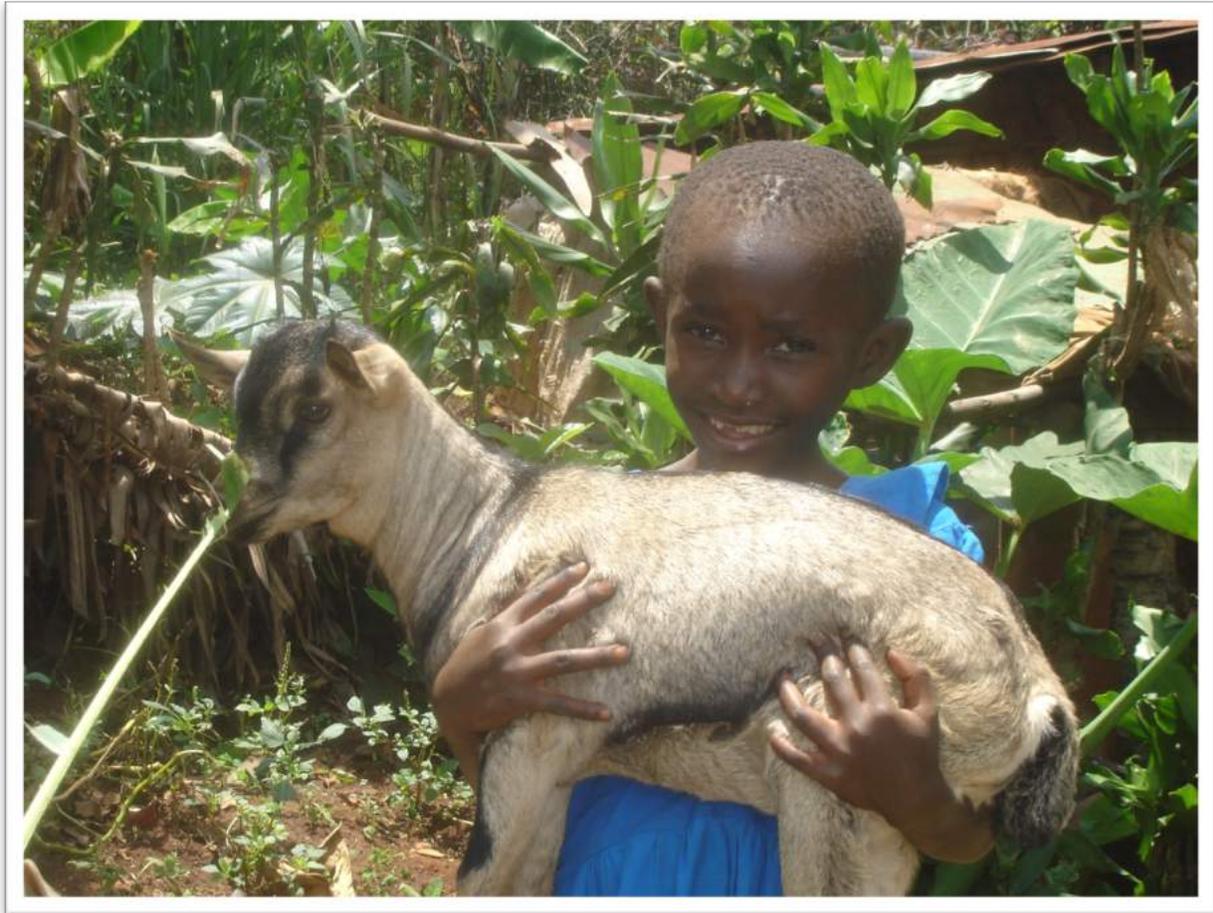


A Special Edition Commemorative

The Itafari Foundation

Celebrating over a Decade of Service in Rwanda

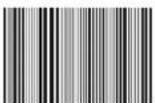


The Itafari Foundation's Mission Lives On

Learn about the Kittelson
Charitable Foundation!

What a Difference We Made!

Kigali Over the Years



2017

To all the friends and supporters of Itafari:

When I began my journey with Rwanda in 2005 I never would have guessed the impact and affect it would have on the lives of our beneficiaries in Rwanda, our donors, volunteers and board members, and most surprisingly, me.

It's shaped my future and my resilience in ways that only can happen when you watch people with so little accomplish so much. They're not looking for a handout, they're looking for a hand up. They're not as much interested in aid, as they are in trade. They are determined regardless of the outside help they receive to create a better future for themselves and their future generations.

This booklet is a snapshot of what we accomplished over the years. It barely touches the surface of the changes our donors made for people they would most likely never meet. The generosity, the heartfelt giving to another with no expectation of anything in return, and the optimism that one person can make a difference, brought wisdom and joy to my life.

Murakoze cyane (thank you very much) for taking a moment to read about some of our journey. Remember you make an impact and the ripple you create through your generosity in the past (and future) will be greater than you'll ever know.

Please contact me if I can be of service.

Warmly, Mama Itafari aka Victoria Trabosh



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RWANDA 05: THE FIRST MESSAGE

What brings me to this point in my life that I must travel to Africa? Where in my soul do I feel God's call? And how do I translate it into a meaningful journey for myself and all of the hearts of the people I am taking with me?

I trust. I pray. I hope. I hope for clarity of purpose. I hope for eyes to see what God has for me. I hope for compassion and grace. And I hope I will make a difference.

Getting the opportunity to change another's life is constant. Choosing to do it and then succeeding is the miracle.

I read a quote that said that the role of the journalist is to speak for them that have no voice. As some journalism becomes more about entertainment others will certainly step up and take the reins. Is that part of my role? To speak for those whose voice cannot be heard? I can see that yes that makes sense to me.

I am not for the faint of heart and I am not ashamed of that. And it just occurred to me that the work I've chosen and the life I've chosen is also not for the faint of heart. I am so thankful that I am a tough little monkey. I'm strong, focused, determined and intent on using all my skills in a more powerful way and with greater success than I have ever done before.

I am curious about what fears and obstacles I will face. The only thing between any of us and our greatness is the "we" or "me." And I want the "me" to continually becoming less of a problem. How have I learned to do this — and how can I teach it? How can any of bring a message that changes the outlook for others — that gives them more hope, greater clarity and the knowledge from their heart that this is possible.

I know that living your dream and possibly losing it all in the attempt is better than never having that focus.

Coming to Rwanda is not scary. I believe Keir's (Keir Pearson, screenwriter of Hotel Rwanda) expression that evil touched down in Rwanda is as clear a way as any to describe how this happened. It's the why that I seek. And while I am blessed with a less inquisitive mind than most, I look for answers and seek a way



that those answers can bring us a greater truth than we ever would have known without that set of events happening.

I know so clearly that we are all the same. And for those who believe that the color of our skin, or our birthplace or our social status make us better or different they are, quite simply, wrong. When skin rots off a body and all that is left is the frame that help the organs now vanished, we are all simply the same. And so what do I do with this unoriginal revelation. I look for answers; I look for success; I look for wisdom, in anyone.

A child's clarity of the world is breathtaking. A beautiful 8-year-old child who looks at the world very seriously asked me why I was coming to her country. She looks at the world very seriously because she has already had disappointments and so things matter to her.

And I told her I was going to Rwanda to talk about hope. And to tell the women of Rwanda that if they believe and focus that they can be anything they want to me. And she looked at me with the eyes of an old soul and said, "the African people will like you very much." So that is my prayer. That this "like" will come from a place in them that is better for us meeting.

I am not coming to sightsee or be a sight. I am coming so that whatever this burning thirst is that is within me can be slaked if only partially. And that the information and respect shared can come back to America and be geometrically multiplied.

What drew all of those women to our event? And how do we keep their fires burning or their embers glowing? And what are they doing to change their world?

What one small thing could each of them begin today that will keep them on the road to becoming their personal best. The smallest kindness to a child, the aged, a creature cannot be overlooked. The words spoken in anger, once said, never stop causing pain. And the gentlest of smiles can change someone for a lifetime.

I am not overly optimistic about this. And if you're reading this and think I'm a little much, you're wrong. I am just right.





A Rwandan city

My Mother Rita was the wise woman who saved me from never knowing true joy. She lived through hell as a child and determined at a young age never to become her Mother. And through sheer determination, she did not. She was no saint, but she was an angel on earth without wings. She loved me and my brothers without demands, without expectations, and without strings. And she was irresistible to us all. She knew truth – and was not shy about telling me when I was wrong. And that’s how she’d simply say it, “Vic, you’re wrong”. And she was usually right. So I’ve picked up that lovely trait of not defending what I know is truth, just living it.

So how do I take this incredible wisdom to a great level. I share it with others. And I ask them to know that they know what they know. And then prove it by living it.

I ask my clients to push themselves hard. And when I don’t ask, or they don’t push, I don’t think the conversations nearly as interesting to either of us. But to strive and yearn and reach and touch the dream is what unleashes joy. As I yearn and reach and strive to find wisdom I am reminded that this goal is not for the faint of heart. And where evil can touch down, grace will surely follow. And may this grace follow me in these next few days.

ON JUNE 22, 2005



RWANDA 05: WHAT I SEE

The Country

Rwanda. It is known as the land of 1000 hills. It is also said to be the place where God comes to rest at night. And I can see why. This is a beautiful country, lush and green. It looks abundant and rich and can deceive you in what it appears it can provide to feed and nourish its people.

Few crops grow well due to the soil acidity and lack of organic fertilizer. I've not seen any large herds of animals of any sort. Some goats, chickens, a few cows.

The city of Kigali rests on many of the thousands of hills that fill this country. With over 600,000 people in this sprawling city there are people everywhere. There are relatively few large office buildings and many of the largest are governmental. I walk into a large hotel called the Novatel and once inside I could be in any international hotel in the world. But I prefer the streets and its people.

Well dressed, or poorly dressed and shoeless, all walk without complaint up and down the hills and streets of Kigali. Many women (and some men) carry the traditional loads on their heads. But it is not to keep their hands free for other activities. The loads they carry could not be held in their arms because of their enormity and weight.

And those loads may crush a spine over time. Our heads and necks were never meant to carry 50 pounds, but this is often the burden they must carry. And in some ways it represents the burden this country carries to repair its soul.

Some days we would leave Kigali and travel into the countryside to meet with recipients of the World Vision, and specifically Vision Finance (the micro loan program I support). As we traveled out of the city, hundreds of people from many miles would be walking or riding their bikes into Kigali to sell their milk or goods. We were easily 10 – 15 miles outside of the city before this progression slowed.

Roughly the size of Massachusetts, Rwanda is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. The majority of the 8 million people live outside the capital, Kigali. The poverty is extraordinary and shocking.



How the Poorest and Most Vulnerable Live, and programs with World Vision that support them.

Some of the housing is so poor and shoddy that I cannot comprehend how people sleep in these places at night. The floors are often dirt, the walls made of mud, and the roof is tin and broken and held in place with rocks and old wood and metal scraps. There are no doors or glass in the holes which are the windows. Immediately next to a home with this much poverty can be a modest home with windows, rooms and solid walls and a tiled roof.

We visit a home of a woman who is a widow. Four of her nine children live with her in a mud walled home that is 6 X 7 (42 square feet). The entire home. The space inside is separated by a piece of cloth. She sleeps on a bench with two of her littlest children, 2 others sleep in the “front” room. Her children range from 25 to 4 years of age. Some are out living on their own. The other children live with her Mother, also a widow. She cooks outside the door in a pot where she fries potatoes that she sells to her neighbors who live 3 feet away. This is in the suburbs of the city.

World Vision is going to build her a home on the same site which will have concrete walls and a roof and glass windows. She will still not have electricity or running water. But this program within World Vision assists the most vulnerable in the community.

Some of the side effects of the genocide in 1994 included over 300,000 orphaned children, 85,000 child headed households (CHH) and 500,000 women who were victims of rape and now infected with HIV/AIDS. HIV positive men acted as rapists as part of the strategy of the genocide. Twelve years later the effect of this brutal strategy is fully evident.

Another visit was to the home of a CHH (Child Headed Household). This young 17-year-old boy* was raising his four brothers and sisters. He looks 14 and 100 at the same time and carries an enormous burden. His home consists of three small rooms. One of the rooms was falling down and uninhabitable.

He weeps with grief as he struggles each day to find enough money to feed his siblings and send them to school. World Vision is going to build him a new home



on the same site. His father who died in the genocide was a craftsman. We sit in this room of crumbling walls in almost complete darkness. There is a jagged piece of broken mirror on the wall, an ancient cabinet against the wall and beautiful chairs that his father made as a woodworker.

This young man is being trained in woodworking by World Vision. He wants to follow in his father's footsteps. He is making some money but not enough. As he wept I felt he carried the burden that no one, least of all a child, should carry to take care of his family. World Vision is also acting as his advocate and we being there gives him some stature in the community where he lives. He is extremely venerable to the adults around him and has had land that his father owned forcibly taken from him by neighbors. World Vision learned of the problem when we met with him and promised to help him get the land back. He wasn't even going to mention it. And thank God he did.

He was magnificent in his dignity and determination and focus. He is passing through enormous grief and yet does not give up. With help, he will survive. His brothers and sisters will be educated. And if heaven works this way, may his parents long gone be blessed by the son they created who must now go on without them.

There is another program which is just beginning to help ex-prostitutes and drug addicts that is funded by World Vision.

We met with the women of this program and shared our joy at what they were overcoming.

Their choice to become a prostitute is often about survival. There is no food for many. A young (or old) woman who feels she must sell her body for survival has no trouble finding work. But it is life threatening on all levels. HIV/AIDS is spread more easily when a man will offer twice the amount if a condom is NOT used. And I'm talking small amounts of money. And when you're starving, being paid twice as much when it's a meager amount is extremely tempting. And the men who want them know it.

But in my interaction with the women who have stepped away from the prostitution, I found that I was meeting women to whom I could relate. Except for their earlier career choice, they were not different from me. And we connected.



They cheered my attempt to communicate with them in Kinyarwanda. And they honored my granddaughter's gift of beaded necklaces.

Jonna, my granddaughter who is 9, wanted to touch the people of Rwanda. And so she, along with my daughter in law Laura and my son Todd, made necklaces. No two alike. 300 of them. 22 pound's worth. A large carry-on's worth. As I brought them from America I was not convinced it was a great idea (BAD Vitsy!!) but I was soon eating crow.

I told them that a child in America believed in them and was praying for them. And to never forget that we stand with them, and pray for them, and believe in them.

Through World Vision they were all part of a cooperative that makes clothes on the most ancient of sewing machines. And they gave me an outfit for Jonna. It is beautiful and I will give it to her with their love and gratefulness.

HIV/AIDS and some of the issues

Another program we visited was for HIV positive participants. They are educating and creating awareness through information, plays and talking about the issues.

In Rwanda, as in anywhere in the world, there is tremendous stigma associated with HIV/AIDS. Some officials I met with said that stigmatizing people with AIDS makes the situation worse – removed and abandoned they will lash out, re-infect others and create more deaths.

But if we show compassion to them they will become the best witnesses to people about prevention. There is a strong spiritual side of the people of Rwanda.

Those who believe that God created us in His image know we are to honor our bodies. The message communicated is to give people the power to know their lives are too precious to abuse. It is the most important asset we have. This message clearly serves all of us as we take care of our own health, and our own bodies, on every level.

There are currently at least 200,000 children infected with HIV/AIDS in Rwanda. Education for adults and adolescents is brutally important. The billboards are clear about the dangers of HIV and spell the message out in the ABC's:



A – Abstain until married

B – Be faithful when married

C – Condoms must be used, if you can't follow A and B

Finally, if you ignore the A, B and C's of prevention, there's the final letter: D – Death.

Hard to miss that message. But condoms are not available everywhere and the poorest cannot get them easily. If there is a choice between food and a condom, guess what wins.

Men who prey on young girls who are starving offer to pay them more money if they don't use a condom... what can I say? It's a terrible battle for the bodies of women. And yet I believe that Rwanda's honest and blunt approach to this problem will help turn the tide.

One final story for this journal entry

On Wednesday night I decided to attend a Rotary meeting in Kigali. It looked like any other Rotary meeting until they told us the speakers and their topic. It was titled "The proper way to use male and female condoms!" And they had props!! And they didn't hesitate to use them or graphically give all the details!!!

To watch 30 business people dissolve into giggling reminded me of being in a sex education class in the 1960's. There was absolutely an intent to use some humor – which was good because it was over the top in the way it was presented. But I learned a lot!!

And that's the point, yes? What I mostly learned was that this country and its people are serious about stopping the prevention of AIDS and condom use, given that Abstinence and Being faithful are the first lines of defense, Condom use must be discussed. And religious issues must also be addressed. Interestingly, the government has not taken a stand on the use of condoms. Lots of issues, but people are not waiting until everything is perfect before they act.

And I think that's my point so far. It's not perfect. The solutions aren't perfect. But this country is full of people determined to get past the incident of the genocide in 1994. It does not define this country. It is the catalyst that changed this country



forever. And there are many that have hope and believe that this country can be saved.

I stand as one of them.

For information about the genocide, please visit this website:

[Http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/africa/2004/rwanda/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/africa/2004/rwanda/default.stm)

* All people mentioned are a composite of situations I observed or heard about.

ON JUNE 23, 2005

A woman with her children, standing in front of their mud home.



RWANDA 05: FINAL THOUGHTS

What a trip.

Today (June 25th) during our 10-hour layover in Nairobi we visited a safari game park. It was beautiful and peaceful and a wonderful transition back into the world. We drove many miles and saw ostriches, giraffes, a lion peeking her head out of the grass, rhino, an angry water buffalo, monkeys, beautiful birds, a crocodile, vultures and many more of God's creatures. They were so peaceful.

Seeing them across the land in wide open spaces takes any romance out of the most beautiful of zoos. I wonder what happens to their spirits when they are captured and held. There is nothing natural about living in a city, surrounded by laughing children (who actually look delicious to some of our wild friends), noisy adults and all manner of foreign behaviors. For many of those we cage their natural instinct is to migrate. What happens when we remove all that is natural from a creature? What does its life really become?

How has this experience changed my life and what will my life become going forward?

I compare Rwanda to Mt. St. Helens. When the mountain erupted in 1980, the ash spread over the land and obliterated all signs of life. I flew over the area with my dearest friend Houl, and over and over on the microphone the helicopter pilot repeated, "Total devastation". It was like a moonscape. All lay gray, quiet, dead. The popular opinion was that "life" would not come back to the area for many years. And yet life came back sooner than anyone thought was possible. That is nature. That is the unknowing. The miracle.

Rwanda strikes me similarly. No one expected the country to come back so soon from total devastation. But over 11 years later, great strides have been made and the ability of people to overcome is a process that is at times slow, but always glorious.

I think about my journey to Rwanda and all that I experienced and observed. Many unnatural things have happened in Rwanda and yet the human spirit will not be denied. I witnessed beauty, grace, and an absolute stubbornness that there is more and there is hope.



So I end where I began. Instead of talking about hope, it was given abundantly to me.

- My spirit is renewed with hope!
- That a child's delight is pure and can overcome its circumstances;
- A Mother's love for her children should be honored and supported no matter the circumstances of how a child came to be;
- Helping another regardless of the outcome is far superior to believing it won't make a difference; Love can be found anywhere and is its own reward;
- Businesses can succeed under the most dire of conditions when there is passion, drive and focus; In America, we have barely begun. If we know that the maximum use of our brain is 12%, what would be possible if we used it all;
- Laughter is truly the universal language. To smile at someone requires looking into their eyes and seeing a shared moment. And all those smiles will never leave your soul;
- My passion for Rwanda was more real than I ever imagined. Though I only believe I will walk on this earth during one lifetime walking through Rwanda was as natural and familiar as walking through my days in Portland;
- I will go back. With all my passion and purpose and desire to make a difference. And I will once more hold friends that have a part of my heart;

If for any reason I never see Rwanda again, this journey has profoundly changed my life. And I am better for it. My love for my family, for John, for my life and its privileges is deepened.

This journaling is a tricky thing for me. It's as unnatural as me being quiet and demure! What almost stopped me from journaling at all is my desire for perfection. I've decided to give that up because I have felt the love and prayers of many of you on this journey and my feeble attempts to describe it is the only way I can try and share the wonder of all I have seen.

Thank you for indulging me and cheering me on, especially those of you who have written. You encouraged (and continue to encourage) me greatly. Your words absolutely warmed my heart. And that is the kindness and power I took with me to Rwanda.

Your smallest gesture mattered. And it always does. To my traveling companions in Rwanda, I thank you for your kindness to me.



Jeff Grubb and Tim Teckman have been to Rwanda before and their efforts, compassion, expertise and business acumen have made Rwanda a richer place for their caring. They are two of the finest men I have ever traveled with (ok – they told me to say that – but there is a tremendous amount of truth in their joke!)

LuAnn Yocky richly blessed my life with her kindness and leadership on our journey. She is funny and kind and caring and compassionate. She moves through the world with grace and serves all she meets.

To the staff at Vision Finance and World Vision: know that your efforts are blessed by God and inspired. Your attitudes and service “to the least of these” serves God in the most powerful way imaginable. Do not become discouraged. We are all cheering you on and humbled by your greatness and modesty.

To all who followed my dream and shared my passion: murakoze cyane (thank you very much). I was 10,000 miles away from you all but you were often on my mind and I felt a great responsibility to tell you what I was seeing and feeling.

There is enough passion in me for Rwanda and enough work to be done that I think my gaze will always be on this beautiful country. There is much to do and I will do my part.

This journey continues. I have decided to start a foundation for “all things Rwanda” and more information will be following on future events and ways you, too, can support this part of the world.

As for you:

- Find your passion.
- Build a dream.
- Do not be discouraged.
- Know that the greatest journeys we live are the ones we choose
- If you become overwhelmed remember what the young African boy said before the International AIDS conference in South Africa

Do what you can

Where you are

With what you have

In the time you have left



ITAFARI COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET

The wisdom of a child should not be argued.

God bless you all and thank you so much for your love and support.

Vicky

ON JUNE 24, 2005

Driving through Nairobi National Park in Kenya.



RWANDA 05: THE CHILDREN

“Eat your vegetables! There are children in Africa who are starving.” If I heard that once, I heard it a hundred times as a child. And I would think, “No child would want to eat these peas I’m trying to hide under my plate!”

I was wrong. I now know what a starving child in Africa looks like. And it’s sobering to realize an impoverished child may have one meal a day, if they’re lucky. But it’s very possible they won’t get to eat this day at all.

Children should not suffer due to man’s mistakes and evils. The children in Rwanda live daily with the results of man’s inability to live in peace. And we cannot idly stand by.

I had never seen so many children that I knew were living in substandard conditions. They are gentle and loving and have never known excess, except possibly of hunger and sadness.

The children’s effect on me was one of the strongest of everything I saw, felt or heard. Because they are the innocent ones. And they deserve our protection and concern, even from so far away.

There was a young boy who was left alone with his two younger siblings after both parents died. He wanted to keep his family together and so he did whatever he could to bring in money, but it was not enough. Some days he would have his little brothers lie very still and not move all day so that they didn’t expend any energy and not be as hungry.

World Vision stepped in and gave him support and now he is able to keep his family alive and together.

The mission of World Vision reads in part, “...to help children and their communities worldwide reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty. We serve the world’s poor – regardless of a person’s religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.”

By the end of the genocide in 1994, 95,000 children had been orphaned. By 2001, an estimated 264,000 children had lost one or both parents to AIDS, representing 43% of all orphans. This figure is expected to grow over 350,000 by 2010. The



statistics get grimmer: more than 400,000 children are out of school. 1 in 5 Rwandan children die before their fifth birthday. (source: unicefusa.org)

So what do these statistics “look” like? Simply the faces of beautiful little children. Wherever we went, there were children. They gathered quickly whenever we stopped. And they were very dear. We would take their pictures and then show them the digital photographs on the camera.

They crowded around to see: their little hands all over my hands and arms, gently trying to see the photos. So many more children than adults.

I was struck by the lack of toys. There were no pre-made toys in sight. Homemade toys: cans on a string, rags tightly knotted to make a soccer ball. All wooden bikes.

The older children danced and sang and acted typical of all children: in turn inquisitive, shy, bold, self conscious, and gloriously unrestrained.

I wondered how many were very sick and would die within the year. There is a high risk of bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, typhoid fever and malaria. And the poorest children, with their lack of nutrition, medicine and fresh running water are highly susceptible to these diseases. HIV/AIDS is also taking a devastating toll on the children.

At times, it was absolutely overwhelming. Without organizations such as World Vision, it’s frightening. But these organizations are not giving up.

I’d often heard about the child sponsorship programs but was skeptical that you really were getting a “real” child. But it’s true.

I now understand that all the faces of children that we see in the pictures are not to get our sympathy. They are to cause action.

When you sponsor a child, it is the child you see in the picture. And sponsoring a child saves their life. It provides food, clothing, and education.

Education is not provided for free and everyone who attends must buy a uniform. Without funds, there is no education. And education is part of the solution to end



poverty. Without our assistance, many hundreds of thousands of children will never experience the joy of learning.

Vision Finance, the micro loan program for which we raised money and that I came to support, offers real hope and solutions to the adults who can then care for their children and the orphans they take in.

It is nothing for a widow to be raising her own 5 or 6 children plus 4 or 5 orphans and to be running a business sponsored through the loans of Vision Finance. These businesses are truly life giving.

I met these women in the towns and villages. These women face incredible odds and yet, are succeeding. Children's lives are being saved.

It's funny; I thought the piece I blogged about the genocide was a bit depressing. Well, as I read what I've written I see that this piece isn't exactly lightness and laughter! But that's ok. I promised to write what I felt and saw. And I wasn't visiting with the wealthy and well off of Rwanda. I was there to serve the poor. And their situation deserves honesty.

What are the solutions? I have a few thoughts. Please give it some thought on your own as well:

1. Take good care of the children in your life. Cherish them. Thank God that in America they will never face many of the challenges that are a daily threat to children elsewhere.
2. Teach your children how to care for others. Show compassion and help them learn the same through your example.
3. If you are so moved, sponsor a child through World Vision or another reputable relief agency.
4. Believe that your actions, however small you might think they are, make a huge difference, especially to the child you affect
5. Give money to organizations that go directly to the front lines so that they may do this work with love and purpose.
6. Pray for those who need God's protection. The staff I met at World Vision and Vision Finance are some of the most remarkable people I've ever met. This work, which I have barely begun, is their daily walk. These are Rwandans helping their own and know that this cycle of poverty can be stopped.



ITAFARI COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET

It was so uplifting to meet with the staff in the main offices in Kigali and then in the branch offices out in the countryside. Amazing brave men and women who have faith and hope that their work will change lives. It is truly an honor to support Rita Ngarambe and her team.

On our last night, we had a wonderful dinner with some of the staff. Richard Nyirinkwaya wrote a poem in our honor. But it really is about the Vision Finance Staff and the empowerment they feel. Lives are saved and changed because of this work.

Our efforts are not wasted.

ON JUNE 24, 2005

Children in Kigali. Notice the babies on the backs of some of the children.



RWANDA 05: THE GENOCIDE MEMORIALS

Mankind has perpetuated evil over and over and over again. When will we stop? When will it end?

Genocide definition: "a form of one-sided mass killing in which a state or other authority intends to destroy a group, as that group and membership in it are defined by the perpetrator."— Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, The History and Sociology of Genocide, 1990

The latest genocide in Rwanda began on April 6, 1994 and lasted for 100 days. During that time, over 1,000,000 people were killed simply because they were identified as Tutsi. No one was exempt. The killing was brutal and slow. Most of the killing was done house to house by neighbors with farm implements: the favorite tool was a machete.

At the memorial site that I visited, there are over 250,000 buried here in mass graves. And a grave is left open because more will be received. It is peaceful and silent. And very, very sad.

The sadness overcomes me when I see thousands of photographs of loved ones gone. Cases of bones and skulls; and then another with smaller skulls and bones that can only belong to children. Clothes that had been worn by those murdered. Graphic pictures of death, dying and torture. It all serves to overwhelm the observer. But these images also remind us that we must never forget.

There is a memorial in each district. In some cases, it is the finest building to be seen. But the dead here are loved and not forgotten and are deeply missed. Any of us who have ever lost someone we cherished miss them deeply. Most of those we remember were not brutally removed from our lives.

When you add brutality to death, one must tread very carefully in saying, "I understand." I do not know their grief. But I know it is theirs alone and so we can stand with them in respect and silence, to acknowledge their pain and loss.

In Rwanda, 100,000 people sit in prison waiting to be tried for their crimes during the genocide. These are not high security prisons. They are made out of brick. I often saw prisoners, dressed in all pink, walking along the road, working, waiting.



In many cases they subsist on very little food and are sick. Their families visit them and bring them food. These prisoners are neighbors, friends, people who murdered people they knew and shared a meal and a life together prior to April 1994. And the Rwandese insist on justice.

Within the culture there is a community dispute resolution system called Gacaca (ga-cha-cha). It was originally established for settling community disputes and transgressions. It has been modernized to be used for the trials and reconciliation of the people of Rwanda.

In a gacaca, the alleged perpetrators are brought before the community and members of the community testify to what they witnessed. One of the purposes of the gacaca is for the relatives of the dead to forgive the murderer. The Rwandan people believe that forgiveness is key to rebuilding this nation.

In the last few years President Kagame has issued new identity cards which no longer specify Hutu, Tutsi or Tua. They are all Rwandese.

If anyone teaches differently, speaks differently or acts in the old system they are immediately prosecuted (in theory). The message though is clear and strong: we are all Rwandese.

A young man I met was 18 at the time of the war (or genocide). He left for Canada to get away from the pain and memories. And he tried to forget what happened.

And then two years ago he realized he had stopped living and needed to forgive those he knew that murdered his best friend in front of him. And through his efforts to forgive (which is an ongoing process), he is healing and he knows he survived for a reason.

Can you imagine forgiving someone you watched brutally murder your loved one, or possibly your entire family??? I know for sure it's possible to do this. I have seen it. But it takes faith in God, true love for another and an ability to ask the question, "How do I go on?" versus "Why should I go on?"

We must stop genocide which continues TODAY in Burundi, the Sudan's western Darfur region and other places in the world, in some cases unchecked. Wherever this evil has been unleashed, it destroys at a terrifying level.



And we must become educated and aware and insist that it is not acceptable.

The Tsunami in January of this year was a brutal destruction of human life. It was covered by the press at an enormously high level and the world responded.

If genocides in the past or current situations of genocide are an issue that is unacceptable to you, get involved. You can learn more about human rights violations on Amnesty International's website: www.amnesty.org. Write to the President and express your feelings. Actively become involved in an organization which takes your views to people and governments of influence. Pray. Give money to organizations which are on the front lines.

And believe your caring makes a difference.

The number of genocides worldwide during the last 50 years since the Holocaust is shocking.

We must learn about the past and learn from it.

Education is the key. And general knowledge is limited. You must seek it. Become informed. And do not give up hope. And if this issue aligns with your passion you will take action.

If you need help figuring out how to do this on even the smallest of levels, contact me. Anything you do from today that is more than you've done in the past will change the world.

There was a final quote at the memorial which was written by Stephen Smith, Aegis Trust. The Aegis Trust was established to combat genocide. In part, he said, "If you must remember, remember this:

in the genocide they killed one, then another then another.

Genocide is not a single act of murder. It is a million acts of murder" We must never forget.

ON JUNE 24, 2005



RWANDA 05: A POEM OF REMEMBERING

On our last night in Kigali, Richard Nyirinkwaya read us this poem he had written in our honor. I dedicate it to all of you and thank you for caring about others

Murakoze,

Vicky

Do You Remember?

Do you remember the days Rwanda was destructed because of Genocide?

Do you remember the days Rwanda was a hopeless country?

Do you remember the days Rwandan people were traumatized?

Do you remember the days Rwanda orphans were dying of hunger?

The days Rwandan children were frustrated, traumatized, and hopeless because of poverty;

The days Rwandan children lived with no food, no water, no medical care and no school fees;

Do you remember the days Rwandan widows were always thinking of how they will survive with a huge number of orphans from their relatives and friends?

Oh God... People of God... People blessed to live in the developed countries...

People of mercy... Do you remember?

Do you? ... Do you remember the days widows living with HIV/AIDS were rejected by the society?

Do you remember those days children were dying of malaria, tuberculosis, diarrhea, and other diseases due to poverty?

Do you remember the days the poverty was like a curse to widows of genocide and those of HIV/AIDS, to teenagers living alone in the villages where nobody was caring for them? To be a child in those days was a curse!

But nowadays, the poverty is alleviated because of Vision Finance Company, because of your giving?

Nowadays widows use the loan from Vision Finance Company and make small business!

Nowadays there is a hope to live for those poor people, a hope to send their children to school, a hope to get medical care, and a hope to feed their children and themselves!

Nowadays, there is a hope for those poor people living with HIV/AIDS to run their own business from Vision Finance Company and live with no shame!

This is your fruit, people of God, continue in that way

This is your vision, People of God, to go down there in the villages, find those poor



people rejected by Society and raise them by giving them loans with low interest than other micro finance you can find in Rwanda!

This is what you expect to be done and this is what is done in Vision Finance Company. This is our Key Mission. Rise up the fund and you will be satisfied of your wonderful vision.

Rwandan poor people, Rwandan people living with HIV/AIDS, Rwandan widows, Rwandan orphans are always singing VIVA Vision Finance Company s.a

And we as staff of Vision Finance Company s.a we are always sings VIVA LuAnn Yocky, VIVA Vicky, VIVA Tim, VIVA Jeff, VIVA Oregon investors and be blessed forever and ever!

GOD BLESSES YOU!

THANK YOU

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June 24, 2005

NYIRINKWAYA Richard Braddock HR and Administration Officer Vision Finance Company a World Vision



A young Rwandan boy dancing.

TRABOSH PRESENTS ITAFARI TO UNITED NATIONS

**Itafari Foundation – *Rebuilding Rwanda One Brick at a Time* April 7, 2006
United Nations, New York City, NY**

My name is Victoria Trabosh and I am President of the Itafari Foundation. The word Itafari is Kinyarwanda for brick. I will explain how we chose this name later in my comments. We are a not for Profit 501(c)(3) Foundation dedicated to assisting the people of Rwanda. In the few minutes I have, I would like to tell you why we formed Itafari and how we are assisting people in Rwanda.

We know that genocide is not a crime of passion. It is a premeditated act. And so then is Itafari's mission to assist and empower Rwandans. Itafari's focus is premeditated. Our determination is premeditated. What drives us, anyone, outside of Rwanda to want to make a difference?

We know that the genocide in Rwanda was not an African problem but a larger issue. We know it was a human rights violation. And we cannot stand by and ignore the results of our earlier indifference.

Twelve years ago, I missed the genocide. I don't remember hearing anything about it. I did not know where Rwanda was.

In 1984 I visited Yad Vashem in Israel, the holocaust memorial outside of Jerusalem. And after spending hours in the memorial I believed: never again. I believed that the evil that killed millions of Jews could never be repeated. And I felt assured that the world had learned its lesson.

I noticed what a serious place Israel was. Its people were not frivolous or wasteful. And I found the same true in Rwanda when I was there in June of 2005.

When I visited the genocide memorial in Kigali, Rwanda, I think I was less shocked by the images and human remains because I was prepared for what I would see. But I was not prepared for my remembrance of the Holocaust memorial and my belief that it would never happen again and then knowledge that it had happened again and again and again.



And so we know that another genocide in Rwanda is as close as our indifference. Another genocide is as close as our denial that it COULD ever happen again. And another genocide is as close as Darfur.

But we also know that one person can make a difference. A woman named Rita Ngarambe asked me to come to Rwanda and speak about hope. I met her at a meeting in Portland Oregon in March 2004. She was visiting Portland through World Vision as Director of the Microfinance Program.

Through her inspiration and belief that I could make a difference, I began to get interested in Rwanda and since that time, the intention of making a difference has been multiplied countless times by countless others.

In May 2005, I held a fundraiser for the Women of Rwanda to raise awareness and money for the Microfinance program in Rwanda. Two women, Karen Frelander and Beth McChesney who attended the event, pledged to raise \$50K through Pay It Forward Events.

Their desire to make a significant contribution and a life changing difference for others led us to the formation of the Itafari Foundation.

Itafari is Kinyarwanda for brick. And a brick represents the weight of a malnourished child that cannot be comforted. It is the burden that a woman carries as she struggles to find a way to feed her family. It is the color of the soil that a woman sees as she is being violated face down in the dirt. But, the brick also represents hope.

One brick alone can do nothing but together we can build something for and with the people of Rwanda.

And so Itafari's purpose is clear – to help rebuild a nation one brick at a time.

Everyone touched by Itafari must be empowered. Our donors, board members, recipients and those who casually observe what we do.

Organizations formed like Itafari fill a need. Rwanda is a country full of people who are survivors, orphans, widows and widowers, men and women of great



vision, children and even the guilty, there is no end to what must be done and what can be accomplished.

Our foundation is exclusively for the people of Rwanda. And that cannot change. After all, our name, Itafari is Kinyarwanda!

Eight million people live in Rwanda. And while we do not offer pity, we come with determination. A determination to quench this fire within us to reach out to another human being in need.

As their equal.

As our brothers and sisters of the human race.

We are an organization made up of more than just wazungu (white people), though there are a number of us. We are also African American, Rwandan survivors, lawyers, writers, screenwriters, musicians, housewives, retired executives, professors of African history, students and children and most importantly: we are people who care and believe that one person can make a difference.

We are all concerned citizens of the world who do not have all the answers but seek a better life for ourselves and others.

When you have the ability and space to create something for another, you should act.

A friend recently wrote a note to me that said, we celebrate and honor those who have died more by our action than by mere grief. Not everyone has the opportunity to do that. Not everyone came through the genocide whole enough to do anything but survive, or worse: wish they had not. Many Rwandans who I have met, both in the US and in Rwanda are lifting themselves and others out of the wreckage of a human explosion that was not their doing or desire. And they are doing work that is necessary and combats all that is evil. Here are some examples: My dear friend, teacher and survivor Nassira teaches me Kinyarwanda and will not accept money for her efforts Jean Paul Samputu, along with Jacques and Vincent, travel tirelessly throughout the world sharing the beauty and joy of the music, dance, and traditions of Rwanda. And Immaculee Ilibagiza who has



found the way to forgiveness as many before her who are left to tell have also found a way to heal. This anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide that we must remember happened because the world became complacent.

And however small the efforts of Itafari are, our faith and belief that one person makes a difference is enormous! The size of the undertaking is also enormous but the human spirit intentionally focused can create unbelievable change.

Our focus is on widows and orphans, microfinance, education and equality for all Rwandans in the world.

We do not define Rwanda by its genocide, but by the strength of its people who refuse to give up.

I will spend May 2006 in Rwanda meeting with organizations, groups, and individuals who have a vision of how Itafari's assistance can be useful for them.

For more information, please visit our website itafari.org, take a brochure or see me after this session.

There is no end to what we believe is possible. We look to the future.

To educating the children.

To believing in reconciliation and forgiveness.

To listening to and for what the Rwandan people need and want.

To working with Rwandans of integrity like Immaculee and Jean Paul who believe that their nation can be healed.

And to paraphrase Winston Churchill, to never ever ever ever give up.



A REPORT FROM RWANDA: MAY 2006

Feeding a Hunger: The Children of the Streets

It is good to be back on the streets of Kigali. To recognize shops, feel the pulse of this city, read its newspapers and know that more progress has been made. The government appears more determined than ever to become a vibrant and important part of East Africa.

Evangelists come and share the good news. Entrepreneurship is alive and full of all the opportunities and challenges of creating something from a dream. Conferences are held at the major hotels that bring leaders together to plan and shape the future. There is no shortage of deaths or births.

I am greeted by old friends with true joy and affection. We begin again to work together to build something greater than what exists. There is no shortage of hope, expectation or tremendous obstacles. It is all truly as it should be, and it is good.

But the children, once again, are the innocents. They are the ones that have nothing to do with their current state. Their birth in this place, to parents of wealth or poverty, is for them, an accident. And so they do what they can, where they are, with what they have, in the time they have left.

I will write in a later message about some children in school. But this message is about the poorest of the poor, those who do not have a home, and no consistent visible means of support. They are the children of the streets orphaned as no child should ever be orphaned: the most vulnerable, most fragile, most likely to lose their lives in a moment or circumstance completely out of their control.

My friend and brother, Jean Paul Samputu (see March Itafari event) is also in Kigali during this first part of my stay. He is an amazing ambassador and tireless champion of the children of Kigali. This morning he asked me to come and meet the children who live on the streets. It is evident that funds are needed to provide food and clothing, and when urgent care is needed, a trip to a clinic. There are no social service agencies to provide these needs and they are dependent on the generosity of others. What little money they can earn on the streets will come from carrying a package for a stranger; guarding a car that is parked, etc. or stealing. There is never enough, but it all helps to make a difference.



Forty children happily cram into two busses (by busses I mean two minivans that comfortably seat 8-10 each). We all travel to a soccer field where they gather. Jean Paul is at first very discouraged because many of the children are high on drugs or alcohol. No food, no water, no beds, no hope. They do what many people in the US have been known to do: drown their pain in drugs and alcohol.

But then Jean Paul does what he does so well: he sees them as just children who need a loving adult to care about them. There are well over 50 kids who range from 5 years old to 20 years old. Jean Paul tells them that people in the world care for them and that they must not lose hope.

I am accompanied by two young women from Canada who are here in Rwanda for an extended stay working on various projects. After the kids spontaneously sing for us, we are each given the opportunity to speak.

In my words, I tell them that Jean Paul speaks about them wherever he goes. His heart and mind lives for Rwanda and his own family no matter where he is performing. He wants the very best for them but he cannot give them money directly because he knows that many of them will use it for drugs and alcohol and he cannot tolerate that. To change their lives, they must let go of those things that cloud their judgment and affect their ability to succeed.

I tell them that while Jean Paul speaks about them in the world, they must assist themselves and not expect him to do all of the work. They listen, and like all audiences, some hear what I say and some are just staring at me. How easy it is for all of us to dismiss the opinion of another to whom we cannot relate.

But now for me, the best thing possible happens. Three young men step forward and tell how they have stopped using drugs and have given up the things that were destroying them. They still have no answers, but now they can approach the starting line and begin to run the race set before them.

While these orphans who live on the street may not be able to relate to me, the story and testimony of their peers cannot be so easily dismissed. Among them I see leaders – young men (and the group is all boys) who are going to set the right example. And they pay respect to their brothers in this extremely hard life that they share. I know that standing here in front of me are young men who are not satisfied with this way of life, who believe that they are worthy of more than they



are now experiencing. And that maybe today was the beginning of something new: a bigger dream than their current reality. Jean Paul gives his testimony of how for many years drugs and alcohol were a way of life for him as well. After finding God, he stopped his destructive behavior and then his talent began to be used in a way that could truly transform lives. He makes no apology for his faith or belief and knows that he has no one to thank but God for all that he has accomplished.

Something has changed since we first arrived. There is absolutely a current of expectation in the air. We close in prayer and then I am told we are taking them all to a restaurant to feed them. There are so many kids, but about 35-40 pile back into the two mini vans and we go to a restaurant in Kigali city center.

The kids are rowdy and rambunctious and excited. Arrangements are made for this very respectable restaurant to seat all of the children. The tables are set with red checkered table clothes and everyone comes in and sits down.

Once inside, to say that they are well behaved is an understatement. It is clear many of them have never been in a restaurant of this caliber. But without one word of threat, their behavior rises above our expectations. Fanta, Coke and Sprite are served. And then these HUGE plates of food are served to each of them. I cannot see the plates for the meat, potatoes and vegetables spilling to the edge. Many of the boys have “saucer eyes.”

It is almost cruel to make them wait for all to be served, but wait they do! Jean Paul asks one of the boys to pray and he recites a Catholic prayer from long ago that has nothing to do with food, but is clearly from his heart. It is all we can do not to laugh, but there is no question God will bless this meal in spite of the request given in the prayer. When Andrew says, “bon appetit,” many of the children answer “merci.”

As I watch these young men eat their meals with near reverence, I see that they know they are being treated as equal human beings in a world full of comparisons and inequality. We have fed them, and now they know we are not full of mere rhetoric but care and compassion for them. Tomorrow this meal will be a memory. But what else has been created for some of these young men? My prayer is a hunger for a better life.



I am here this month as a representative of Itafari to look for possibilities for programs we can support that will serve Rwandans by replacing despair with hope. Is there hope for these children? I say yes and today I watched them see it through their own eyes. We must never give up on another human being who does not have the advantages or opportunities that we are given.

Your contribution to Itafari will grow beyond whatever amount you are prepared to donate. The meal that was fed to these boys today, party of 40, cost \$80US. Itafari paid for this meal. The boys will never know that. All that they need to know is that they are worthy of the respect of others. That people in the world from their own country as well as those 10,000 miles away honor them and know that the money is well spent. And we trust that the hunger they felt before they began the meal is now replaced with a hunger to care for themselves. And to know that in the future they can eat a meal due to their own effort rather than through the generosity of another.

In the meantime, you can help us support these children and others in Rwanda. You may donate directly on the website www.italafari.org or send a check to Itafari Foundation, 27 El Greco, Lake Oswego, Oregon, 97035 USA. Your gifts are tax deductible and a year end receipt will be sent to you. NOTE: if you would like to have your donation used for Samputu's kids, please designate the Widows and Orphans program when you make your gift. We will use this money to help these children and would like to formalize a support program where we can regularly contribute to their care: First we must feed them, then we teach them; then they can learn to feed and teach themselves.

Imagine being a teenager again; or look at your own children. What would you want for yourself or them? A gift here in Rwanda has an amazing ability to make a difference to a child. Your gift expands geometrically as so much can be done to make a difference to a child. A child in Rwanda can eat for \$1US a day: not enough, but better than once every few days.

Join Itafari in its quest to support the people of Rwanda in the rebuilding of a nation. Jean Paul Samputu is not only an internationally recognized musician, he is the international spokesperson for Itafari. Please remember that these children he introduced me to, and others like them, need your support and compassion, but not pity. They are magnificent and amazing children who just need a helping hand. I will have pictures out soon and we will tell some of their stories. And the



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stories you hear can be repeated a million times. With each donation, we can assist this nation itafari by itafari by itafari (brick by brick by brick).

You will be filled with great contentment knowing that the meal of satisfaction will be yours. Bon appetit!

Warmly, Vicky

ON MAY 23, 2006

A Rwandan boy with a toy car.



RWANDA 06: ITAFARI RETURNS TO U.S.

Ordinary Women Accomplishing the Extraordinary

The drum I beat: We are all ordinary people who can accomplish the extraordinary. I'd like to tell you about some ordinary women accomplishing the extraordinary. My story is about how the world is a better place because of two people and the over 1,400 others they have inspired.

During my stay in Rwanda I have had the pleasure of meeting two ordinary women, sisters, who have grown an extraordinary business. Their names are Joy Ndungutse (50) and Janet Nkubana (43). They are Rwandese women who were born in a refugee camp in Uganda.

They assist women to manufacture their own goods and sell them on an international level. In 2003, they started with six women under a tree. Their task was to weave baskets of a quality that would stand the scrutiny of the international market. And the goal was that these women would work together: despite their differences, despite the trauma of genocide, despite the obstacles of ill health, new babies, poverty, responsibilities, husbands or widowhood, children, stress and despair.

Six women under a tree.

From that small group, the cooperative, called Gahaya (after Janet and Joy's grandfather) has grown to over 1,400 women! When I visited their center, there were almost 1,000 women waiting for Joy and Janet. The "center" is a church building, one large room that is rented once a week. This cavernous room, with no working electricity, no facilities of any kind other than a roof and benches, held all the women. Each woman had brought the items they had made that week, to be examined, checked for quality and finally to receive immediate payment for their work.

For six hours, no breaks, the women lined up by area to have their goods examined.

In one week, an average woman can make a set of three bowls, or two small friendship baskets. That's it. And if their item does not pass inspection, the items are returned to them with advice on how to correct the problem, or they're



advised to sell the items themselves in the marketplace, the most difficult way to be paid.

On this day, beyond the friendship baskets and bowls that were made, Joy and Janet had asked for special red bowls to honor Bono's Red Project. I watched hundreds of women step forward, many with babies on their backs. They waited for inspection, received their money, counted it, and then went to their area president to deposit \$1US for their savings accounts.

When Gahaya began, Joy and Janet were often asked for loans from the women. They soon realized that their best work would be done as the women became more self sufficient and less dependent on others. A forced savings plan was put into place so that when money was needed, they could use their own funds rather than depend on the largesse of another. And it worked! To further motivate the women, bonuses were given to the women who managed to save the most — a Rwandan 401K plan in action!

For perspective, realize that the average pay for each woman is approximately \$8 US per week. Of this amount, they are required to save \$1 US per week. And with Gahaya, their lives have been changed. Imagine how they must feel to become independent and empowered.

And instead of just imagining, I will summarize the feelings of four women who I interviewed. These women are Area Presidents, selected by Gahaya to support the women contributing to Gahaya. These Area Presidents are weavers by trade, but are also paid a salary to support the women between Gahaya's weekly visits and oversee quality, problem solving, new designs, and coordinate the women. Before Gahaya, they never lead anyone but their families, and yet their comments are thoughtful and wise.

Statistics on the four Area Presidents who I interviewed:

Ruth, 40 years, 4 children ages 11, 9, 6, 1-1/2, married
Beatrice, 42 years, 5 children ages 24, 14, 11, 7, 2-1/2, widow
Ephigenie, 51 years, 7 children ages 27, 24, 22, 19, 15, twins 9, 1 grandchild,
married Theresa, 42 years, 7 children 19, 18, 16, 14, 12, 10, 8, married

Here are some of their comments paraphrased:

Ruth: She felt good that she could add financial assistance for her family. Her husband tells everyone he has the best woman and he is proud of her.



Beatrice: She now feels important and is respected by other women who come and ask her for help. Her children are so grateful that their school fees can be paid; that her example shows her daughters they can become anything they want to be.

Ephigenie: Laughed when she said that being able to bring money into the home makes the home more “comfortable” because she no longer has to beg her husband for money so there is less stress in the household.
Theresa: She is now a role model for her daughters and she is inspiring her daughters to know that in business there is no difference between women and men.

When I asked these women what their current challenges are, they all were thoughtful, and then looked at me and said, “I have none.” These were four separate interviews and I was shocked at their level of contentment and satisfaction. Their lives are modest by any standard, and yet...who they had become was enough. And so what is possible for those with so little, is possible for us as well. We can learn that what we have is enough...and then dream about what can be.

They are still dealing with unbelievable loss and grief from the genocide, ongoing trauma, the death of their children if they succumb to illness like malaria, little if any modern conveniences like electricity, and yet they are magnificent in their ability to believe in their dreams.

The greatest achievement for all was that all of their children were in school, and they personally were contributing to their children’s ongoing success.

When I asked them what do you want Itafari to tell the world for you?

Ruth: Help us to get a center for Gahaya that will allow us to expand our work and where we can all work together.

Beatrice: Greet everyone and thank them for buying our products — help us to expand the marketplace because so many women want to make beautiful products so that the world will never forget Rwanda and those who have died.

Ephigenie: Rwandese women are hardworking and want to build their county and build their homes to make them solid.



Therese: Help to train women to become self sufficient and grow out of poverty and know they are doing well and are not beggars. We want a greater market for our goods.

It's hard to close this message because these women inspire me. Unless you have been here or to a country like Rwanda, it is almost impossible to understand the conditions and circumstances under which such ordinary women are accomplishing the extraordinary, but you only need to see it to know nothing can stand in your way if you truly believe in the beauty of your dreams.

We will soon add a retail area to Itafari's website where items can be purchased on line. In the meantime, you can purchase items at <http://edimports.com> or at an Itafari Pay It Forward event.

My heartfelt thanks to two beautiful, powerful, determined, humble, ordinary women: Joy Ndungutse and Janet Nkubana for touching thousands of lives through their extraordinary efforts.

Be inspired and motivated by them. May you overcome unbelievable obstacles in building your dreams and accomplish the extraordinary in your life as well.

Warmly, Vicky - **ON JULY 5, 2006**



Rwandan woman

LAUNCHING: A TOUR OF HOPE

Dear Friends & Colleagues,

It's been an amazing 22 months so far for Itafari! We've made great progress, raised some serious money, and worked in great programs in Rwanda. I completed my 4th trip in less than 2 years in February and am pleased to report wonderful progress in the following areas:

Participation with Kigali Parents School to build a Secondary School in Rwanda
Worked with ASSIST and RARDA to raise goats to be given to 350 child-headed households through co-operatives established throughout the country
Purchased baskets and bowls from Gahaya Links which are sold at Itafari Pay It Forward Events
Met with the 85 children sponsored by Itafari donors
Distributed funds raised by the elementary children of Madeleine School and St. Agatha Schools (\$2,600!) distributed over 120 pen pal letters from the children of Portland to the children of Kigali
Working with Urwego to distribute micro finance loans
Reviewed other possible programs for Itafari's consideration
Chrysologue Ngarambe was hired as Itafari's Executive Director in Rwanda

I am convinced this work is meaningful and makes a difference. If you've ever considered going to

Rwanda, here is your opportunity. In October of this year, I'll be taking 8 people with me for a Tour of Hope. You'll see Rwanda and the incredible changes being made by the people of Rwanda.

EVENT: A Tour of Hope

TRAVEL DATES: October 8-21, 2007

PRICING: \$4,750 per person

INCLUDES:

Roundtrip airfare

Entrance fees

Hotel & all meals

Private transportation



ITAFARI COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET

\$500 per person toward collective donation; recipient(s) to be determined by the group on location

MORE INFO: Capacity: 8 travelers – space is limited!!

Book soon to secure your spot

BOOKING: Email

info@crookedtrails.com

If you're interested in joining me, read more about the trip. Your donations are always welcome and more information can be found at our website: <http://itafari.org>

Call me with any questions at 503-636-3692 or email me at vicky@itafari.org

I hope to hear from you and look forward to sending out more reports from Rwanda! Murakoze cyane, (thank you very much!)

Warmly, Vicky Trabosh

ON JANUARY 19, 2007

A MAN NAMED ITA



The clearer you are on what you want the more coincidence you will have in your life.

On the third and last flight of the 10,000-mile journey that would bring me to Kigali, I was seated next to an African man. We were two strangers on a flight that was about one quarter full.

I'm not very chatty on long trips. I value the too-rare chance for peace and quiet and the eclectic music on my iPod. But on this flight, chatty I became.

It started when my companion turned to me and commented on the number of boarding passes I was holding. We laughed. I asked him where he was going and where he was coming from. He was on his way home to Nairobi from Norway where he had been for three months. He was Maasai, a tribe in Kenya. He was the director for a not-for-profit headquartered in Norway.

He asked where I traveled to and I told him Rwanda, for the Itafari Foundation. And he said, "What did you say?"

"I-ta-far-i,"

I repeated.

He looked at me and said his name was Ita!

I often sense significance on these long international flights: in where people are headed to, coming from, or doing. This one blew me away.

We laughed and began to talk of things that change the world. Passion for living a life which will bring success, comfort, and joy to yourself and others. A deep sense of commitment to making the world a better place through your talents, education, and focus. A sense of calling which makes no sense but must not be ignored.

Many of the people I meet who work to serve others come from a strong sense of faith and calling. You see them everywhere – men and women, young and old, who want to serve others. But especially, you see it at airports and on the plane. There is a nexus of possibility in these crossroads. There are old nuns, priests, Hassidic Jews, Muslims, doctors, teachers, Peace Corp volunteers, students with t-



shirts boldly proclaiming their faith and affiliation, middle-aged people from everywhere in the world, and others whom I cannot label. All of us are heading to a place that is foreign and different, yet that has somehow called to us. Different attitudes, different expectations, different focus: but all of us on some sort of personal mission. This is Ita:



Ita and I on our flight.

Raised in a Maasai tribe in the country of Kenya, he was the first member of his family to become highly educated. He received his undergrad and graduate degrees in India, and had stayed in India a number of years to start churches – nine of them! He is only 33 years old. And he is just beginning.

He has traveled the world, made friends with those whose lives have affected him, and he in turn has changed theirs. Not only is he a strong Christian man of faith, he is one who feels compassionate about serving others through his gifts and talents.

We talked of his concerns for those who have no faith. Of the practical issue of stopping female genitalia mutilation in cultures such as the Maasai and in greater

Africa. And of the challenges he faces in being a foreigner in so many foreign lands, of balancing his strong sense of duty to his family with this ability and desire to travel the world and share what he knows to help others. We talked of love and his fiancée, Rose, who he will be marrying in December in Kenya, and we talked of his dreams of starting businesses that utilize his talents and create a difference in the world.

We are unique. Each of us brings certain talents and vision to the world, and if we do not manifest our deepest goals and dreams, the world will never see them. No one else will do it better. As Ita spoke about what was in his way of accomplishing his goals and dreams, I stated that I believed only one thing would stop him: himself.

The media surrounds us with news that is mostly negative. The incredible talents of the ordinary are eclipsed by the drama of the ignorant and their manifested outcomes. Corruption. Deviance. Greed. Murder. Lack of integrity. Hate. War. Miscommunication. Malfeasance. Brutality. Violence.

None of those things, NONE of them, entered a conversation where two strangers focused on making a difference in their own unique way met by chance on an airplane. And of course there are no Las Vegas odds of people finding each other as Ita and I did that day. It is only opportunity, to be taken or missed, that exists.

The clearer you are on what you want, the more coincidence you will have in your life. I have never before met a man named Ita. Ita had never known the word Itafari. But we are both totally convinced that a new lifelong friendship has begun. A young African man, a middle-aged white American woman. Two people began as strangers and now are friends.

Ita supports and believes in my work. I see his greatness and reflect it back to him. He is stunned at our conversation and how so much of it confirmed his heart's desire – his innate sense of what he instinctually knew, in so many areas. Meeting him reminds me that God is absolutely in the smallest things, like the seat assignments on a largely unfilled plane that create the opportunity for two once-strangers, now friends, to find joy, companionship, and a singleness of purpose manifested in such different ways, through shared values and beliefs.



A man named Ita has begun my journey to Rwanda. On this, my fifth trip. It is a sign of significance for me. I never want to settle for mediocrity in my work. This rightness of this is manifest in such remarkable experiences. With such incredible people who are placed in my path, I will continue this work until it ceases to be extraordinary.

If you want to see the extraordinary in this world, shut off the television, put down the paper, and make a difference in your actions and attitudes, today. Step into what you believe with no shame. I promise you no one will stop you. Only you will put on the brakes.

Imagine that you look back from just two years forward. Itafari's co-founders – Bethe, Karen and I – as well as all those who support Itafari are stunned at what we have accomplished in just two years. It has brought me to this place of not doubting ever again that I can accomplish all that is truly important to me.

I celebrate and seek that sense of purpose in others. From my family, my clients, my friends, the people we serve in Rwanda, our donors, and from a man named Ita.

My best to you all,
Vicky

ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2007



THIRST FOR CHANGE

Safe drinking water is a major problem in Rwanda.

Everyone, regardless of age or infirmity, carries water. You see children eight years old carrying five- gallon yellow jerry cans to get water from a well. Water is life, and so many needlessly die from lack of safe drinking water.

The chance of me personally dying from this problem, or needing to carry five gallons of water for six kilometers, does not exist. We – myself and Adam Bacher, the photojournalist who has traveled here with me two weeks prior to prepare for the arrival of the Itafari Tour of Hope guests – can ask for amazi (water) in restaurants. And we can buy as much bottled water as necessary, because bottled water is so accessible and convenient in Rwanda.

These bottles, themselves, are yet another problem facing Rwanda. That is why Adam and I are filtering the majority of the water we drink rather than buying it in bottles.



Rwandan boys carry water jugs to fill up with clean water.

Itafari has partnered with Crooked Trails for the 2007 Tour of Hope. Crooked Trails is a non-profit, community-based travel organization helping people broaden their understanding of the planet and its diverse cultures through education, community development, and responsible travel. It was Chris MacKay, founder of Crooked Trails, who suggested we filter our own water. What a foreign concept to this non-camper! But after serious discussion with her, I agreed.

The impact of plastic on Rwanda's environment is devastating. The Rwandan government has banned the use of plastic bags in Rwanda. It is strongly suggested that you not bring them into the country (and by strongly I mean a sign at the airport politely suggests you bring no plastic bags into the country). But non-biodegradable water bottles are everywhere. They pollute the environment.

As a traveler, I could easily ignore the issues of pollution and poor water sources. Imagine going on a vacation to Florida, settling into your hotel, and a hurricane blows up the Gulf. You're inconveniently moved to an elementary school shelter, your vacation is "ruined," and you have a hassle getting out of the airport. Eventually you return home no worse for the wear, and certainly not needing to clean up from a disaster that was not yours. But if Florida had been your home, the aftermath for you would have been entirely different.

Similarly, it can be all too easy for travelers to Rwanda to experience an artificial sense that everything is fine in Rwanda...just a bit inconvenient.

The preconceived ideas we have as we travel or prepare to experience something new will change what the experience actually becomes. Novelist and philosopher Walker Percy described the phenomenon by which travelers measure their experience against expectations, finding, for instance, the Grand Canyon beautiful "by the degree to which the canyon conforms to the preformed complex." No sightseer, he claims, will ever be able to really see the canyon in the way of the explorer who first discovered it because the experience has been co-opted and packaged. We compound our dissociation by signing up for tours, following the guides, and busily snapping photographs, and we struggle against a nagging sense that something is missing.

I understand that sense of something missing and I am diligent to remove the feeling through experiences that are not comfortable or expected by me. I cannot deny that I am a 50-year-old traveler who prefers the comfort of a hot shower to



waking up in the middle of a jungle finding a large bug on me that I could never have imagined lived in this world. I don't see that changing anytime soon. But my environment of Rwanda deserves a fresh set of eyes, expectations, and experiences. I can let go of the western way of thinking and become more in tune with my environment.

I can filter my water.

In a week, the visitors from Portland will arrive for the Tour of Hope. I cannot wait to show them – and you, through this blog – a Rwanda that will exceed their expectations and amaze them at the strength and character of a people who experience daily challenges that we do not know in America. They – and you, I hope – will be changed forever and better for this knowledge.

We are here to make a difference. Itafari is doing its part.

In Kigali, it's easy to forget the seriousness of the water problem – and that the easy accessibility of bottled water is, in itself, a problem. But what we conveniently forget today will be tomorrow's heartache. As a world, we conveniently looked the other way when a terrible genocide broke out 13 years ago. We are conveniently looking away in Darfur and the Sudan as another tragedy unfolds.

Stephan Rechtschaffen said it best: "We...anticipate what's to come and ignore what's actually here."

Our coming to Rwanda is about making a different impact on this country. One that I would want if I were Rwandan. A "do NO harm" mentality...in fact, a "do GOOD" mentality.

Itafari is definitely doing good!

We're going to break ground on the Kigali Parents Secondary (High School) on this trip.

We will buy more baskets from Gahaya Links to sell at our Pay It Forward fundraising events.

We will visit the 120 children whose lives have been changed through our child sponsorship program. We will distribute goats to child-headed households to change their lives and the other children for whom they care.



And we will meet with the loan recipients from the microloan programs we support.

As my dear friend Joy, founder of Gahaya Links, always says: “Can you imagine?”

Rwanda is a country determined to overcome the label of the genocide of 1994. The government and its people are forward thinking. The past is not forgotten, but they are intent on a new future – one that honors those who died more by action than by grief.

You can make a difference with two things: money and a right attitude. The best impact is made when the two work in concert. Consider giving to our programs. Look at Adam’s blog for incredible pictures capturing the stories and spirit of this land.

And continue to stay tuned to more stories of significance from which you can take personal wisdom and change your own life.

Murebeho (goodbye in Kinyarwanda) for now,

Vicky

ON OCTOBER 5, 2007



HOW TO BUILD A SCHOOL: ITAFARI BY ITAFARI

You too can build itafari by itafari! Click here to sponsor a brick that will be engraved with your name.

When is a brick not just a brick? When it becomes a powerful symbol of possibility. When the word itafari spoken in Rwanda brings with it awareness: Of hope. Of strength. Of change.

When the Itafari Foundation began in August 2005, we hoped that the Kinyarwanda word for brick (itafari) would be an image that inspired the idea of opportunity – that placed a picture in people’s minds of what was lost, but also what could be gained. That one brick, one itafari, could do nothing. But together, we could help rebuild Rwanda itafari by itafari by itafari. We could help. We could partner. We could work alongside those who knew better than us what Rwanda needed – the people themselves.

As I travel through Rwanda, I speak of Itafari Foundation. When I introduce myself, “nitwa Vicky” (my name is Vicky), there is no recognition except that I am mzungu (white). But when I say I am a part of the Itafari Foundation, there is awareness, remembrance that they have heard of this Itafari Foundation.

And now we begin to find common ground. Not because I am known, but because Itafari is known. That is because our donors give to Itafari and I represent them and their intention to make a difference here in Rwanda.

Today was one of the best days I have ever had in Rwanda. And that’s saying something!

Today we had a ceremony for the ground breaking at Kigali Parents School for the High School that Itafari is helping to build. And what a ceremony it was! You know, we do not do justice to celebrating greatness in the U.S. In Rwanda, when you are honoring an organization, a new beginning, a success, there is a very formal process. And this process was part of what I took part in.

Kigali Parents Primary School began in 1995, one year after the genocide. Two teachers from Uganda whose parents had fled Rwanda in the late 1950s were



called to a land that was devastated. Though they had never lived in Rwanda themselves, these two young men wanted to help the people they met. The survivors. And they only knew how to do one thing: teach. They set up their first small school in a brothel where the landlord agreed to give them one of the rooms and started with six children – some of them, the children of the brothel's prostitutes. These prostitutes were desperate to feed their children, which was why they were willing to degrade themselves in this way.

Charles and Eugene began to teach. Soon they had more than 60 students crowded into that one room, different parts of a chalkboard separated to teach each grade of student.

And they persevered. And the children learned. And they grew their program. And soon took over more rooms in the brothel. Their dream of educating children blossomed. They acquired some land and slowly built the Kigali Parents Primary School (KPPS).

Today, 1500 children attend the highest academically rated elementary school in all of Rwanda! The school is simply amazing. The teachers and children demand excellence of one another. And all strive to serve to better their country and their families.

Itafari is honored to partner with them. Currently the Primary School goes through the sixth grade. After graduating sixth grade, all children in the country are required to take a national test. Kigali Parents School consistently has their students place first and in the top percentile of the nation!

The school is desks and chairs and a blackboard and students and teachers. The school is hope and possibility and greatness. And it is available to students regardless of the economic status or heritage. Because there is currently no Kigali Parents Secondary School (high school), the children often transfer to less academically rigorous schools and lose the advantage they have gained with their superior education.

At KPPS, the children arrive at 6:45am, work all morning, have about a 90-minute lunch, return to school and work until 5:00 pm. They are learning English, French, and Kinyarwanda. They are beautiful, well- behaved, smart kids. They wear a uniform that makes them all equal. You cannot tell a child who has a parent in the



Government Cabinet, from the child who is there on a scholarship. They are the future of Rwanda. And they need a rigorous high school education that prepares them for University.

At the ceremony, Itafari presented our first donation toward the project we have been working on for over a year: building the new school. The ceremony took place at the future site of the school itself – nearby, a huge bulldozer was ready to clear the land. The dream has begun.

The children danced and sang – they had even written a song for Itafari. The city and district officials thanked Itafari for partnering with Rwanda in caring for the children. Principal Charles thanked Itafari for helping them realize their dream. The parents of students were there to look on proudly at all they had accomplished and what was possible.

I cried. I was overwhelmed.

Do you ever work so hard to accomplish something that you don't stop to see what will happen when you begin to reach your goal? That is me and Itafari. As a Board, we are determined to build this school. Our donors hear our request and give. But not enough give specifically for the school.

We only have enough money to clear the land and level it. Next we must build the foundation of the entire school and then build S1 – Secondary 1 – seventh grade – for the KPPS who will be entering seventh grade in January 2008. We need about \$190,000 to have Kigali Parents Secondary School (KPSS) open. And then each additional set of classrooms for the next grade will be built. It's a wonderful way to build a school – as needed. Itafari by itafari by itafari.

Consider giving to this project. You can do so on the website. Every gift of \$75 will qualify you for one itafari (brick), which will be placed on the front of the building. We will be selling approximately 2,000 itafari...and the children will remember always that people all over the world believe in them.

The parents at Kigali Parents Primary School will also be participating in this fundraising. This is their school. Their children. But they need our help.



ITAFARI COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET

Give on the website or send us a check. Buy amatafari (many bricks)! I will get back with you when I return to get the information on how you would like your name written on your itafari. Can you imagine: building a school itafari by itafari by Itafari. - **ON OCTOBER 9, 2007**



A woman helping to build KPPS.

Kigali Parents Primary School
being built.



WHEN A CHILD IS NO LONGER A CHILD

Parents the world over want the best for their children. Depending on the culture and opportunities, a child can have the weight of the world on his or her shoulders or conversely, a trouble-free existence where every need is cared for without the child's awareness.

In Rwanda, both extremes are evident. But the latter is more prevalent than the former. Children are becoming parents to their siblings or themselves, too often.

Let me introduce you to two groups of children being tended to, who could all too easily fall through the cracks: Ex child-combatants and child-headed households. Itafari is helping them both.

Ex child-combatants. Ex child-combatants are children who are being brought back to Rwanda from the Congo. Child soldiers are children aged 7 to 16 years old who have known the horrors and atrocities of war. They have participated in killing, maiming, or raping. They are taken from their families, used by the Congolese who commit acts of terror, and are easily persuaded to commit acts they do not understand. And they are expendable. Over 2600 children have been documented as being used in the war in the Congo.

Many have escaped back to Rwanda. And Rwanda is not ignoring the issue or the trauma these children have suffered.

I visited the rehabilitation site where these children live for three months. This rehabilitation center is funded through the Rwanda demobilization and Reintegration Program (RDRP). With support from its development partners, the center has diligently responded to the need for these children to be repatriated, rehabilitated, reunited with their families and reintegrated into main stream society, thus restoring their right to enjoy their childhood and grow up into responsible citizens. They are seen by doctors, social workers, councilors, and therapists and given much care and love so that they can reintegrate into society.

There were 36 children there the day we visited. The youngest was 7 years old. They look a little tough, until you begin to interact with them.



They become boys once more when they laugh, when they smile at you. When you are able to get past your differences. Me a white woman. Them, African boys. But when I become a Mama, and I see them like sons, we are the same. I had a funny personal experience there. I was reminded of my stepsons, who were 12, 14, and 16 when I married John. They too were highly skeptical of me when we first met. But I had chosen their father to marry, and so I had chosen them. The same feeling came over me as I looked at these boys who were strangers to me. I saw them as children who just needed to heal from their pain. We choose to help Rwanda, and so we choose them.

In all of my previous trips to Rwanda I had never heard of the RDRP! Truly, so much greatness happens silently with so few to notice. And greatness is happening here. In miraculous ways, these boys are healing!

The team at the center finds their families through simple yet successful ways. They talk with the children and see if they can remember a town or village, can they describe a church or building, do they know of a landmark, such as a tree? And in a sleuthing manner that would put the world's greatest detectives to shame, they reunite these boys with their families. They begin to teach them in schools, they let them talk through their experiences. And for the first time, many of them get to be children, to play. They are safe, and protected, and not expected to ever hurt anyone again or need to protect themselves. The communities where they will eventually go to live are sensitized to their situation to help integrate them successfully into the communities. And healing begins.

Why does this happen that children can be pawns in war? I rarely know the why, but I can begin to answer the "now what". We are incorporating some of the child ex-combatants into our existing child-headed cooperatives and our goat program. Read on to find out more.

Child-headed cooperatives. In Rwanda, children are parenting children. Think of your favorite 12- to 16- year-old. They have younger siblings. Can you imagine this 12- to 16-year-old child being fully and completely responsible for his or her younger brothers and sisters? Providing food, shelter, school fees, medical care, emotional support, and all other needs?

In short, being the parent.



That is the fate of thousands and thousands of children in Rwanda. Their parents have passed away during the genocide, fell ill and died, or disappeared. Again, I can't answer the why of this issue, but I can provide the "now what".

Itafari's "now what" for these children is our goat program. We have formed a partnership with ASSIST Rwanda, a local not-for-profit, and RARDA, the government program for animal husbandry. We are raising a new breed of goat, crossing Rwanda nanny goats with South African Boer billygoats. These stronger, more disease-resistant goats will be given to child-headed household cooperatives that will breed them to make a living so that they can care for their families.

Together, we do more. We will be incorporating some of the child ex-combatants into our existing child cooperatives. With your assistance, Itafari will buy more goats, expand the program, change lives, and make the children smile once more.

For now, for Itafari, the answer is the simple goat – or ihene, in Kinyarwanda. We sell goats which are given to these child-headed households through cooperatives of 10 children each, 35 cooperatives to start. Together, the children will begin with one billy goat provided by RARDA and 15 nanny goats provided by Itafari. ASSIST Rwanda will manage and monitor the program. The children will care for these goats, breed more goats, and sell the offspring as they become available. They will also be required to give back some of the offspring to start more child-headed household cooperatives.

Simple. Effective. Empowering. Life changing. That is Itafari. That is a goat.

During my trip to Rwanda, Itafari presented 15 goats to a child cooperative who call themselves THE POWER OF LOVE. Their stories of why they qualify to be in our cooperatives are heart-wrenching.

We made our presentation at the RARDA/Itafari/ASSIST demonstration farm. The district in Nyagatare where the farm is located generously donated the land for that farm; the goats that were presented there will be distributed out to cooperatives around the country. In attendance at the Itafari presentation were many government officials, representatives from each of our organizations, (RARDA/Itafari/ASSIST), curious onlookers, and the Power of Love Cooperative.



One young boy really caught my attention. He was 12, small for his age, very poor, tough, and looked defiant and angry. No smiles, no joy.

He was the one who I wanted to reach.

When I was told his name and age, I said, “He is strong.” He acknowledged I was right. And then I said, “It shows.” Just a glimmer of interest in his part. We got to present goats, and I chose him to present with a goat. She was a handsome nanny! And as we both held her front legs, something inside him appeared to soften. And then he began to smile. What a beautiful smile – because now he was a boy again. And then he wouldn’t stop smiling! Nor could I.

A simple goat. A child needing to be seen. It all comes together through the generosity of donors like you who may never see the beneficiary of their kindness. And in that anonymous act of giving, the world of a child is changed.

What we can do. Itafari continues to sell goats to our donors for \$25 each. A goat you purchase will go to one of these child cooperatives – that is, to a child whose parent is dead or unable to provide any care, or to an ex-combatant child who has never known a childhood of any normalcy but now sees a chance. To a child who longs to know if they truly matter.

Through Itafari, and so many good organizations in Rwanda, these children have hope.

If you’d like to make a significant difference with less money than you spend on one dinner in a restaurant, consider giving a gift of a goat, \$25, through Itafari. You can give it in honor of a loved one, in memory of someone you hold dear, as a gift for the animal lovers in your life, or just because it is so simple to change a life through a goat.

When is a child no longer a child? When no one sees them. Help us see the children of Rwanda in a powerful way. Send a check for \$25 or more for goats to:

Itafari Foundation

27 El Greco

Lake Oswego, OR 97035



Or you can give online through our secure website, <http://itafari.org>. In any case, thank you for remembering the children. In your thoughts and prayers or through financial giving.

To read more about Itafari, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, please go to: <http://itafari.org>.

To go directly to photojournalist Adam Bacher's blog where pictures of the October 2007 Itafari Tour of Hope in Rwanda are posted, please visit: <http://bachersblog.com>.

And please, never hesitate to write me with any questions.

OCTOBER 20, 2007



A young girl with a goat, (or ihene, in Kinyarwanda).

ITAFARI GIVING CHALLENGE

Dear Friends, Clients and Colleagues,

I need your help! Until January 31st, Parade Magazine, in partnership with Network for Good, is sponsoring America's Giving Challenge. Parade Magazine will be donating eight \$50,000 grants to the top charities that America (YOU) donate. All we need is donors. The eight top charities with the most donors, not necessarily the top dollar amount, will receive an additional \$50,000 to support their cause.

What's our cause?

Although Itafari supports child sponsorships, micro loans, and brick & goat purchases, our main goal for this special opportunity is to raise enough money to help build a high school for less than \$500,000 for 1,500 students.

What can you do?

1. Make a donation by following this link:

<http://www.networkforgood.org>

2. Share this email to inform and inspire others to also make a difference What does this mean?

Your gift of any size will make an extraordinary difference. While we don't have much time for this very unique opportunity (January 31st deadline), I thank you in advance for your consideration. The children of Rwanda will remember you for the rest of their lives. If you have any questions, please call me at 503- 636-3692 or send an email to vicky@itafari.org.

Murakoze (thank you!),

Vicky Trabosh Board President Itafari Foundation 503-636-3692

ON JANUARY 23, 2008



ITAFARI GIVING CHALLENGE: ENDS SOON!

You still have a chance to help!! We only have until this Friday, January 31st, to take part in the Parade Magazine Challenge. This magazine is sponsoring America's Giving Challenge and will be donating eight \$50,000 grants to the top charities that are donated to. The eight top charities with the most donors, NOT the most dollar amount, will receive an additional \$50,000 to support their cause.

If everyone donated as little as \$10, we have a chance to make one of the eight top spots. We can't do this alone, so if you know of anyone that would be interested in supporting our cause and help raise an additional \$50,000, please forward this email on.

Be sure to watch our inspiring video explaining what this money will be used for by clicking the button to the left or:

<http://www.networkforgood.org/pca/Badge.aspx?badgeld=109944>

A big THANK YOU to those that have already participated. If you have any questions, please call me at 503-636-3692 or send an email to vicky@itafari.org.

Murakoze (thank you!),

Vicky Trabosh Board President Itafari Foundation 503-636-3692

ON JANUARY 28, 2008



OBSTACLES

It is good to be back in Rwanda. And it only took 53 hours to get here! New record for me. A flight delay at Washington DC Dulles meant that it took an EXTRA 24 hours to reach Kigali. But though I arrived a day late, it was to the smiling faces of those I know better than some of my friends in the US.

Together we are so hopeful of what the next three weeks will bring. In spite of obstacles.

The obstacles of a language barrier; cultural differences; life experiences; the US financial crisis; overwhelming need, limited time to complete tasks while here; multiply priorities and juggling of meetings. And yet. It is Rwanda – a place where people choose not to be identified by the genocide but by the strength and resilience of its people.

For me, and those who have come to know and believe that an ordinary person can make an extraordinary difference, the obstacles are easily outweighed by the results of what we have done. By what we choose to believe is possible.

In the short term, I believed that my two suitcases of 60+ pounds each filled with gifts and items for our 171 sponsored children and others would arrive in tact and on time. (check) That a trip of 53 hours could be an adventure which would allow me to connect with fellow travelers from around the world equally dismayed but also on their own journeys and willing to find hope even in challenging conditions. (check) That laughter and moments of kindness are everywhere even in difficult circumstances. (check) That my Kinyarwanda could comfort a 71 year old Rwandan Mama at Dulles airport who spoke less English than I speak Kinyarwanda (not easily done) – and yet reaching out to her gave us both a moment in time where a true friendship was born.(check)

In the long term, that in just over three years thousands of lives have been affected by the donors of Itafari.(check) Literally, lives of children have been saved and improved through the programs that Itafari serves.(check) Many of today's children will become future leaders of this country and remember the part Itafari played in their journey to their own personal greatness (future check) That as I watch our financial crisis unfolding and politicians and a public unsure of



what our future holds, I know it will be ok and made better by our efforts when we seek to improve the circumstances of those less fortunate. (resounding check)

This is a very rough period for America. And yet. We should be defined not by our present circumstances but by the strength and resilience of the American people. We can make a difference in spite of the present moment or obstacle.

That is what I intend to do here on behalf of Itafari and our donors. Make a difference – for the donor, the beneficiary, and the programs we support. Reach out to people asking for a hand – not a handout. And bring back the stories of success and accomplishment that Itafari has participated in through the generous donation of people who give in spite of their obstacles. Thank you to those who have given from my last email. It doesn't take a lot to make a difference in Rwanda. \$100 or any amount goes a tremendous way. And an act of kindness and generosity to others is returned to you tenfold.

Please write to me with any questions. I'm happy to respond personally – it may take a bit due to the time difference. (NINE HOURS AHEAD OF PST) Unless of course you write in the next day or so, jet lag may have me up and responding in the wee hours as my body clock argues that it is NOT time to sleep but indeed time to work! (kind of like now). I'm writing this at midnight on 30 September because I'm UP! Will be posted tomorrow.

In the meantime, remember what we who work through Itafari always say and believe: Do what you

can. Where you are. With what you have. In the time you have left.

And that is enough. Murakoze cyane again for your support. You create hope, belief that a stranger's kindness can change a life, joy in the people you generously give to, and permanently change lives through the opportunity provided by you.

And that's a good day, no matter the obstacles. Vicky Trabosh
vicky@victoriatrabosh.com

ON FEBRUARY 1, 2008



RWANDA PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION & ARTIST RECEPTION



Rwanda – Return to Peace

World Forestry Center 4033 SW Canyon Rd Portland OR 97221 May 26th to

September 1st

Artist Reception

June 19th, 5:30 – 8:00 pm

Wine and appetizers served

An exhibit of photographs will be on display this summer, showing the recovery of the African country of Rwanda from the 1994 genocide, in which one million people were killed over the course of one-hundred days.

This work is the result of a month long trip to Rwanda in October 2007, part of a partnership between Portland photographer, Adam Bacher, and the Oregon-based Itafari Foundation. Bacher spent the month documenting the people of Rwanda, and Itafari's work on their behalf.

Areas Bacher photographed include:

“A day in the Life,” following two Rwandan children from a poverty-stricken family: sunrise to sunset. A child soldier rehabilitation facility for children forced to fight with Militias based in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Rwanda's Genocide Memorials and testimony of survivors.



The Millennium Village at Mayange, one of twelve impoverished communities in Africa designated for assistance to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

A demonstration goat farm setting up cooperatives with orphans and child-headed households, enabling them to raise and sell their own goats.

Endangered Mountain Gorillas.

Photographs and stories of Bacher's trip to Rwanda are posted online.

ON JUNE 18, 2008



TRIP TO RWANDA MAKES SIXTH VISIT – FOLLOW THE JOURNEY

In just a few days, I leave for my sixth trip to Rwanda in just over three years. My first trip was with World Vision. From that trip came the idea of forming our own foundation which could work with organizations in Rwanda searching for international partners to further their mission and goals of helping their own people.

As many of you know, our initial goal when we began was to raise \$50,000 in our first year. We did not accomplish that goal. We raised \$110,000! Through the efforts of ordinary men, women and school children in the United States, we have raised over \$225,000 in just over 3 years!

Our programs cover the following areas:

- Child Sponsorship
- Microfinance
- Goats for Child Headed Households
- Building the Kigali Parents Secondary (High) School
- Entrepreneurship through selling the beautiful handmade baskets of Rwanda at our pay it forward events

None of the funds raised are used to fund my expenses or cost of these trips. Donations are designated for individual programs and needs. During my trips I monitor the programs, meet with the directors of the organizations with whom we partner, meet with the 160 children who now are sponsored by our generous donors. I'll also look to further our understanding of what is needed and necessary, and look at ways you the donors can make an extraordinary difference in a country where the need is great and the determination to succeed is greater.

Follow my blog for interesting, inspirational and uplifting messages. Donate. Buy a goat for \$25 (we have beautiful certificates to send for gifts); buy an itafari (BRICK) for \$75 which will be inscribed with your name and placed in the school on the wall or courtyard; fund a microloan for someone in Rwanda looking for a hand, not a handout. Major gifts can make a major difference and will be used wisely in conjunction with your wishes.



When I return, consider holding a Pay It Forward event where you bring a group of friends into your home and we come and present the incredible story of a country that will not be defined by its genocide but by the strength and resilience of its people.

Margaret Mead said it best:” Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. “

I’ll send infrequent messages during the 26 days while I’m away. I leave it to you to check the website, go the blog, and share this with your friends. Please email me directly; I’ll respond from Rwanda. Together, we are working to rebuild the country of Rwanda itafari (brick) by itafari (brick) by itafari (brick). I look forward to sharing this journey with you.

I’ll return to the U.S. on 22 October with new ideas, new inspiration and new resolve. My best to you always.

Murakoze cyane (thank you so much),

Vicky Trabosh
President and Co-Founder Itafari Foundation

ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2008



HUNGRY TO HELP

I have never worked in a place where I am as equally passionate about the friendships I have formed and the work I do.

That is Rwanda: there is a passion; an intensity; a hope in people that I rarely experience on a daily basis as I do every time I am here. I arrived on Tuesday. It is now Sunday and everything is falling into place.

Sara Oberdorf arrived on Wednesday from London. She walked off the plane and I liked her immediately. She comes to all the meetings and observes and learns about Itafari and our work. She connects so easily with everyone she meets. It is a true pleasure getting to know her. She enhances this experience for me even more and her insight is invaluable.

We met with RARDA (handles livestock issues within the government) to work on our partnership for our ihene (goat) project for Child Headed Household (CHH) cooperatives.

Great news: more S. African Billy Goats on the way! We talked about possibilities. That one day our CHH cooperatives could export their high end goat meat to markets around the world. And will call the meat RIA (RARDA/ITAFARI/ASSIST) after the three organizations that are making this project possible. RIA goat meat will be exported to the best restaurants in the world: The children of Rwanda will be the catalysts, the inspiration; the beneficiary. But that's down the road: part of the bigger picture. And the bigger picture includes empowerment, inspiration, perspiration and results.



Photo caption: Jean-Paul a 21-year-old CHH showing off his new ihene enclosure, roof to be added soon.

Hungry to help children who will succeed with our support? To buy goats, go to the donate section of the website or mail a check to the address listed on the itafari.org website.

Making a difference is always possible. - ON OCTOBER 5, 2008



Boy with goat (or ihene, in Kinyarwanda)

WHERE HOPE IS A CONSTANT

In a world gone slightly mad I find a constant that does not change: hope and healing. Being in Rwanda during the world's financial crisis is a bit comforting. The worries and fears that are riveting the world, are less so in my work in Rwanda. It's like being on a vacation, or when I was at University. It's buffered. And that is not a bad thing. Because in spite of the problems which will affect me financially and personally, good work is going on. The good work of our donors is continuing. Let me tell you a story to illustrate my point:

A CAMP – A FIRE – A PURPOSE

Last year I visited the ex-child combatants (see blog dated October 20 2007 – When a Child is No Longer a Child). In it I described the problem of children (7-16) years old being forced to become soldiers in the Congo along the border of Rwanda. Can you imagine? But it's not necessary to try. Because it is not about the atrocity of war or the exploitation of children. It is about the hope they have, the healing that is taking place, and the reintegration of these boy soldiers back into their communities. It is about the belief that the past is not the future.

Last year I vowed to return to the camp of healing and prepare a meal for the children. And late last week that vow became a reality. Sara Oberdorf and I left Kigali with 10kg (22 pounds) of a combination of minced ihene (ground goat) and minced beef. 10 kg of spaghetti; 6 cans of tomato paste; 50 kg of tomato sauce; vegetables; spices carried from the US; AND oranges, candy, cheese, eggs, bread, cheese graters, ladles, spaghetti tongs, ice chest, and enough miscellaneous items to insure our campfire meal of spaghetti and meatballs would be a raging success!

Five of the children were chosen to be aspiring chefs for the day. We began by discussing hygiene and using the kitchen disinfectant spray to clean our hands and our work area. That was a big hit. Sara who is a US scientist living in London studying infectious diseases discussed unseen bacteria and the need to keep ourselves and all work areas spotless. The children were focused and learning.

Did I mention this is taking place in a large shelter with only a table, some huge pots and a raging smoky fire in the background?



After the cleanliness lesson we began our mise-en-place of our ingredients. Then the boys began to carefully chop the vegetables, pore the sauce into the HUGE pots, prepare the meatballs, begin to fry them on another raging fire and stir like crazy because MAMA Itafari (yours truly) was giving them multiply warnings NOT to burn anything. This is all taking place on wet wood with water oozing out the ends of the firewood causing enough smoke to can and smoke all the salmon in Oregon!



As we were literally in the ‘thick’ of it, all smoky, all working hard, all anticipating a great meal, we worked as a team for 4 hours. The meatballs were sticking to the bottom of the pan and so I made the executive chef’s decision to turn the sauce into a bolognese and prayed the eggs, bread, cheese, etc., of the meatballs would be delicious in this new recipe. Of course there is also the issue of cooking 22 pounds of spaghetti - that was a challenge.



I will never again mind cooking anything on my gas stove with controllable heat...

As we progressed, the miraculous happened: a meal began to emerge! Five large baguettes were cut. These huge pots were carried to the area where 42 boys + staff + curious onlookers awaited. (the camp chef, an older wiser man was a bit perplexed by these activities in HIS kitchen – a lot of head shaking and laughing on his part). We served huge portions to the kids.



Such an unexpected meal – and they ate a lot – once the first one came back for seconds, a great portion of the kids followed suit! My heart was made glad! Then they danced. As only they can dance. With joy. With abandon. With grace and beauty. It was their way of showing their appreciation.



Our Jr. Chefs couldn't believe what they called our 'sacrifice'. But it of course was no sacrifice but an honor to serve them. Food heals. Love heals. And there was a lot of love in this food. We told them about the goat program we will establish in

their camp that that will be incorporated into our existing program. To teach them a skill so that when they leave the camp, those who are interested in animal farming will have a marketable skill and will be able to incorporated them into our existing child cooperatives.

MAMA Itafari made too much sauce but just about the right amount of spaghetti. The meal was ended with fresh oranges and candy. And many cheers of thanks. As we left, I was concerned that our additional sauce would go to waste (no refrigeration at the camp). But Ally the Director of the camp called later and said they pored the remaining sauce over the beans and rice (their usual fare) that evening for dinner and the boys were ecstatic. And he laughed and said they couldn't quit dancing.

How hard was that? Not at all. Just challenging. But comparatively speaking, to their life and challenge, it was nothing. And perspective is everything.

Thanks to Jo Smith who accompanied me last year on the Tour of Hope and gave generously for this meal. The future does belong to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams. And the children are always a wonderful reminder of how little it takes to make a great difference in the world.

How little is little? \$25 will buy one goat (which will not be minced!) to give to a child in one of our cooperatives. Don't resist the urge to make a difference. Go to Itafari.org and donate.

Murakoze and Bon appetit!

ON OCTOBER 14, 2008



PARTY WITH A PURPOSE

Have you ever wanted to hold a party for 140 children? In a foreign country? With children who speak little English but desperately want to believe in you and how you can help them?

Then come to Rwanda and meet our sponsored children! Children of little to no resources, often orphaned, desirous of a better life and willing to trust you will keep your word and support them.

When we began our child sponsorship program just over 2 years ago, I hoped we could find 25 people willing to sponsor a child for \$25/mo for 12 months.

In over two years we have NOT found just 25 people, WE HAVE FOUND OVER 170! People are so generous – and have committed to this project. Not all can continue after one year but we have an extremely high retention rate of donors.

Some of the children's stories are heartbreaking – some breathtaking – all deeply affected by the generosity of a stranger.

The report cards, letters, words of wisdom shared by the donors and the money are all part of the ability to save and change lives. And then there's the party! Who doesn't love to party!! ??



The air was electric as Sara and I were joined by Lauren, an American who I met while on my 53-hour trek from Portland to Rwanda. After greeting the kids, we introduced Sara and Lauren.



We sang the wildly popular “some sailors went to the sea sea sea” song (with hand motions) interviewed many of the children to send back personal messages, gave some of the children gifts sent with me by their sponsors (including a bike promised a year ago for good grades –J. Paul almost cried!) fed them incredibly large plates of food, talked with them about writing to their sponsors and handed out a little bag of goodies which included toothbrushes, pens from Umpqua Bank, pencils, little toys, candy and TWIZZLERS (red licorice.)

The kids had never seen licorice and had no idea what to do with it until I popped a piece into my mouth. Enough said!

We also played the Itafari game: Lauren or Sara stood with their back to the kids and the kids chose one side of the room or the other to guess which hand she would raise. Until we got down to two kids and the winner would get a gift.

LIKE THE EVER POPULAR WHOOPIE CUSHION!! The party took seven hours, all of our energy and yet we walked away knowing that to honor these children was to honor all children. That a party whose purpose was to bring joy and laughter was a significant way to spend the day. And that our efforts today will help change the face of Rwanda in the future.





We don't have the children who need sponsors shown on the website. We bring the books with their pictures and stories to our Pay it Forward events.

If you're interested in sponsoring a child and can commit to \$25/mo for 12 months, please contact me.

Or hold an event for Itafari. A Pay It Forward. Another party with a purpose. We come to you and are happy to travel – just talk to us and tell us what you'd like to do.

To our child sponsors: this party was your party.

Truly your heart would burst with joy at what you have given to them. For the children I say murakoze cyane cyane!



• ON OCTOBER 17, 2008

RESTORING RWANDA – NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY EVENT **NOVEMBER 7TH**

College Students to Host Banquet Fundraiser Event for Rwanda at Hyatt Regency in Bellevue Kirkland, WA

On November 7th at the Hyatt Regency Hotel's Grand Ballroom in Bellevue, a group of college students from a small liberal arts school in Kirkland will host Restoring Rwanda, an Itafari Foundation pay-it-forward fundraiser event. The students were given 10 weeks to plan and execute the event, and, in partnership with the Itafari Foundation, are well on their way to pulling it off.

The college students chose to partner with the Itafari Foundation because of its enthusiastic concern for and skill in meeting identified needs of the people of Rwanda. Itafari is a not-for-profit founded by Victoria Trabosh, of Portland, Oregon, to help the people of Rwanda rebuild their country by supporting widows and orphans of the genocide through education, entrepreneurial financing and training, child sponsorship, goat-rearing programs, and school construction.

As a class project, the students decided to put together Restoring Rwanda, an elegant, banquet-style fundraiser to help raise money for the foundation's efforts. Currently the students have booked the Grand Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Bellevue and planned an evening meal, various speakers (including Mrs. Trabosh), and silent auction for 150 donors. The doors open at 5:30pm and the event will begin at 6pm on November 7th, 2008. Next, the students will focus on ticket sales and securing corporate sponsorships. They have 4 weeks left.

For additional information regarding Restoring Rwanda, please contact Stephanie Tell at stephanie.tell06@northwestu.edu or Andrew Jenkins at andrew.jenkins07@northwestu.edu. For additional information regarding the Itafari Foundation, please visit www.italafari.org. To secure tickets for Restoring Rwanda, please visit www.iamincorp.com/italafari.

ON OCTOBER 28, 2008



CHRISTMAS GIFTS: GOATS/BASKETS/BRICKS! PURCHASE ON DEC 6TH,7TH AND DEC 12TH

There is never a better time to make a difference than now. While times are difficult one constant remains: making a difference in the life of a child never ceases to be important.

Many of you have purchased goats and bricks online as gifts. We send you or your loved one a beautiful certificate for the holidays, any occasion or 'just because'.

But buying baskets usually only happens at our Pay It Forward Events. We have an agreement with Gahaya Links not to sell our baskets online so that Macy's, who does an incredible job supporting the thousands of women, can take the opportunity for sales on their website.

BUT I HAVE SOME GREAT NEWS IF YOU'RE IN PORTLAND!!! 2 OPPORTUNITIES TO BUY OUR BASKETS FOR THE HOLIDAYS!



#1 SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6TH AND 7TH 10AM – 5PM at the Mt. Park Recreation Center in Lake Oswego. ADDRESS: 2 Mt. Jefferson Terrace – Lake Oswego, OR 97035 phone:503-635-3561

HOLIDAY BAZAAR OFFERS LOCAL SHOPPING OPPORTUNITIES

On Saturday and Sunday, December 6-7, from 10 am to 5 pm Mountain Park will be holding its annual Holiday Bazaar at the

clubhouse. This two-day annual bazaar offers holiday shopping, unique gifts, and original art from over 30 crafters, artisans, and local businesses – many of them Mt. Park residents.

This is a great opportunity to do your holiday shopping and find the perfect gift for the hard-to-buy-for person in your life. And while you're out shopping be sure to swing down to the West End building on Kruse Way where Lake Oswego will be holding their annual Holiday Market. The Holiday Market will be open the same hours as the Mt. Park Bazaar. For more information, please call 503-635- 3561.

#2 FRIDAY DECEMBER 12TH, 5:30-8:30PM – ADDRESS: 1225 SE Grand Avenue Portland, OR 97214 phone: 503-885- 8211

CALIFORNIA CLOSETS HOSTS FUNDRAISER FOR ITAFARI!

Judy Romano, Owner, has generously offered this stunning space for an event for Itafari! We'll have goat certificates, brick certificates and many beautiful baskets. Music, drinks and goodies too – a party with a purpose!

AT BOTH EVENTS WE'LL TAKE VISA, MASTERCARD, AMEX, CASH AND CHECKS. Buy gifts that make a difference, change lives and give gifts that are truly beautiful and the finest quality I've seen anywhere in Rwanda. AND get a tax deduction. Truly, it doesn't get any better than this!

Don't hesitate to contact me with any questions and I hope you have a wonderful holiday! If you can't make the events, go online to purchase gift certificates for goats and bricks at <http://itafari.org/donate>

Vicky Trabosh, President Itafari Foundation 503-636-3692 – vicky@itafari.org

ON DECEMBER 1, 2008



ALAMEDA FLORAL HOSTS ITAFARI EVENT FEBRUARY 4TH!

1st Public Event in 2009!

Many of you know that opportunities to buy our baskets usually only happen at our Pay-It-Forward Events. We have an agreement with Gahaya Links not to sell our baskets online so that Macy's, who does an incredible job supporting the thousands of women, can take the opportunity for sales on their website.

WELL, HERE'S PORTLAND AREA'S OPPORTUNITY TO BUY OUR BASKETS!



Debra Brocato, Owner of Alameda Floral
HOSTS FUNDRAISER FOR ITAFARI!
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4th, 4:00 – 6:00 PM

Please Stop By!

ADDRESS: PacWest Center Building
1211 SW 5th Avenue, Portland OR 97204 Phone: (503) 288-6149

Debra has generously offered her beautiful store for an Itafari event! We'll have Goat certificates, Brick certificates and many beautiful baskets, some that are one-of-a-kind. Music, drinks and goodies too – a party with a purpose!

WE ACCEPT VISA, MASTERCARD, AMEX, CASH AND CHECKS. Buy gifts that make a difference, change lives and give gifts that are truly beautiful and the finest quality I've seen anywhere in Rwanda. AND get a tax deduction! Truly, it doesn't get any better than this!

ON JANUARY 19, 2009



NEVER EVER EVER EVER EVER GIVE UP

When the stock market went wild in the world last September, I was in a hotel room in Kigali. What little access I had to TV gave me dire predictions of an international financial meltdown. Fifteen minutes, twice a day, from CNN World and the BBC was more than enough news a year ago.

A year later, I wait to return to Rwanda. Indeed, some of those dire predictions have certainly come true. But others have not. Life goes on. Not as we thought it would and for many of us our future may be different than the one we envisioned. But I know that we must continue to do the right things right. We must continue to choose to make a difference in the world. And those who are so much less able to bear the changes continue to need our assistance. And NOTHING does more to buoy my spirit then when I have the opportunity to make a difference in the world.

Itafari has given so many of you that same opportunity. And I'm asking you to support us once more.



Itafari just celebrated its 4th birthday! And our work has just begun.

Like any four-year-old, we are learning our way, struggling to do things that maybe a bigger kid (foundation) would only have the courage to try, and finding that our efforts are working – but not as quickly as we would

have hoped.

In spite of all the challenges, we continue. So many of you continue to support Itafari. THANK YOU again for all you do.



Our challenge now is to finish our commitment of \$250,000 towards building the Kigali Parents Secondary School. An amazing school that will support the Kigali Parents Primary School (KPPS). KPPS has consistently had the highest scores in the country for their children in the national tests. The highest. And the school is open to all children, regardless of race or ethnicity. A school we are proud to partner with.

And so what better way to build this school than brick (itafari) by brick (itafari).

The government recently required that all buildings be complete before they can be occupied. (we were going to build the school in phases). Our goal is to open the school



for the January 2010 term. The building has begun! You can see the pictures on the website under VIRTUAL FUNDRAISER or on the presentation that's also on that same page on the website.

ITAFARI COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET

MY REQUEST:

BUY A BRICK FOR \$75 – your name will be placed on it and in the school. It's the perfect symbol of the Itafari Foundation and will change the life of a child forever. Forever. \$75.

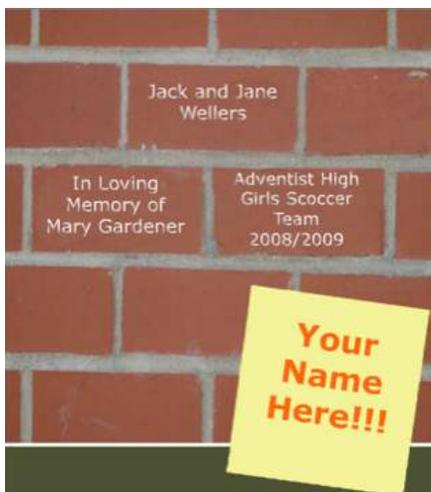
LEARN ABOUT how the Itafari Foundation is helping to build hope in a country

MAKE A DONATION OF ANY AMOUNT – \$75 may be more than you can afford. If so, please give what you can. You may also want to give a larger amount. Naming opportunities are available for gifts over \$10,000 and other specific amounts can also be designated and acknowledged in the school. Let's talk about your dreams and the legacy you'd like to leave.

Share this blog with others...friends, loved ones, co-workers.

JOIN US – VIRTUALLY – this weekend, Friday – Sunday, September 25 – 27 for a Fundraiser to complete the building project of the Kigali Parents Secondary School.

A unique and personal gift. An incredible remembrance of a loved one. A statement that you believe in the power of education. A reminder to yourself that anything we do, large or small, changes the world.



ITAFARI COMMEMORATIVE BOOKLET

You can donate online at the website, call me, or send your check to:

Itafari Foundation
27 El Greco
Lake Oswego, OR 97035
503.636.3692

Your gift is 100% tax deductible. We will give you a beautiful personalized gift certificate. And you know that this brick, this itafari, is a sign for you and the children of Rwanda that we must never ever ever ever ever give up.

I hope to be back in Rwanda in January or February to see what we have accomplished together. Itafari by itafari by itafari. Warmly, Vicky

ON SEPTEMBER 23, 2009



ITAFARI FOUNDATION'S VERSION OF A HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER



Dear Friends of Itafari Foundation,

Whatever memories you choose to create during the holidays, consider making a special gift to the Itafari Foundation. In Rwanda we are having a Christmas party for 211 children. Not all are sponsored yet, (\$25/month), but all are welcome to attend a party at year's end. This party will be for one purpose only: to celebrate with the children. A party. With food. And a gift. Each of the 211 children will share a special meal and receive a gift of a foam mattress – so they no longer have to sleep on the ground.

The cost of this party? \$40 per child. And we need your help. Many of our child sponsors have given an additional one time \$40 gift. But not all are able to participate. And we've even lost some annual sponsors of our children. Yet Itafari continues to support these children every month, regardless of our sponsor's ability to pay.

Can you help us close the gap? Can you give \$40 or any other amount to help us help the children of Rwanda? We are in need of approximately \$4,000 to complete this year's giving for the children and the party. WE HAVE AN ANONYMOUS DONOR WHO WILL MATCH THE FIRST \$2,000. Will you be one of those who can make a difference? It's been another amazing year of making a difference. And by giving, you know you receive far more than the satisfaction that you helped another. You are changing lives. And we at the Itafari Foundation thank you for considering us in your yearend giving. Read the "Christmas Letter" from our friends in Rwanda to learn more about the



difference your donations are making. Please donate \$40 or any amount (no amount is too small) and help another's celebration be a little brighter. Contact me directly at vicky@itafari.org or call me at 503-636-3692. You can also donate online, or send a check to the Itafari Foundation. 100% of your donation is tax deductible.

From all of us at Itafari Foundation to you and yours, may you experience a wonderful and blessed holiday.

Warmly,
Vicky
Co-founder and President, Itafari Foundation

Trabosh

PS: IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR GOATS AND BRICKS WE ALSO HAVE THOSE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE WEBSITE OR THE OFFICE. GOATS AT (\$25) MAKE A WONDERFUL GIFT WITH A BEAUTIFUL CERTIFICATE OR A BRICK WHICH WILL BE PLACED IN THE HIGH SCHOOL IN RWANDA (\$75) WITH YOUR NAME OR THE NAME OF A LOVED ONE!



Go online to purchase gift certificates for Bricks, Goats, Micro-Loans or Where Needed Most

<http://www.itafari.org/donate>

WE ACCEPT VISA, MASTERCARD, AMEX, CASH AND CHECKS. Please mail your check payable to:

Itafari Foundation

27 El Greco

Lake Oswego, OR 97035

This Holiday Season give gifts that make a difference, change lives and are truly beautiful. The finest quality I've seen anywhere in Rwanda.

AND get a tax deduction!

Truly, it doesn't get any better than this!

ON DECEMBER 15, 2009



VISION 2020

Rwanda is unlike many African countries. One of the ways they distinguish themselves is with their plan to transform the country by the year 2020. This aggressive goal is not just a good idea: it is the compass by which the country and its leaders are charting their course.



In the conclusion of the document the writers state:

“VISION 2020 represents an ambitious plan to raise the people of Rwanda out of poverty and transform the country into a middle-income economy. Some will say that this is too ambitious and that we are not being realistic when we set this goal. Others say that it is a dream. But, what choice does Rwanda have? To remain in the current situation is simply unacceptable for the Rwandan people. Therefore, there is a need to devise and implement policies as well as mobilize resources to bring about the necessary transformation to achieve the Vision. This is realistic based on the fact that countries with similar unfavorable initial conditions have succeeded. The development experience of the East Asian ‘Tigers’ proves that this dream could be a reality.”

note: East Asian ‘Tigers’ refers to the term Four Asian Tigers or Asian Tigers refers to the highly developed economies of:

- Hong Kong
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Taiwan

Please download the PDF to read more about the focus of this amazing country and its leaders: [Rwanda Vision 2020](#)

ON JANUARY 6, 2010



THIRSTY GOATS ARE NOT AN IMPOSSIBLE PROBLEM IN RWANDA



What do hippos, goats, and rollers have in common? Everything if you're in Rwanda.

I'm here in Rwanda for my 7th visit in less than five years. Nothing is better than doing what you're meant to do with people of vision and integrity. The work of the Itafari Foundation allows all of us to work with people determined to be known by their strength and resilience, not by a genocide that happened 16 years ago. The past should never be forgotten, but the future lies ahead of us: full of hope, challenges, joy, sorrow and impossible problems which will be solved.

One of our problems right now is getting water to the goats in our child headed households. Each of these 35 cooperatives, which are in the south, east and northern regions of Rwanda have been given 15 nanny goats and a billygoat from S. Africa. Their task: raise the goats, plant elephant grass for feed, use the manure for fertilizer, run their small business and within about three years become self sufficient. A huge task – much more so for children raising their siblings. But NEVER underestimate the power of the human spirit and a big dream to be independent.

Today I go back to Nyagatare to visit the first cooperative to whom we gave goats to in 2007. They call themselves the Power of Love! They get the need to inspire themselves and are aptly named. They've had success but also some severe challenges. Water is not always easily accessible. And goats are thirsty. The minerals they are given make them thirstier.

To get water to them requires the herdsman to fill jerry cans full of water. They each weigh about 45 pounds when full. Can you imagine carrying one for each goat each day over the land of 1,000 hills? The herd we were looking at has 35 goats. Can you imagine walking miles and miles each day carrying 45 pounds in your arms? Understandably, neither can the herdsman!



But if I've learned one thing in my work in Rwanda it's that you don't keep your problems to yourself; you ask others how they can help you.

Before I left for Rwanda I was speaking of my thirsty goats and said, "I don't know how we'll solve this impossible problem, but we will!" Two people from the audience came up and offered to help. One mentioned HIPPO ROLLERS which are on display at OMSI in Portland. Had I ever heard of them? No. the other person sent me the link to their site: <http://hipporoller.org/> and then offered to buy three for Itafari and our cooperatives.

From there, the dream has grown bigger. The Hippo Rollers, which allow a woman or child to move 200 pounds of water EASILY only costs \$100 each! It's the shipping that's the killer. But, impossible situations are meant to be solved, and we'll figure it out. In the meantime, the first person that offered to help donated \$500, then another friend donated \$1,000. We have enough to buy 15 rollers – and we've only just begun.

Have YOU ever been extremely thirsty? What do you do? Get water. Not so easy for a goat, a young person trying to carry water, or a group of people trying to thrive on their own. But you can help. Give us a hand, and literally, the children will do the heavy lifting which you have just made light.

Many things are changing in Rwanda – for the better. But there will always be challenges if you want to make a difference in the world. And I do. And so do all the many donors of Itafari. Join us. Send me an email letting me know your interest. I'll contact you when I return home on February 21st.

\$100. In Rwanda, a hippo roller becomes a gift to a cooperative of children determined to raise goats, raise their standard of living and raise their opportunities in life. Can you imagine?

Write to me at Vicky@itafari.org or call the Itafari office with your donation at 503-636-3692. If you want to give on the website, go to <http://itafari.org/donate> and check give any amount – make sure you note as you pay that you want it to go for a hippo roller.

Murakoze cyane! (thank you so much!) Warmly, Vicky

ON FEBRUARY 18, 2010



WE ARE THE SAME IN OUR GRIEF

I recently had the honor of speaking at the Rwandan Celebration in Portland Oregon at the Rwandan Genocide Remembrance Day at Lewis & Clark College. The Pacific Northwest Rwanda Association sponsored this important event. Second Counselor Andrew Tusabe from the Rwandan Embassy in Washington DC was one of the speakers who talked about the challenges and success that Rwanda is having in their country.

I am always humbled when asked to speak at such an event. But I have learned we must each do our part no matter how small we believe it is. Following is the text of my speech.

April 11, 2010

We are more alike than we are different.

Grief is universal; laughter connects people and the decision to change the world lies within each of us.

If you wonder why a mazungu is speaking today, you are not alone. I wonder myself. But I am. And so I'll share what I know – which I know is nothing compared to what many of you know.

I am here to commemorate and honor the people of Rwanda. Those of you who are here to today, and to remember those innocents who were killed through no fault of their own. Today we honor those who suffered or died, more by our action than our grief.

I just returned from my 7th trip to Rwanda in less than five years. I pay for these trips myself so if you ever consider donating to Itafari, know you're not paying for my seat on the plane!

If you don't know my story, I went to Rwanda because one woman asked me to come and speak about hope. What do I know? I knew what hope can look like. I know that healing can come over time. That when we lose someone we love, we can choose to never let their goodness die if we choose to focus on the difference they made while they were here.



Rwanda has changed tremendously in the five years since I've been traveling there. There's tremendous progress, but a huge amount that's left to be done. I was concerned on my last trip because the night before I was leaving three grenades went off simultaneously in the city. More innocent people were killed. And the terrorists (my word) accomplished their goal: to make people afraid. And there have been more grenade attacks since. So what can you or I do about it? We continue on. We don't become overwhelmed or intimidated by cowards who use violence to speak, rather than words.

You may not be able, willing or interested in getting involved in the politics of your country. I can't blame you! I'm not interested in becoming involved in the politics of this country. But how you or I live our lives speaks volumes of what we truly believe.

You're here today. Some of you because you want to be. Some of you may feel you should be here. But you're here. And this unique group of people will never be gathered again. We represent different experiences, different attitudes, different goals, different hopes, and different dreams.

We have different colors of skin, are of different faiths, or of no faith at all. We are men and women, boys and girls, young and old. We have vastly different experiences. Some of us want to talk about what is possible, others want to be silent. Some have hope, some have lost all hope. But what if who we are as a group, is just the group we need to be?

The role John and I play here today is a small one. I'm honored as always to be asked to speak. I'm so inadequate for this job, but I do it anyway. So know that I know I don't know much. But I'm passionate about making a difference in the world and the part of the world that I care to make my difference is Rwanda.

Some of the finest people I've ever met in the world are from Rwanda. Rwanda has changed my life. And so I do what I can to pay that forward. To change lives as mine has been changed.

I'd like to conclude with the following thoughts: your attitude and words have power. Choose (and use) them wisely. Don't wait until you're perfect to reach your goals and dreams. Never stop believing in the goodness that is in the world. Be vigilant in speaking out or taking action against those who would choose to



tear down what is good. Disagree with courage and respect. Keep hold of your emotions so that you can be heard. Know that forgiveness is for your soul, not the soul of the one that caused you or a loved one harm. To find peace within yourself is the greatest gift you bring to the world.



Murakoze cyane and “kora ibyiza buri muni” – in Kinyarwanda, “do good every day”

ON APRIL 19, 2010

HEADED BACK TO RWANDA IN AUGUST AND TAKING FRIENDS WITH ME!

Our last tour to Rwanda was in 2007. Though I have been back multiply times since then, on August 24th six Americans will be joining fellow board member Sara Oberdorf and me in Kigali as we begin a tour of this amazing country and our programs.



When I posted the trip over two months ago to our email list, the trip IMMEDIATELY sold out! Our guests will meet the new nation builders on this once-in-a-lifetime travel opportunity. They will spend their days meeting the people of Rwanda through a variety of personal visits, public talks and presentations, community service activities, and sharing in meals. They will meet the men, women and children taking part in various Itafari programs including education, microfinance, health and human services, and entrepreneurship.

They will have the opportunity to participate in schoolroom lessons and play with children in our sponsorship program. They'll meet recipients of micro loans and

visit their businesses. We will visit the women of Gahaya who make beautiful artisan baskets that are being sold all over the world.



We'll get to visit many parts of the country including a visit to the Akagera Game Park. Some will go and meet the gorillas up close and personal!

We will also go to the genocide memorial to pay our respects and acknowledge what must be remembered.

I cannot wait for this trip with Sara and our guests. If you're interested in future travel with us, let me know! We may be heading back in the Spring!

ON JUNE 21, 2011

THE JOURNEY BACK TO RWANDA BEINGS AGAIN THIS WEEK!

It is not what we talk about doing, but what we actually do, that matters.



On August 24th, Sara Oberdorf and I leave for Rwanda. We'll be greeting our travelers from the United States who will begin arriving just a few days later. Our trip will be one of profound moments, laughter, reflection and sights and sounds that will change each of us forever.

Watch for blogs on the website, donate to the amazing programs we support, and keep us all in your thoughts and prayers.

Changing lives is not hard, but it is work. Yet our lives are changed immeasurably for the better as we support those who care so much to make a better life for themselves.

How can we do anything but support them?



In Rwanda we say, “Kora ibyiza buri muni” (Do good every day.) What good will you choose to do today?

Together, we are rebuilding the country of Rwanda itafari (brick) by itafari (brick) by itafari (brick).

Murakoze cyane, Vicky Trabosh

President and Co-founder Itafari Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) organization

ON AUGUST 23, 2011



CLIMBING 1,000 HILLS IN RWANDA



I remember my second visit to Rwanda in 2006. I was here for a month alone and Itafari was less than one-year-old. Oh the possibilities – opportunities were boundless for what we could accomplish! By nature I am unconditionally optimistic. Then I met with a woman from the UK who was, to say the least, embittered by her experiences. I was shocked by her attitude and thought, “Why are you here? Why don’t you just go home if you’re so cynical?” She had worked in Africa, and had focused on Rwanda for some time. Clearly frustrated, clearly exhausted, her attitude and language was almost devoid of hope and joy. I remember thinking that I would never have that attitude. That intention has served me well in both Rwanda and in life.

I believe the ability to choose the struggle, the road less taken, to climb the mountain, is a choice. Every day to succeed for me means I must make that choice. Herman Buhl, mountaineer said “Mountains have a way of dealing with overconfidence.” Rwanda is definitely a mountain for me – and overconfidence is definitely put in its place here on a regular basis. The land of 1,000 hills – all of which I know I must face (and climb) if Itafari is to become successful in its support of the people of Rwanda.

Sara Oberdorf and I arrived in Rwanda on Thursday evening. It is ridiculous how happy I was to see this woman when we met up in Brussels! She is a friend,

confidante, board member and truly inspires me and gives me her wisdom and perspective without hesitation or guile. Together we accomplish more than I ever could alone.

And yet in the quiet of the morning when jet lag has me by the tail and wide awake at 4am I contemplate what our work here means and how we accomplish our mission and goals. I'm reading "A Thousand Hills – Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It" by Stephen Kinzer. It is one of the best books I've read in terms of clearly defining Rwanda's history and the motivation and clarity with which Paul Kagame leads this country. At the end of the book Kinzer explains, "If Kagame can achieve half of what he has set out to do, he will go down in African history. If he can achieve it all, leaders of every poor country on earth will look to Rwanda for lessons, and bands of angels will sing in heaven. How much of what he dreams is really possible? That was the last question I asked him." Kagame's reply: "Seeing everything, we can do it. We can reduce the number of people below the poverty line, reduce the level of dependence on donor funds, and truly develop our country. We can and we want to. We are convinced – very, very convinced. We want to do it, and we will."

This gives me new perspective on the work of Itafari and our climb to support the people of Rwanda. Every great goal begins with a clearly stated purpose and undeterred focus on the ultimate objective: in our case, to support the people of Rwanda for their goals, their Vision 2020. And how better to do that than have our own Vision 2020 for Itafari? What if by the year 2020 Itafari no longer exists because it is no longer necessary to be a donor to this country? What if by the year 2020 Rwanda is developed to the point that it is a standard of what is possible in the face of poverty and overwhelming challenges?

Ah, that is a mountain worth climbing! To know that we're here for a time and a purpose and this country is well on its way to its own greatness without need of charity as a means of support gives me renewed clarity and determination to be a part of the solution, not the problem.

That greatness is directly the responsibility of the leaders of Rwanda. To read "A Thousand Hills" reminds me that it is not the face of the man or woman you view today that tells you of their potential. It is their story, their perspective, their losses, their failures and their ability to rise again that makes greatness for themselves and a nation. Tuesday, a small tour group is coming to join Sara and



me as we show them the Rwanda we respect and support. They will meet the people without whom we could not do this work. And then we will ask them to add their own wisdom and perspective to our goals and objectives. Read about our trip here and at Sara's blog. Murakoze cyane for your support. I'd love your feedback to our blog.

Ask yourself, what dreams do you have that direct and focus your life?

ON AUGUST 29, 2011



IT TAKES BRAINS, TRUST AND TEETH TO ACCOMPLISH THE EXTRAORDINARY!



In 35 years of owning cars I have rarely raised the hood. I've been to car shows and the hood is raised and men (predominately) are standing around looking at the engine. The only other time I see a raised hood with an audience, happens when there's a problem with the engine. As a woman who is not blessed with mechanical prowess, a hood of a car that is up is either: a) boring or b) a problem.

A few days ago in Rwanda there were men standing around looking at the engine of the car we were using and there was b) a problem. Car issues are never convenient and so it was the case that I needed to get back to the hotel to get ready for our final night's celebration with our tour group and some of our Rwanda partners. An important night for sure, and not a good one to be inconvenienced by a dead engine.

It was 5pm. It gets dark at around 6:30pm each day due to the proximity to the equator. I know we are going to be challenged to get this fixed and get me back to the hotel. But no one seemed concerned and what I was most curious about was HOW we could get it repaired and WHO would fix it.

Our country director called a friend who was a mechanic and he said he would arrive shortly on a taxi moto. "Great", I thought, "and then what?" Where would we take the car? How could he carry tools on the moto? How does he even know what's wrong??

Within 30 minutes a guy showed up and joined the small but interested group of men staring at the engine. He had NO tools but he didn't seem concerned. The problem was explained in Kinyarwanda, and he began looking around the battery on this car with 190,000 km on it (which I was told is "not so many!")

It seems the ignition wire had burned out. But this mechanic noticed a bunch of wires wrapped around the battery (Storage? Securing it to the block? Left behind??) Whatever the case, in the few experiences I'd had in engine gazing, no battery I'd ever seen carried a bunch of wires in that place.

The mechanic unwrapped the wires. He then took one and stripped the plastic off with his teeth. He checked for a spark on the battery and then somehow connected his dentally enhanced wire to something else and started the car! Really??! He assured us he could have the car running in 30 minutes.

They got a car for me to get me back to the hotel. As I sat in traffic on the way back, I marveled at this Rwanda I love. I've said it before: nothing will stop people who are determined to win and succeed. Not lack of tools, not darkness, not time constraints. Innovation comes from a place of passion and inspiration. That mechanic didn't have an office. He worked by phone. He was so confident he could repair the problem. It followed that all of us who stood around believed he would find and fix the problem. No one was disappointed.

Where is that deep sense of commitment to success in me? It seems to me that we are often hamstrung by the smallest of obstacles. Innovation; passion; focus; partnership; faith in ourselves and others; these are the things that must be present to create greatness in ourselves, in our country, a moment, and in a lifetime.

If you could have seen this mechanic who had the following tools: his mind, his focus, his confidence, his teeth(!) and watched his success, you would wonder as I do why we as individuals and the Itafari Foundation don't accomplish more.

Our two weeks in Rwanda have come to an end. Our programs are expanding, changing, improving and being revamped. All for one purpose: to create programs and services that support Rwandans to reach their biggest dreams.



ONE of our programs: Child Sponsorship

Our child sponsorship program has over 205 children sponsored. We held a party with 275 children last Saturday. Three people in our tour group sponsored six children. To be here is to know that \$30 a month for these children is life changing.

The eight of us sat in the main room of one of the mothers of the children we sponsored. The room was 8 X 8. Claudine had a woven mat on the dirt where we sat with our legs folded over each other. The cool cement walls covered handmade itafari (bricks). A door without windows. Breaks near the ceiling to let in air. Dark with a small candle burning to give us light. A tin roof to keep out the rain. And she appreciated all she had. Nothing wasted, nothing taken for granted. As we left, Claudine thanked us over and over for coming to her home. She asked that God would bless us. She prayed for us! She is not discouraged. She is hopeful. I gave her a small gift of money and she is going to use it for English lessons so that she can call me!

I'll be writing more blogs as I reflect on our trip. This eighth trip only deepens my commitment to our Rwandan partners. We'll continue to work with them to seek solutions.

Maybe Itafari represents the wire wrapped haphazardly around the battery. The battery represents the people of Rwanda. Inspiration is the spark. And I personally believe God is the mechanic.

Please consider supporting this work of Itafari. Sponsor a child, help us build the Kigali Parents Secondary School, buy a goat, purchase a basket, donate for a micro loan. Give a general donation to support the work that it takes to run a foundation.

Hold an event where I come and speak to your friends about this amazing country, its history, its progress and most importantly, its people.

Whatever you do, be inspired to know anything is possible in your life with just a bit of faith, focus and confidence in yourself and others.

Contact me or the Itafari Foundation to learn more about our work.



WORLD FORESTRY CHANGE EVENT

JOIN US THIS WEEK - FINAL REMINDER
Together we can reach our dream to
build a school in Rwanda



503.954.1096
www.itafari.org/events

Join us June 1, 2012 at the World Forestry Center to change and affect lives - music, dancing, GREAT speakers, drinks and dessert!

I'm using my voice to share our passion - and there are a LOT of people on this video doing the same! Please watch this NEW video: **(CLICK HERE!)**

I am now inviting you to help us build a High School in Rwanda. Join us on June 1 to hear more about this important work of the Itafari Foundation!

A Special Invitation...



**Building Hope...
and a school!**
Brick By Brick

Imagine having hope but needing help.
Imagine being the one who can help.



Friday, June 1, 2012
Doors at 6pm, Program at 7pm

World Forestry Center, Miller Hall
4033 SW Canyon Road
Portland, OR 97221

Guest Speaker
The Rt. Rev. Nathan Kamusiime Gasatura
Bishop of Butare Diocese, Anglican Church of Rwanda



Ticket Price: \$100 (tax deductible)
For Tickets: BoxOfficeTickets.com/itafari
To Donate: Itafari.org/donate-online

Desserts ☺ *Drinks* ☺ *Music* ☺ *Rwandan Dancers*
Rwandan Baskets For Sale



EVENT INFORMATION

WHERE:
World Forestry Center

TIME:
Doors open at 6pm -
program at 7pm

FOOD/DRINK:
Cash Bar/Soft Drinks -
Complimentary Dessert
buffet at intermission

MC: KC Cowan

KEYNOTE:
Rt. Rev. Nathan Gasatura of
Butare Rwanda

MUSIC:
Tracy Stone

DANCERS:
The Women of Rwanda

Speakers:

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THIS VIDEO](#)

tickets are tax deductible!



donations appreciated)

TICKET PRICES:

\$100 - GENERAL ADMISSION

(DISCOUNT ON GROUPS OF 10+)

\$250 - PRIVATE RECEPTION

WITH RT. REV. NATHAN GASATURA
INCLUDES PREFERRED SEATING AND
GIFT FROM RWANDA. RECEPTION
HELD PRIOR TO EVENT AT 6PM

Click Here

*To Purchase Tickets
Or Make A Donation*

*Need more information or have a
question?*

*Please contact me directly at
503-841-6108 or email me at
vicky@victoriatrabosh.com*

*If I can get you to appreciate the
difference you are making, my
work will be complete.*

*In Kinyarwanda we say, "Kora
Ibyiza buri muni"
(Do good every day)*

Thank you for answering the call.

*Warmly,
Vicky*

Susan Eavin, Retired Teacher
**Jean-Marie Nkusi, Rwandan
Student**

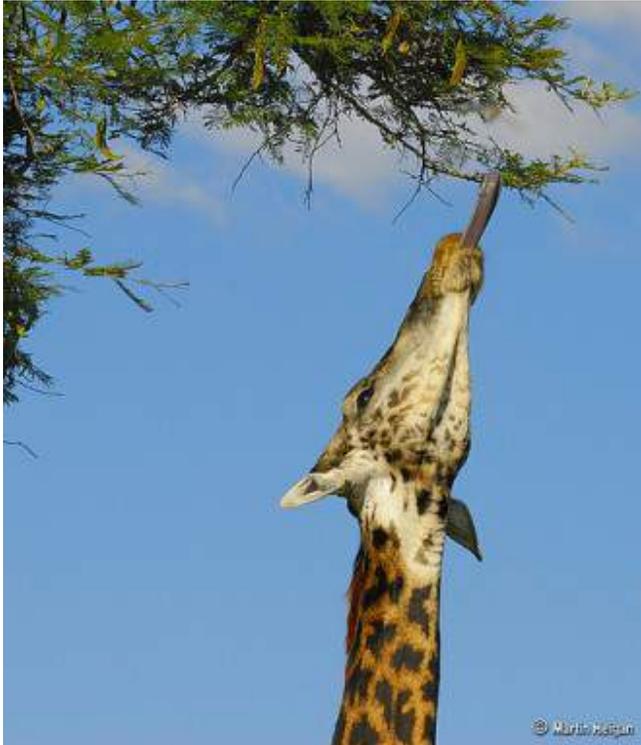
Victoria Trabosh,
President and Co-Founder
Itafari Foundation

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THE POWER OF PERSISTENCE



I am calling seat 33C home for the next 10 hours. And lucky me! 33D has no passenger! The luxury of it all. How simple the pleasures when I remember not to want more than I have in the moment. This is a direct flight to Amsterdam and then another direct flight to Rwanda. Only 21 hours. My shortest flight itinerary yet. As I celebrate my 9th trip to Rwanda, I am struck with the one quality that is necessary to accomplish the extraordinary: persistence.

It is not perfection, luck, great intelligence, wisdom, money, or any other quality that could be credited with the reason ordinary people accomplish the extraordinary. It is persistence. Never giving up on what matters most. Never allow the obstacles facing you to stop your progress. In the moment. In the future. In the past.

Persistence is how I got to Rwanda. And persistence is why the Itafari Foundation will celebrate its 7th anniversary this Fall. If you've ever wanted to work in a country and make a difference, you must be prepared to face challenges and obstacles you could never imagine. You must prepare to have your heart broken. You must suspend disbelief that others cannot find joy unless they have every

electronic toy known to the western world. You must get out of your own way and be scrutinized not just for what you say you will do, but your ability to get it done and do it in a culturally sensitive fashion. You must be willing to be so tired from jet lag that you wonder if your internal clock will ever start ticking normally again. You must be willing to celebrate the smallest of victories with true joy and awareness of what you have accomplished. And you must persist in the moment when you're not quite sure what to do next. All you know for sure is that you'll figure it out because the cause, the people, the work is worth more than an ego that says it should all be easy.

Itafari Foundation was formed because I was asked to come to Rwanda by a woman named Rita Ngarambe. She and I had no expectation that we would become friends and we still shake our heads in wonder over how the kindness of words would turn into a lifelong friendship. But the friendship wasn't enough. What sustained our modest beginning was a group of people in the US and Rwanda who began to dream big and caught a vision for what they could create together.

My friends, donors, some board members, and even my family do not know my friends and loved ones in Rwanda. And they donate their time, money, strategies and wisdom.

In Rwanda it is the same. Our beneficiaries, my friends, our partners...for many of them, I am the face of Itafari. For me, that is an injustice; for I am NOT Itafari but its representative. All of the office support is donated (25+ hours per week). The board members serve without compensation. Our largest donations have occurred as friends and supporters have donated or secured donations from within their circle of influence. We have had wonderful in kind donations, like the website, which is world class.

And yet we've only just begun. In my last blog post I mentioned that Itafari's vision should reflect Rwanda's Vision 2020 which is unbelievably forward thinking and successful. With my excellent math skills, I calculate we have eight more years to line up with the country's vision for itself. As Rwanda successfully becomes less dependent on NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations) like Itafari, Itafari must become more sensitive and aligned with Rwanda's vision.



I believe running a successful NGO is exactly the same as running a for profit business. While Itafari is definitely a not FOR profit, we must not be NON profit. We must build a sustainable model that can be duplicated and replicated. It's not all about the money, but without funds, great and necessary work cannot be accomplished.

This brings me back to my 30,000-foot theme (literally and figuratively). Persistence. I am going to Rwanda this time to work with our partners and ensure a common goal, a common focus. I sell what I believe in. I want to improve and enhance the vision Itafari has for the work we are doing so that when I ask you for donations I am clear that your decision to support our work is a wise use of your funds. That though you may not go to Rwanda, you know your funds are being used as requested. And that the stories of success I hear that come from your donations, your efforts, come back to you and amaze and delight you.

I am persistent in reaching this goal for you, our partners in Rwanda, our beneficiaries, and for myself. Join us in support of this amazing country. Read more about our programs.

We have unsponsored children that need you – consider a monthly sponsorship. Join us on a trip in the Fall. Sara Oberdorf and I will once again be leading a small group – and you will meet and work with these amazing people. (details to come) Donate monthly and regularly to support the cost of running a not for profit. We have rent to pay, utilities, bank charges for credit cards, wire fees, printing, mailing, marketing costs, etc.

We're persistent in our belief that we will help to build the Kigali Parents Secondary School. If you believe in the power of education, we have naming opportunities, buy a brick that will be placed in the courtyard or make a general donation.

Need incredibly beautiful baskets and jewelry from Rwanda? We have them! Call the office for more details.

Hold your own Pay It Forward and invite your friends. I'll come and speak, we'll sell baskets, ask gently but clearly for donations, and you and your friends will be changed and empowered.

You're still reading!?! Thanks! Remember: it is not hard to change the world; it is more difficult to believe you can. It is more difficult to think you have enough to



give and that whatever you give is enough. I know this is true and I appreciate anything you do to assist us

I'll be back in Portland on April 5th. Don't hesitate to write, call, comment and donate. All is appreciated all makes a difference, and all of it will accomplish the extraordinary.

Always,

Vicky aka Mama Itafari

ON MARCH 27, 2012



A SPECIAL INVITATION TO JUNE 1, 2012 EVENT NEWSLETTER

A Special Invitation...*imagine* change and affect lives on June 1, 2012 in Portland, Oregon



**Will you join us on
June 1st?**

- **Special Guest
Speaker Rt. Rev.
Nathan Kamusiime
Gasatura
Butare, Rwanda**
- **Hosted by KC Cowan**
- **Entertainment by
Tracy Stone and
Rwandan Dancers**
- **Dessert Buffet at
intermission**
- **Rwandan baskets
for sale**

**TICKET PRICE \$100
(hasn't changed in 7
years and still tax
deductible!**

LOCATION:

**World Forestry Center
Miller Hall
4033 SW Canyon Road
Portland, OR 97221
Across from the Portland Zoo;
free parking and MAX line**

Click Here
*To Purchase Tickets
Or Make A Donation*

**If you're unable to
attend, please
consider a donation
to help us build this
school.**

**You can make a
difference.**

**In Kinyarwanda we say:
Kora ibyiza buri muni**

Almost 7 years ago to the day I held my first event for the women of Rwanda....

So much has happened and through the support of so many,
lives have indeed been affected and changed. In May 2005,
200 people came to the World Forestry Center to hear about
what hope could bring.

**Now on June 1, 2012 we asking you to join us again and
bring hope to children in Rwanda through
the power of education.**



We are building a High School and need your help!

**On June 1, 2012 at the World Forestry Center we are
imagining 350 people gathering
to hear stories of hope,
see the women of Rwanda dance, and
be inspired to make a difference
in the lives of children in Rwanda.**





Thanks so much,

Vicky Trabosh
Itafari President
and Co-Founder

EMAIL THIS TO A FRIEND

Don't hesitate to unsubscribe if this holds no interest for you. We don't send out many emails and our intention is never to bother you - but keep you informed. Thanks

Special Invitation



**Building Hope...
and a school!
Brick By Brick**

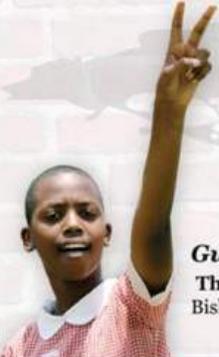
Imagine having hope but needing help.
Imagine being the one who can help.



Friday, June 1, 2012
Doors at 6pm, Program at 7pm

World Forestry Center, Miller Hall
4033 SW Canyon Road
Portland, OR 97221

Guest Speaker
The Rt. Rev. Nathan Kamusiime Gasatura
Bishop of Butare Diocese, Anglican Church of Rwanda



Ticket Price: \$100 (tax deductible)
For Tickets: BoxOfficeTickets.com/itafari
To Donate: Itafari.org/donate-online



Desserts 🍷 *Drinks* 🍷 *Music* 🎵 *Rwandan Dancers*
Rwandan Baskets For Sale

GO TO ITAFARI FOUNDATION'S WEBSITE TO
LEARN MORE OR CALL US AT 503-954-1096.
You can also purchase tickets through the
Itafari Foundation office. We accept cash,
checks, and credit cards.

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10TH TRIP TO RWANDA: NEW CHALLENGES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES



I have never had anything beyond my family call to me as passionately as this country and its people.

This trip will be filled with many activities:

- Reviewing the progress of Kigali Parents Secondary School building that has continued with our great fundraiser in June which raised \$50,000
- Connecting with the children we sponsor – especially those John and I support on a monthly basis and those whose sponsors had a chance to send gifts
- Finalizing the Christmas party for 207 children
- Climbing to see the gorillas
- Visiting and laughing with beloved friends
- Attending the wedding of our country director (love is always grand!)
- Meeting with women leaders to explore their wisdom and their collective ability to significantly influence the future of their nation
- Investigating new opportunities for Itafari to make a difference through our programs

Showing my Rwanda to my beloved friend Julie Sklare who is accompanying me for her first trip to Rwanda

Julie and I met at Purdue University in 1976. She has been part of some of the most significant moments of my life. She was my maid of honor in 1981. She was with me at the moment my mother died. She has watched my family grow and change and is loved by all. We have traveled together, laughed together, cried





together and believed in the other's greatness. She has supported my work with Itafari from the very beginning in 2005 and cheered me on. After attending our event on June 1 2012 she wanted to know more. To see what more we could do together. And as I sit next to her on this plane on the last leg of our journey I love my dear friend even more for her support of this work.

It is wonderful to think about introducing one of the most significant people in my life to the actual people and country I speak of incessantly! What a gift. I look forward to Julie's reflections and thoughts about improving how we do what we do in Rwanda. To climbing the mountains of Rwanda and be face to face with gorillas. To the laughter and shared memories we'll add to this treasure chest of memories we have already stored.

Join us on our journey. Donate – help us build our school – sponsor a child – donate for the annual Christmas party – buy a goat – give to our general needs.

Write to me. Ask questions. And never doubt that you make a difference in the world.

Kora ibyiza buri muni (do good every day). always,

Vicky

BY ITAFARI

ON NOVEMBER 13, 2012



A FRIENDLY PERSPECTIVE OF RWANDA PART 1 BY JULIETTA

In November of 2012, I travelled to Rwanda with Vicky Trabosh, my dearest friend of 37 years, to see the land and meet the people that have become so much a part of her heart. And now I understand.

While I have journeyed to many places in the world, I had never been to Africa. After hearing about Rwanda and supporting Itafari for years, I told Vicky that I wanted to go with her on the next trip. The Itafari event last year in support of building the Kigali Parents Secondary School had touched me. Why couldn't we get a school built? I wanted to see it for myself. I also wanted to see the mountain gorillas, which was an unbelievable experience.



It was an amazing trip. I would like to share some of my impressions of this land of a thousand hills.

I knew this would be an adventure. What I didn't expect was the beauty of the land and how moved I was by the people. They are working hard on all levels to bring their country together and to rise up to become a modern center – self-sustaining and self-sufficient. They know they need help, but are not looking for handouts. There is an emphasis on education as one of the pillars of this development. They know that education is the way up. And I agree.



So, I am sponsoring a child. Over the years I have often thought of it, but never followed through. Then, I came to Rwanda. And I saw for myself what is happening there. People here are trying to make a better life for themselves and their children. Even the children are trying to make a better life for themselves and their sisters and brothers. How could I not help?

So, I am sponsoring Donata; helping her go to school and work to fulfill her dream of becoming a doctor. You go girl!

It was clear that this small country does not have an abundance of natural resource commodities. But, they have people – lots of people. And people can be a great resource, especially when educated. Schools are only one way Rwandans are educating themselves. We visited Gahaya Links, one of Itafari's partners. This is a cooperative where village women are taught to weave beautiful baskets and jewelry (sold by Itafari). It was clear how much it meant to the women to have a source of income to improve their families and communities. I enjoyed interacting with the women – watching them work and trying to talk with them.

My Kinyarwanda is sorely lacking, but I'm very good at saying "Hello – how are you?" They were very warm in their responses.

One cannot visit Rwanda without facing the genocide. I went to the Kigali Genocide Memorial to learn and understand what happened here. Difficult emotions came up. "Over 1 million dead in 100 days". It was impossible to wrap my head around it – both the blood shed and that the world did nothing to stop it. Everyone's life here has been impacted by this violence. But the country is trying to heal itself and it is palpable. One can feel the collective strength of the people of Rwanda.

We also went to Butare to meet with Pastor John about a possible partnership with Itafari. John asked if we would like to come out to the construction site of his new church. Remember, everything is on a hillside in Rwanda. They don't call it the Land of a Thousand Hills for nothing. So being the Muzungu (Westener), that I am, I assumed we would see a big piece of machinery digging into the red clay soil; leveling part of the hill. However, when we got there, I saw a different kind of machine. A Rwandan machine. I saw an army of women, and a few men, hard at work digging with hoes; leveling an area on which to build their church. Women with children on their backs. Women swinging hoes with an intensity I have rarely experienced.



And they were getting the job done! I realized that in my cushy modern life, I have lost sight of the enormous capacity of the human body and how much can be accomplished when moved by spirit and motivated by purpose.

These are a few reflections on my wonderful journey in Rwanda. You may have noticed that I didn't speak about the school. I would like that to be the topic of my next post. I know we just met, but I hope you will stay tuned.

Murakoze cyane (thank you very much), Julietta

ON FEBRUARY 20, 2013



LUNCH FOR GOOD – MAY 6TH, 2013

"KORA IBYIZA BURI MUNSI"

(DO GOOD EVERY DAY)
WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU!

YOU ARE INVITED TO:

Lunch for Good – May 6th with the Itafari Foundation



Rebuilding Rwanda itafari (brick) by itafari

PLEASE JOIN ITAFARI FOUNDATION & RT. REV. NATHAN GASATURA,
BISHOP OF BUTARE DIOCESE, ANGLICAN CHURCH OF RWANDA
IN A CELEBRATION OF DOING GOOD

EDUCATION IS VITAL TO EACH OF US. WHAT WE MIGHT
TAKE FOR GRANTED IS A SACRED OPPORTUNITY IN
RWANDA. THIS IS OUR OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE: TO
CREATE AND ESTABLISH
SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN A COUNTRY DETERMINED TO MEET
THE CHALLENGES OF THE PAST AND DREAMS FOR THEIR
FUTURE.



**HOSTED LUNCH AT THE UNIVERSITY CLUB
1225 SW 6TH AVE PORTLAND, OR 97204**

MAY 6, 2013 | 11:45AM-1:30PM

PLEASE RSVP SOON – SEATING IS LIMITED!



**CALL 503-954-1096, OR EMAIL
ITAFARIFOUNDATION@EARTHLINK.NET**

DECORATIVE BASKETS & JEWELRY WILL BE FOR SALE

**WANT TO DO GOOD BY HELPING BUILD A SCHOOL,
BUT CANNOT JOIN US ON MAY 6TH?
ITAFARI.ORG/DONATE-ONLINE**

Itafari Foundation 501(c)(3) 2187 SW Main - Suite 11 Portland, OR 97205 503.954.1096



IMAGINE THE SMILE ON YOUR FACE, GIVE A GIFT TO A CHILD IN RWANDA



**IMAGINE THE SMILE ON YOUR
FACE KNOWING THE GIFT YOU
HAVE GIVEN A CHILD IN RWANDA**



***ITAFARI FOUNDATION'S
ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY
IN RWANDA:
CAN YOU HELP US?***

Itafari holds an annual holiday party for the children in our child sponsorship program. Currently we have 196 children in the program and only 186 sponsored. But every child deserves a gift for the holidays. The budget for our party is \$30 per child.



Not only gifts, but a party!

Each child receives a new bed sheets, clothes, a holiday meal, transportation to the church (many children are further than walking distance), an opportunity to be with their friends and knowledge that no matter their circumstance, they too can celebrate the holidays.



***It only costs \$30
to make a memory***



need your assistance. Please consider a gift of \$30, multiples of \$30, or ANY amount you're able to give. Imagine giving a child a memorable gift - a memorable moment - and the gift of kindness.



WAYS TO DONATE:

- You can donate online (click on "DONATE NOW" button above.)
- Mail a check to the Itafari Foundation
- Call the office and we'll take your cc number
- Add a one time \$30 to your monthly payment through your checking or credit card account - just call or email authorizing this one time charge

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE FOR THE CHILDREN OF RWANDA. MAY YOUR HOLIDAY BE FULL OF ALL THAT BRINGS YOU JOY!

EMAIL:

itafarifoundation@earthlink.net

WEBSITE:

www.itafari.org

Itafari Foundation 2187 SW Main, Suite 11, Portland Oregon 97205-1123

503-954-1096



2013 ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY!

ITAFARI FOUNDATION'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY IN RWANDA: CAN YOU HELP US?

Each year Itafari holds an annual holiday party for the children in our child sponsorship program. Currently we have 196 children in the program and only 186 sponsored. We believe that every child deserves a gift for the holidays.

This party will be for one purpose only: to celebrate with the children. A party.



With food. And a gift.

Each of the 196 children will share a special meal and receive a gift of a new bed sheets, clothes and the

opportunity to be with their friends with the knowledge that no matter their circumstance, they too can celebrate the holidays.

The cost of this party? \$30 per child. And we need your help. Many of our child sponsors have given an additional one time \$30 gift. But not all are able to participate. And we've even lost some annual sponsors of our children. Yet Itafari continues to support these children every month, regardless of our sponsor's ability to pay.



Can you help us close the gap?



Will you be one of those who can make a difference? It's been another amazing year of making a difference. And by giving, you know you receive far more than the satisfaction that you helped another. You are changing lives. And we at the Itafari Foundation thank you for considering us in your year-end giving.

Contact me directly at vicky@itafari.org or call me at 503-636- 3692. You can also donate online, or send a check to the Itafari Foundation. 100% of your donation is tax deductible.

From all of us at Itafari Foundation to you and yours, may you experience a wonderful and blessed holiday.



<http://www.itafari.org/donate>

WE ACCEPT VISA, MASTERCARD, AMEX, CASH AND CHECKS. Please mail your check payable to:

Itafari Foundation

27 El Greco

Lake Oswego, OR 97035

Warmly,

Vicky

Vicky Trabosh Co-founder and President, Itafari Foundation

ON NOVEMBER 19, 2013



UPDATE ON KIGALI PARENT SCHOOL

Here are some updated images of the school in construction!



ON FEBRUARY 6, 2014

EVENT CANCELED- CELEBRATION WITH AFRICA NEW LIFE MINISTRIES

****This event has been canceled, but we will be contacting our child sponsorship participants directly in how they can continue to support this program through the transfer to Africa New Life Ministries!**

COMING SOON: A video will be posted here the week of March 10th regarding the transfer and your opportunity to continue to sponsor your child.

Dear Child Sponsors,

We invite you to join us as we celebrate passing our child sponsorship program to Africa New Life Ministries. Thank you for your patronage in helping this program succeed over the past eight years. Though I know many of you do not live in Portland, I wanted to let you know about our next event on March 11th, 7pm at The Village Ballroom, 700 NE Dekum St. in Portland.

Please join us to meet the staff of Africa New Life Ministries, who will continue this program for years to come. Learn how you can help both Africa New Life Ministries and Itafari in the future.

This is a free event, but please RSVP here!

P.S. If you cannot join us but would like to continue your child sponsorship program, please let us know – we'll be sending you information on how to continue with them.

Thanks so much,
Mama Itafari aka
Vicky Trabosh



ON FEBRUARY 4, 2014



CHILD SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Dear Child Sponsors,

We thank you for the many years of support of your children through the Itafari Foundation. Beginning April 1 we will transfer our sponsorship program to Africa New Life Ministries and hope you continue your participation through them. I appreciate hearing from many of you that you want to continue your sponsorship – what a gift to the child in Rwanda who know you by name!

More information will be posted here in the coming days – and do not hesitate to contact me personally with any questions or concerns.

Thank you so much for all you've done and all you will continue to do to help the children of Rwanda.

Sincerely,

Mama Itafari aka Vicky Trabosh
President and Co-founder
Itafari Foundation
vicky@itafari.org
503-841-6108

ON MARCH 5, 2014





Muraho,

As promised the child sponsorship program is transferring to Africa New Life. Many of you have written to me let me know you'd like to continue your sponsorship. The children and I thank you. There are a couple of things you'll need to do to take action:

1. Watch the video (3 min) for more information
2. Go to the link provided for Africa New Life and complete the paperwork
3. Let them know if you're choosing NOT to continue.

Some of you pay annually and your sponsorship continues. They charge \$39/mo v. Itafari \$30/mo so your annual gift will "run out" sooner than your anniversary date. (Let me or Africa New Life know if you need your renewal date). We're transferring the remainder of your donation to Africa New Life for annual donors.

If you're unable to continue sponsorship, Africa New Life will NOT continue to support the children and there may be a break in their school attendance. They'll work diligently to find a new sponsor.

I thank you for all you've done and your incredible support. Itafari continues on with focus on building the Kigali Parents Secondary School. You're welcome to support this effort too as you are so moved. There is more information on our website about the latest construction - it's really exciting to see the school come together! Go to www.itafari.org to see what's happening.

Itafari remains committed to the children and people of Rwanda. Please [contact me](#) directly if you have any questions.

From the entire board we want to thank you for all you've done. I'd like to publicly thank Karen Freelander Co-Founder for her tireless effort in the last eight years to support you in communicating with your children. Thank you to John Trabosh who worked as a volunteer in the office for the last three years keeping the books straight and following up with each of you.

It does take a village of caring people to support children who just want a chance to dream their dreams and build a life that brings satisfaction, success and security. You're there for them, and they are changing their world and will someday change the world at large through their efforts. You are the spark they needed to light the fire within themselves. Imagine, you've changed the world.

Click here for information on the transfer and continuation of your sponsorship. <http://www.africanewlife.org/itafari/>

Murakoze cyane cyane.

Vicky aka Mama Itafari





Join us for the final few months of finishing what we began eight years ago.

Through the donations received from Itafari and a bank loan, Kigali Parents Secondary School is scheduled to open in 2015! **BUT WE'RE NOT QUITE THERE YET!**

Your donation today can:

- Help pay off the remainder of the loan for the school's construction
- Buy a brick for \$75 in remembrance or in honor of a loved one to be placed at the school
- Purchase a classroom for \$10,000 and have a plaque with a naming opportunity
- Give any amount for needed text books, supplies, equipment, desks and chairs to create a dynamic learning environment

Together {Itafari (brick) by Itafari (brick) by Itafari (brick)} we are reaching our goal.

Thank you for helping us in the final stretch.

Happy New Year!

Victoria Trabosh
President
Itafari Foundation



DONATE



Give Hope during the Final Stretch!

Imagine the excitement of a child entering a brand new school. Their future will be brighter and full of opportunity.



HELP US WITH OUR FINAL PUSH TO BUILD THE SCHOOL!

I want to share this article written by my intern, Melissa Ingabire. She has been with me since June, and has helped us with both organizing of the Itafari office, and my personal office, and supporting us in our great work.

Reflections by Melissa Ingabire, Itafari Intern 2014



“Itafari is a gift to the people of Rwanda as Rwanda is a gift to me!”

~ Victoria Trabosh

Ten trips to Rwanda in nine years, and Trabosh is still moving forward. Over the last decade Itafari made a significant difference with the people of Rwanda.



Current building in progress



Kigali Parents Secondary School is a dream of Principal Charles Mutazihana who started Kigali Parents Primary School in the 1990s. Itafari supports his vision and donates heavily to their program. Itafari was instrumental in getting the Secondary School started, though the project is headed by Kigali Parents Primary School. Principal Charles has told Victoria that without Itafari's support they wouldn't have received the financing they needed.

The anticipated opening of the school is Spring 2015. This is a project Itafari is particularly proud of because they believe that to support education is crucial to restoring Rwanda and in line with Rwanda's Vision 2020 plan.

"The eradication of poverty will be through education. Never have I ever seen a child more eager to learn than in Rwanda," says co-founder Victoria. "I know that I am meeting the future leaders of the world, not just the country of Rwanda."

The people of Rwanda have not let the devastation of the 1994 genocide define them. This is a country and people who don't need your pity. Rather they want your compassion so that you will not share their grief, but take action and support them in building dreams for their country, families and themselves.

"What keeps me motivated? The people of Rwanda," Victoria says without hesitation. "I am a busy woman, but whenever I am tired I see the faces of people that put their trust in me. I believe in their vision and know Itafari must continue to support them and their dreams. As a parent, grandmother, and woman seeing my contribution live beyond me is one of the most satisfying things in the world."

 DONATE

I am the author of this article, Melissa Ingabire. I am Rwandese American. Though I was born in Rwanda, my knowledge of the country is limited because I came to America when I was one years old. I will never truly know the circumstances my people live in, or their struggle. Naturally I feel an allegiance to them, to do something to help, which is also an expectation. Rwandans take pride in caring for their own. If you are dirt poor you will feed a starving child even if you can barely feed your own.

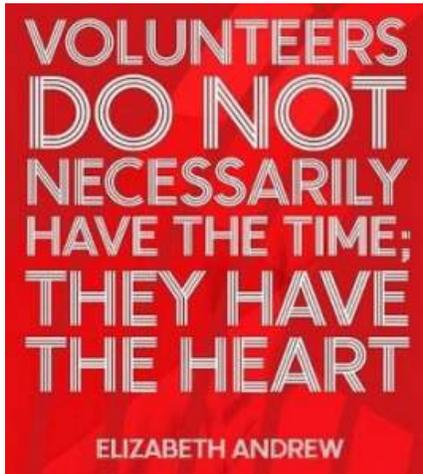
I began interning for Victoria just this summer, but I have know her as my muzungu (white) grandma for almost my entire life. We met ten years ago when Itafari was just starting.

I am astounded that this is the same woman who ten years ago didn't even know where Rwanda was. The same woman who used to come into my home once a week for Kinyarwanda (one of the languages spoken in Rwanda) lessons from my Mom. She had no connections to the country but a desire to help the people of Rwanda, my people.

And therein lies wisdom. You don't need to know the people, you don't need to know the language, you don't even need to know where the country is. Just hold compassion in your heart and be willing to help them, not pity them. The people of Rwanda do not want pity or charity. What they do want is your support in helping build a school to educate their children, which will make a much greater impact in their lives than any handout. – August 27, 2014



THE HEART OF A VOLUNTEER



I'd like to talk to day about the heart of a volunteer. It's funny: volunteering can either wear you out or improve your outlook on your entire life, for the rest of your life.

Mother Teresa said, "There is a light in this world, a healing spirit more powerful than any darkness we may encounter. We sometimes lose sight of this force when there is so much suffering and pain. Then suddenly, the spirit will emerge through the lives of ordinary people who hear a call and answer in extraordinary ways."

If you choose to volunteer what is truly most precious, your time, never doubt you touch and change lives.

Volunteering isn't always glamorous or exciting. It's truly the ones who don't necessarily have the credentials, but have the concern, that make the world a better place.

Many of you wonder where you'd find the TIME to do more. I understand. It's a commitment like no other. The consequence for not showing up when you say you will is to those you serve. There's no paycheck to dock, no stock that will be affected, no advertising that needs your name. But your commitment, which must come from passion to be sustained, is worth all of the blood, sweat and tears you give to those whom you are called to serve.

In 2005 I began my work in Rwanda and co-founded the Itafari Foundation. I have visited 10 times since. Each time, I'm more comforted, more inspired, more focused because of the people I meet and the stories I've heard. It is truly life



changing to meet people who refuse to be defined by their losses, but instead chose to be defined by their hopes and dreams.

In 2006 we began the dream of helping to build a high school in Rwanda. What I thought would be one of our easier projects turned out to be much more challenging than I imagined. But I couldn't give up. And we persevered through the economic downturn in 2008, through an all-volunteer foundation that attracted many donors but few large donations. Yet, in spite of the slowness, we never gave up. How could we? The people of Rwanda never gave up. And we were there to support THEIR hopes; THEIR dreams. We were just a part (a brick – an itafari) of their goal.

There were times I considered giving up. But I couldn't. I had to believe in myself and what we could accomplish more than I believed in the reality of the difficulty of the goal and competing important issues in the United States and around the world. And so we continued to support the Kigali Parents Primary School in their dream to build the Kigali Parents Secondary (or High) School.

And I'm thrilled to report that the school is almost complete! I plan to go to Rwanda in the first quarter of 2015 to be there when the doors open to accept hundreds of students eager and willing to be educated. It's thrilling, to put it mildly.

And may I emphasize again, the Itafari Foundation *was just a small part* of this great project. The people of Rwanda built it, raised money for it and accepted our donations gratefully and with grace.

The Library will be dedicated to Jeanne Carmichael, a woman who has passed but was a teacher in Oregon. She loved books and with her donation we will be dedicating the library in her honor, with a beautiful photo we took of her in her last year. When I told her about our plan was she was thrilled!

Many of our donors bought BRICKS (itafari) that will be dedicated in honor or memory of loved ones. For \$75 they made a commitment to children 10,000 miles away that says, "I believe in you. I believe in the power of education. And I believe in the power of your dreams."

When I go to Rwanda in 2015 we'll be installing a wall with the hundreds of names of the donors. And there's more work to be done. But we'll get it done.



And we'll know that although we played a small part in the overall progress, we played a part.

And that's the power of volunteering. You do not know the ripple affect your kindness, your attention; your focus will have on someone who didn't even directly receive your act of generosity. But the act will live on long after you have given of your time.

So what do you want to accomplish? You may not have the opportunity to go to Rwanda, but you have an opportunity. If something came to your heart or mind you read this, act on it. Believe it matters. Believe YOU matter. And know that no act, no matter how small will change a life. And the first life it changes will be yours.

[Click here to buy a brick for \\$75!](#) We will prepare a beautiful certificate for you, suitable for framing to remember or honor a loved one. I'll place a plaque in the wall in the school with your name on it that will be there forever as the students pass by it every day and know that a stranger cared for you. Remember, your kindness will inspire and change a country's young people forever.

- **ON NOVEMBER 26, 2014**



GIVE HOPE DURING THE FINAL STRETCH!

Give Hope during the Final Stretch!

Imagine the excitement of a child entering a brand new school. Their future will be brighter and full of opportunity.

Itafari's project to build a high school in Rwanda is becoming a reality!



Join us for the final few months of finishing what we began eight years ago.

Through the donations received from Itafari and a bank loan, Kigali Parents Secondary School is scheduled to open in 2015! ***BUT WE'RE NOT QUITE THERE YET!***

Your donation today can:

- Help pay off the remainder of the loan for the school's construction
- Buy a brick for \$75 in remembrance or in honor of a loved one to be placed at the school
- Purchase a classroom for \$10,000 and have a plaque with a naming opportunity
- Give any amount for needed text books, supplies, equipment, desks and chairs to create a dynamic learning environment





Together {Itafari (brick) by Itafari (brick) by Itafari (brick)} we are reaching our goal. Thank you for helping us in the final stretch.

Happy New Year!

**Victoria
President
Itafari Foundation**

Trabosh

DONATE

- **ON DECEMBER 29, 2014**



You're Invited! Itafari Updated and Open House



You're Invited!



All items **20% off!**

Hand-woven baskets and jewelry made by very courageous women of Rwanda.

- Gifts
- Home Décor
- Personal Jewelry
- Timeless African Art Pieces



Itafari Farewell Open House

Wednesday, November 30, 2016

4:30-8:30pm

2187 SW Main St. Portland, OR 97205



Please join us for the Itafari Foundation's open house and final event.

Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be provided.

Items on sale include: jewelry, baskets, and classroom naming opportunities for the Kigali School.

RSVP to:

Karli@VictoriaTrabosh.com

503.705.2700

For more information please visit: www.Itafari.org

MAKE A DIFFERENCE
DONATE TODAY

 DONATE





ITAFARI PAST AND PRESENT
A letter from Victoria

What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.
-Zig Ziglar

In 2005 when I traveled to Rwanda for the first time, I never knew the lessons the country and its people would teach me. Upon returning I met Karen Frelander and Beth McChesney who said we could do more. And from there, the **Itafari Foundation** was born.





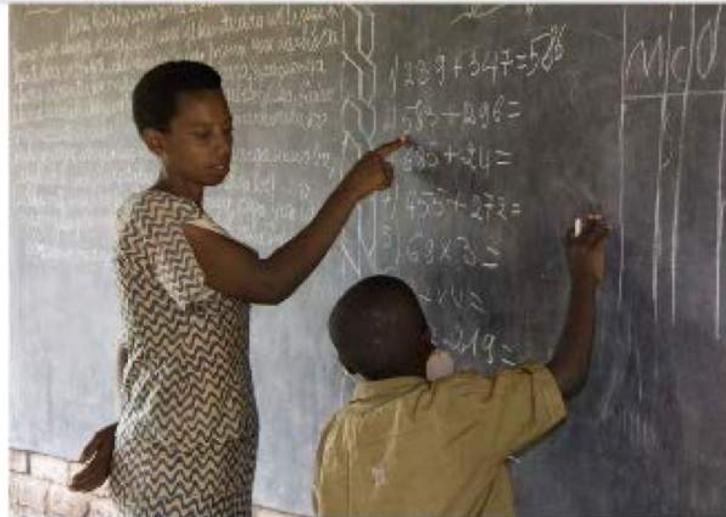
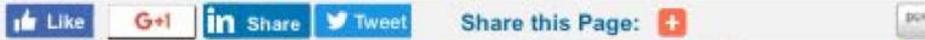
Our goals were daunting; our opportunities limited, but we aspired to partner with people in Rwanda who had a dream for their lives, and simply needed a hand.



If you attended my first event at the World Forestry Center in May, 2005 I used the quoted from Emily Dickinson:

***"Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul -
and sings the tunes without the words - and never stops at all."***





I had hoped we could raise \$25,000 for World Vision. And that goal was *almost* reached, we raised slightly more than \$23,000.

Then Karen, Bethe and I co-founded the Itafari Foundation. Our goal was to raise \$50,000 in one year. We did not reach our goal. Instead, we raised *over* \$110,000! And our new mantra became: *Do what you can, where you are, with what you have, in the time you have left.*



Since our modest beginnings, we've raised over \$1,500,000 with very little overhead and maximum impact for our partners in Rwanda. I have traveled 11 times to Rwanda and each time am more inspired than the last.





A DREAM COME TRUE: OPENING A SCHOOL

One of our dreams was to help the partners of Kigali Parents Primary School build a Secondary (High) School. I thought it would be challenging but easy. I was wrong. It was tough but we raised thousands and thousands of dollars for this effort. We took donors to see the school, meet the children, teach in the classrooms and be humbled by how much can be done with so little.





And the school is complete! Though the partners of the school have taken out loans to finance this wonderful school, Itafari has been there along the way.

Our Wonderful Work is Complete!

And now, it is time for Itafari to close. We do not have a board to sustain our vision and our work is done.

The Board of Directors has agreed we will be closed by December 31, 2016 and in an effort to raise just a little bit more money for our partners, we're holding an Open House in Portland to sell some of the beautiful handmade items!

Please join us on November 30th!

Itafari Farewell Open House

Attend the Open House in Portland on November 30 and buy for the last time, some of the beautiful baskets, purses, jewelry and pictures from the Land of a Thousand Hills, Rwanda.

If Itafari has touched YOUR life, please let me know. Your words and comments mean everything to me.

I'll continue to travel to Rwanda and support entrepreneurs and leaders. My work as an executive coach and speaker is in demand in Rwanda by people who want to be their best and change the world.

And that's all any of us can do.

Murakoze cyane cyane for being part of our journey.

Warmly,

Mama Itafari aka Victoria Trabosh, President and Co-Founder



DONATE

Itafari Foundation
2187 SW Main, Suite 201, Portland Oregon 97205-1123
503-841.6108 | itafarifoundation@earthlink.net | www.itafari.org

3. Buy a brick and name it for yourself or a loved one so the children will always see at the school that we believe in them.

4. Make a more substantial donation for a naming opportunity for one of the beautiful classrooms in the school – and your name or your company's name can be above the door. All of your money will go directly to the school so that they can pay down their substantial loan.

The website is the easiest way to donate for either item #2 or #3 on the list.

Here's a quick link: <http://itafari.org/donate/>



ITAFARI FAREWELL OPEN HOUSE



All items **20%** off!

Hand-woven baskets and jewelry made by very courageous women of Rwanda.

- Gifts
- Home Décor
- Personal Jewelry
- Timeless African Art Pieces



Itafari Farewell Open House

Wednesday, November 30, 2016

4:30-8:30pm

2187 SW Main St. Portland, OR 97205



Please join us for the Itafari Foundation's open house and final event.

Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be provided.

Items on sale include: jewelry, baskets, and classroom naming opportunities for the Kigali School.

RSVP to:

Karli@VictoriaTrabosh.com

503.705.2700

For more information please visit: www.Itafari.org

CLOSING THE ITAFARI FOUNDATION 12/31/16

We are celebrating Itafari's closing with **21 DAYS OF ITAFARI!** This is our final fundraiser!

Now through **December 31st** I will be sharing stories and personal images of a determined people and a beautiful country rebuilding after a nationwide genocide. The community is committed to rebuilding and sustaining growth for years to come, from building schools, hospitals and creating business from micro-loans. Your donations will go directly towards building the **Kigali Secondary School**. Our goal is to raise **\$23,000** by December 31, 2016 because that is the amount raised in 2005 which started the **Itafari Foundation**. Since November 30, 2016, we've raised \$7,000! That means we're only **\$16,000** away from our goal! Give by December 31st to be eligible for your 2016 tax deductible donation! Pay it forward and learn how you can help here: www.Itafari.org/donate



Kigali Parents Primary School Kids and Victoria Trabosh

Make Your Donation





Your Last Opportunity to Build
Itafari by Itafari

Wednesday, November 30th, **4:30-8:30pm**
2187 SW Main St. Portland, OR



In Honor of **Giving Tuesday 2016**
Itafari by Itafari you have made a difference in the lives
of thousands of people.





Celebrating Itafari's COMPLETION!

Dear Friends of Itafari,

After 11 years, we are closing. We have reached most of our goals and have this final opportunity to make an amazing difference through your gifts. Our expenses are ONLY the bank fees charged, insurance, and a few miscellaneous office expenses. I'm so proud of how well we've managed the donations we've received.

IF YOU'RE in PORTLAND Oregon, JOIN US Wednesday, November 30th anytime from 4:30-8:30pm. Our address is: **2187 SW Main St., Suite 201, Portland, OR 97205**. You can also mail checks payable to the Itafari Foundation which are 100% tax deductible.

Beautiful handmade items from women intent on weaving a lasting peace for their country. Stunning images captured by renowned photographer and Itafari Board Member Adam Bacher, small clutch bags ideal for daily use, Baskets and Jewelry. Gifts or remembrances. And then the opportunity to give to support the Kigali Parents Secondary School. You can designate a gift of any amount, or a large gift that includes a naming opportunity.

We also continue to sell the BRICKS (Itafari) which will be placed in a commemorative wall at the school.

Join us in our final efforts to raise money, hope and awareness. On behalf of our beneficiaries in Rwanda, the Board of Directors, and those who have volunteered to hold events over the years, and helped at our big events, Murakoze cyane cyane (thank you very very much).

Warmly,

Mama Itafari aka Victoria Trabosh President and Co-Founder



YOU'RE INVITED. Please Join us!



All items **20% off!**

Hand-woven baskets and jewelry made by very courageous women of Rwanda.

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- Timeless African Art Pieces



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Karli@VictoriaTrabosh.com

503.705.2700

For more information please visit: www.Itafari.org



ITAFARI GIFTS:

Jewelry, Baskets, Photos, Classroom Naming Rights and More.

ALL ITEMS 20% OFF





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**MAKE A DIFFERENCE
DONATE TODAY**





What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.
-Zig Ziglar



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503-841.6108 | Vicky@Itafari.org | www.itafari.org



OUR MISSION LIVES ON – ONE CHILD AT A TIME!

The Itafari Foundation is closed, but our mission lives on – One Child at a Time!



The Itafari Foundation is closed as of 12/31/2016. We have accomplished the goals we set out to achieve over a decade ago. We are no longer accepting donations. Since 2005 the Itafari Foundation has been working on behalf of our donors and beneficiaries and we are excited to have set and reached our objectives. We have been proud and excellent stewards of our supporters' and donor's money all while creating real change for thousands of lives through our services.

Our passion and interest in Rwanda continues and so too does our mission: *transform, empower, lead and grow Rwanda in alignment with Rwanda Vision 2020*. The Itafari Foundation will now support the men, women and children of Rwanda in partnership with the **Kittelson Charitable Foundation (KCF)**.



KCF is dedicated to providing the tools and resources necessary for sustainable education AND economic independence in Rwanda. Today Kittelson Charitable Foundation is sponsoring nearly 50 Rwandan students on an on-going basis.

I have known Wayne Kittelson for years (in fact we met through our mutual love of Rwanda). KCF provides Rwandan students with uniforms, mattresses, shoes, and toiletries needed at their boarding school; pays for their tuition and school supplies; and sends students to secondary schools throughout Rwanda. KCF sponsors students ranging from age 5 to 30 and from kindergarten to the university level. ***They have a long-term commitment to the students in Rwanda*** and I am thrilled to be supporting their work.

We want to welcome the donors and members of The Itafari Foundation to the home website of the Kittelson Charitable Foundation. Please consider donating to this great organization ***Donate to the Kittelson Charitable Foundation.***

If you have questions, you can always contact me or KCF directly. Let us do what we can, where we are, with what we have, in the time we have left.

In Rwanda we say, “*Kora ibyiza buri muni*”. (Do good every day). ***Murakoze cyane cyane*** (thank you very very much) for all the good you did through the Itafari Foundation.

I’ll be headed back to Rwanda in May 2017 to place the bricks in the school that have been purchased throughout the years by donors. Pictures will be posted and if I can be of assistance please contact me directly. More to come!

Warmly, Mama Itafari aka Victoria Trabosh, Co-Founder and President

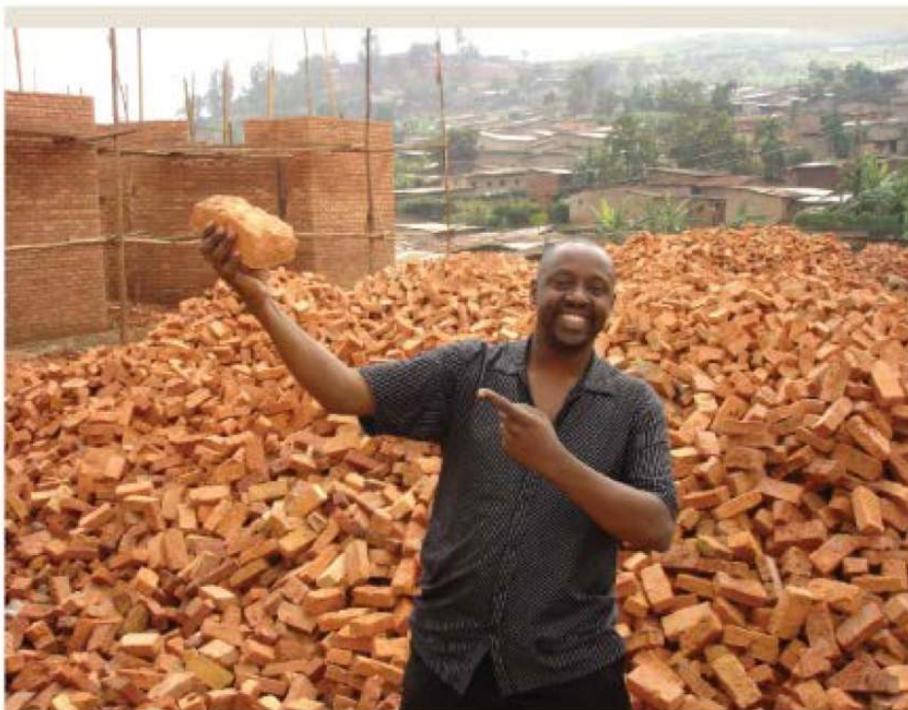
ON JANUARY 3, 2017



Itafari by Itafari: The Difference in the Lives of Thousands of People



**Itafari by Itafari,
YOU have made a difference in the
lives of thousands of people.**



CLOSING ITAFARI FOUNDATION
Your Final Opportunity



Dear Friends of Itafari,

As 2016 comes to an end, so does The Itafari Foundation. With 10 days left in the year, and in the life of Itafari, I'm asking your help to



In Rwanda. *we're almost there!* Through the generosity of donors like you, we've raised \$18,000 since November 30th!

That means we've \$5,000 left to raise. Receiving this email means you've supported Itafari or shown some love and interest in the past. You'll never accuse me of pestering you, but please accuse me of requesting of you a final gift.

We have ZERO overhead expenses except for bank fees and insurance. So be assured every penny you generously donate will go directly to the desired recipients: the men, women and children we serve in Rwanda.

IMAGINE getting a hand when you need it most and then being able to say, "Thank You - I'll take it from here". That's the attitude of the Rwandan community. With your help, they become self-sufficient and will pay it forward for years to come through a sustainable and enriched livelihood, thousands of educated children and a determination to prosper beyond tragedy.

Please join us! We have only 10 days left in 2016. If you are looking for a place to make an impact, Itafari is your outlet. Alone, one brick (Itafari) builds nothing. But Itafari by Itafari, together as many, you are a critical part of the rebuilding of hope, social and economic progress.

May this holiday season bring you great joy.

Always, Mama Itafari



10 DAYS LEFT OF ITAFARI

\$5,000 to Reach Goal!!





MAKE A DIFFERENCE
DONATE TODAY



FROM THE LAND OF 1,000 HILLS

Kora Ibyiza Buri Minsi
(Do Good Everyday)

~

