



A World that needs Inspire

GETTYSBURG COLLEGE is committed to preparing students to lead energetic, engaged, and enlightened lives. That promise reflects the fundamental purpose of the institution and articulates the essential reason the College is here. The goal is for students to ask, “As a consequence of what I did today, will someone be inspired? Will they be challenged to try harder, to be better?”

Gettysburg’s promise is fulfilled in the lives of its alumni, such as Michael Bishop ’57, who won the Nobel Prize in Medicine for his cancer research; Fred Fielding ’61, who served as 9/11 commissioner and counsel to two U.S. presidents; Bruce Gordon ’68, who was the president of the NAACP; Carol Bellamy ’63, who served as the executive director for UNICEF; and Kathryn Wolford ’79, who was president of Lutheran World Relief.

Of course, Gettysburg alumni are engaged in inspiring work everywhere in the world. In this article we profile two such graduates — one older, one younger — who are actively engaged in work that is making a difference in the lives of people in considerable need.

Should you know of other alumni involved in similar work, let us know at jwikoff@gettysburg.edu

BY JEROLD WIKOFF P'03

action

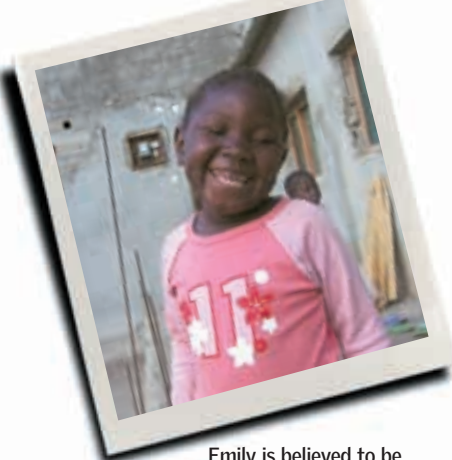
Gettysburg alumni leading energetic, engaged, and enlightened lives

Where a child lives

WHEN GARY WORTH '66 retired in 2001, he never suspected that Africa would soon loom large in his life.

As a student at Gettysburg College, Worth was a member of R.O.T.C and went on to serve in the Air Force. Following a tour of duty in Vietnam — working on ground radar at Dong Ha, three miles from the demilitarized zone — he spent his last year of active duty in Phoenix, Ariz.

After an honorable discharge, Worth remained in Phoenix and attended the American Graduate School of International Management. “I got a master’s in international relations,” he said. “I really didn’t know what I wanted to do at the time. I was still thinking Vietnam, and ‘international’ sounded like something I would be interested in.” Turned out it wasn’t — at least, not then.



Emily is believed to be five years old. Her mother died when she was three years old. Her father, who had been working in South Africa, died shortly after his return to Chokwe in Mozambique. Emily lived for a while with her grandmother, but the grandmother soon was unable to care for and feed Emily.

At the beginning of the summer in 1973, Worth accepted a position in sales with a local telephone company, Mountain Bell (today Qwest). He worked with them for five years in Phoenix before moving up to work at the company’s headquarters in Denver, Colo. “I’ve been here ever since,” Worth said. For most of those

years, while working and raising children, he didn’t have much time to think about Africa or anything else international.

Social concern, however, always remained a part of Worth’s life. As active members of their church in suburban Denver, he and his wife, Cathy Fox, participated in food drives for the city’s Women’s Crisis Center, made sandwiches for a “breadline” at the Holy Ghost Catholic Church, and helped paint houses in an inner-city program

called Paint-a-thon. In retirement, with nothing now holding him back, Worth looked to do more.

“I always wanted to do a short-term mission trip,” Worth said. “My wife had a passion for Africa, so in August of 2002 we traveled to Kenya with a group from Cherry Hills Community Church.” There, they spent time in a school in the Kawangwaree slum outside Nairobi. The experience was transformative. “We saw firsthand the life of a few of the many orphans in Africa,” Worth said. “All had been orphaned by AIDS, and no government agencies existed to assist them. Extended families were barely able to support themselves, let alone additional children. Many of the children were forced to live on the street.”

The image of those children wouldn’t leave Worth and Fox. “Later we learned that AIDS has left 14 to 16

million children orphans in Africa,” Worth said. “Once you see such poverty, you just can’t turn your back on it. When Cathy and I returned to Colorado, we knew we wanted to do something to help.”



Sortina, affectionately called “Sort” at Vukarhani, is “big sister” at the orphanage. Raised by an abusive mother, Sortina had received church aid as a child. When her mother died, she was moved to “Vukie.” Sortina suffered initially from anger and other emotional issues, but now, Worth said, “it would be difficult to find a more loving big sister.”

The first thing they did was to organize a fund-raiser at their church, which earned more than \$6,000 to help build an orphanage in Kenya for 40 children. They then started thinking how they could do more and decided to form a nonprofit organization called Africans Orphaned by AIDS (AOA). Their intent was to raise funds for another orphanage.

Originally, Worth and Fox had hoped to locate their orphanage in Ethiopia. “We spent a year working with a woman there, but it didn’t feel right,” Worth said. As he and his wife learned, working in Africa can be frustrating. “You can’t just send money and expect it to be used properly,” he said. “You need oversight and accountability. And working with the governments there, everything takes far too long.”

Frustrations in Ethiopia eventually led Worth and Fox to turn their attention to Mozambique, where they began working with a Cherry Hills Community Church missionary, Doug Miller. Together, they decided to build



AT A GLANCE

What: AOA (Africans Orphaned by AIDS), a nonprofit organization founded in June 2003 by Gary Worth '66 and his wife, Cathy Fox

Where: Mozambique, Africa

Why: AIDS has left 14 to 16 million children orphans in Africa where no government agencies exist to assist them. Extended families are barely able to support themselves, let alone additional children. Many of the children are forced to live on the street.

Programs: Vukarhani (“Hands of Compassion”), hopes one day to provide food, shelter, and nurturing for as many as 500 children.

an orphanage outside the town of Chokwe, about 120 miles north of the capital of Maputo. In that area alone there are an estimated 2,000 orphans. Through their project called Vukarhani ("Hands of Compassion"), they hope one day to provide food, shelter, and nurturing for as many as 500 children.

The first steps for the Vukarhani effort were obtaining required certifications in Mozambique, developing building and care plans, finding widows and other volunteers to help, and creating the environment for the first small group of orphans. There was also fund-raising.



Timothy and his sister Ageeda lived with a neighbor after their parents died. When the neighbor became ill, nuns cared for the two children but eventually returned them to the village, where they wandered from hut to hut. Eventually, they were taken in at Vukarhani, where Timothy "does well in school and is learning Portuguese."

The process was slow. Worth and Fox founded AOA in June 2003, but weren't able to purchase land in Mozambique until January 2006. Another 18 months would pass before they could complete phase one of Vukarhani and open the orphanage.

Located at the end of a dusty road about a mile and a half from the center of Chokwe, Vukarhani has a main building with both girls and boys dorms that are large enough to house 24 children. "At the moment we have 13 children at the orphanage, but we are looking to expand in the near future," Worth said.

Adjacent to the main structure is a traditional cooking building and an



Enoch is probably six years old. After his father died of AIDS, the villagers chased Enoch, his siblings, and mother out of the village. His mother brought the children to Chokwe to be near her brother. Soon after his mother and a brother died of AIDS, Enoch was rescued and placed at Vukarhani.

area for chickens and goats. There is also a large, rectangular multipurpose building for neighborhood events and other activities. Cultivated areas are nestled between the structures, where tomatoes and other vegetables grow. "The intent is for Vukarhani to be self-sufficient," Worth said. "Our goal is also to provide the children with job skills that will help them as adults. We feel we have made a good, solid start here."

In August 2007 Worth traveled to Mozambique to witness firsthand the progress of the project. "It was amazing to be there, to meet the children and see how their lives are changing," Worth said. "The 14 children there are in a loving environment. They get three meals a day, regular baths, a toothbrush — so much more than they've ever had before."

In the meantime Worth and Fox are looking into developing a second project in Africa. "We've been talking with a person in Uganda for nearly a year," Worth said. "Our goal there is also to work with orphans. Plans are not definite, but we're thinking about some type of transition housing. Whatever we decide, it will be about the children because we believe that *where* a child lives should not determine *if* a child lives"

To support Africans Orphaned by AIDS, contact Gary Worth at 303-663-8354 or director@AfricansOrphanedbyAIDS.org or gjworth@comcast.net.

Wanting to do more

For David Sokoloff '99, the idea for a nonprofit organization began to germinate during his Peace Corps service in Kiribati (pronounced Kee-ree-bahs), an island nation in the central tropical Pacific Ocean. "My assignment there as a teacher proved to be two years of hard work, service, and complete fulfillment," Sokoloff said. It also left him wanting to do more.

Just before Sokoloff's Peace Corps tour ended in 2005, a local teacher mentioned to him that she would like to start a preschool program, but lacked pencils, paper, and other teaching materials. Sokoloff promised to send what he could after returning to the United States. "It was while I was preparing that package to send that I decided to make this into something more than just a one-time shipment," Sokoloff said.



David Sokoloff '99, with his host parents Taakenteang and Tenten of Kiribati.

The "something more" turned into a nonprofit organization, For Granted, Inc., which is dedicated to improving early childhood education throughout the world. "It actually started with a circle of Gettysburg friends," Sokoloff said. Of the 14 members serving on For Granted's board, eight (including Sokoloff) are Gettysburg graduates — Mike Leonard '99, Frank Lee Merwin '97, Richard Hendricks '99, Amanda Hansen) Hendricks '01, Ethan Heftman '99, Todd Hobelmann '99, and Ben Knuth '98.

The board members work on a volunteer basis. Sokoloff himself is a full-time student in international affairs and development studies at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. After completing his degree, he hopes to work more intensely with For Granted to increase its sponsorships, reach, and ability to impact the lives of the world's underprivileged children.

Since its founding, For Granted has shipped more than 750 pounds of books and educational supplies to Kiribati, enabling the start-up of three new preschools and strengthening the resources of a junior secondary school. "Many of the villages there don't have any books, paper, writing utensils, or countless other basic resources for educating their children," Sokoloff said. "This kind of aid is invaluable."

In the meantime For Granted has expanded its reach beyond Kiribati, collecting educational and other materials for a baby rescue home established by the Bethel Agricultural Fellowship in the village of Danishpet in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The home works to prevent female infanticide. It cares for 650 boys and girls, and has a school for pre-kindergarten through 10th grade as well as a hospital.

Over the past two years For Granted has grown significantly with the help of many domestic and international entities. At a recent fund-raiser the organization gained the financial support of nearly 30 corporate sponsors along with a donation from the

Republic of Taiwan. "Much of this year's success has been the result of partnerships developed with the Peace Corps, the Oneness-Heart-Tears, and Smiles International organization of New Zealand, and the Royal Caribbean

Cruise Line, which recently delivered one of For Granted's educational shipments to Christmas Island in the Republic of Kiribati," Sokoloff said.

For Granted has also taken on other new projects. "We just sent nearly 200 pounds of books and educational supplies to support the education of the children in the Commonwealth of Dominica, and we plan on sending much more in the coming months," Sokoloff said.

In addition, For Granted recently started a program with Handicap Solidaire Burkina (HSB).

"HSB is a disabled people's organization created in 2003 in collaboration with Handicap Solidaire Switzerland to defend the interests of physically disabled people in Burkina Faso," Sokoloff said. "For Granted is providing financial assistance for a new project that focuses



AT A GLANCE

What: FOR GRANTED, a nonprofit organization founded in 2005 by David Sokoloff '99

Where: Kiribati, central Pacific Ocean

Why: Dedicated to improving early childhood education to the world's underprivileged children

Collaborations include:

- The Bethel Agricultural Fellowship, a baby rescue home in Tamil Nadu, India
- Handicap Solidaire Burkina (HSB), a disabled people's organization that defends the interests of physically disabled people.



Young men in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, playing in a Saturday basketball game.

on professional training for physically disabled artisans as well as micro-credit loans for small enterprise development."

For Granted has also expanded its work in Kiribati. In 1996 local women organized the Te Motu Village Group in order to help improve the lives of the villagers there through the sharing of resources. For Granted is helping the group pay for a rain water catchment system that promises to raise village health standards.

"I founded For Granted to help disadvantaged populations overcome obstacles in order to gain the education they desperately need and want," Sokoloff said. "We have a considerably greater supply of resources here and in other developed countries. For Granted was founded to build links between communities in the United States and in developing countries by transferring needed supplies and funds to support education and related development programs. Our hope is that the sharing of unneeded resources with those in great need will significantly impact educational initiatives and lives."

So far, For Granted appears to be accomplishing that and more.

For more information about For Granted, visit www.forgranted.org. Sokoloff can be reached at or dsokoloff@forgranted.org or 609-315-2678. "For Granted is always looking for more ideas and welcomes people to contact them," Sokoloff said.



Children of the Commonwealth of Dominica playing with donated gift bags.