 214-519-9279.

Donation Corner

Do you have a laptop, netbook, or notebook computer in good condition that you are no longer using? How about a laptop case or bag?

Our partner organizations in Uganda need computers and cases. Let us know if you can help! Contact Sally Stillings at sally@kellermannfoundation.org or call our office at 214-519-9279.

Your donation is tax-deductible in the U.S.