



Sewpportive Friends

A stitch of compassion goes a long way.

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Join us in our journey, as we help women in Africa by providing them with handmade, reusable feminine products.

October

We had an exciting and successful July trip to Zimbabwe. We delivered supplies and visited with our friends from Rise N Shine, Sianyang and White Waters High School. We also connected with a new friend, Pepsi, who is helping us organize a visit to her village, Chisuma, in November. In addition, kits, fabric and sewing supplies were delivered to New Hope Waves, an organization from Zambia, who will be producing their own feminine kits in their community.

Sewpportive Friends has been focused on empowering the girls and women in areas that have limited or no access to healthy feminine hygiene products for approximately 2 ½ years. We have delivered hundreds of kits, over 150 yards of fabric (hemp fleece and PUL), dozens of scissors, sewing needles, snapping tools and more. This mission would not be possible without all of you.

A special THANK YOU to our friends who have been sewing recently, here in the United States: Sally, Jeanne, Marian, Fonda, Carol, Cheri, Sharon, and Dianne. And, many thanks to all the helping hands that provide the care and support to reach those in need.

Over the past couple of years, I have personally met so many amazing individuals. It has been a journey motivated by love, compassion, generosity, and certainly faith. It has been truly

amazing to see the number of girls and women that now have an opportunity to finish their education and participate in life with healthy and proper feminine products. It has also been incredible to see how so many people have become connected and touched by this project.



White Waters High School, Matopos

I said to a Zimbabwean friend, "It is a small world," she responded, "We like to say, it is a big village."

Amazing things will be accomplished when it begins with love. Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Julie



Sewing Groups at Sianyanga

There are now two groups sewing at Sianyanga. One group meets on Thursday and the other on Saturday. Fifi, a Sewpportive Friend leader in Zimbabwe, initiated this second group to meet, which functions as a learning time with friends. They sew, produce crafts, talk about politics or any subject that is of interest. This group includes girls ages 11 and up, and everyone is welcome. We hope to share some photos of their activities soon.

The other sewing group is producing quality items and teaching others in the surrounding areas. Sharing this knowledge is what life is about. Keep up the great work ladies!

We had a fun visit with the teachers, students, families and community leaders. The students performed songs and danced, the ladies directed a fun short play of their activities. The air was filled with laughter, love and hope. We are always sad to leave.

Chisuma Village

We met this lovely lady, Pepsi, last year and she had asked if we would teach the women in the village she resides now, Chisuma, how to sew washable pads. This coming November, Pepsi, and our Sewpportive Friends group (Margie, Joyce, Brian, Norma and Gregg) will spend a day teaching and sewing with our new friends.

White Waters High School

The sewing group at White Waters High School are producing great items! Since it is part of their sewing curriculum, all the girls who attend White Waters H.S. will have acquired this knowledge and be able to share with others.

We had such a fun time dancing, singing and watching their performances. They always make us feel like part of their school family.

There is so much to learn in life... and learning from experience is a very powerful tool.

Regions/Communities/Organizations Sewpportive Friends has reached:

1. Chisuma (New sewing group 11-2018)
2. Lupinyu (Rise N Shine Girls Club)
3. Victoria Falls (Jafuta Foundation)
4. Sianyanga (Sianyanga Primary School)
5. Ngamo (Hwange School Projects)
6. Silungudzi (WhiteWaters High School)
7. Harare (Precious Pearls Trust)
8. Livingston, Zambia (New Hope Waves)



Zimbabwe

NEWS COVERAGE – Raising Awareness

Over the past few months, there have been a number of news articles addressing the feminine hygiene crisis around the world. We need more voices to speak up and to be heard! Many of these stories reflect what we have experienced firsthand. Girls are forced to quit due to their inability to access feminine products or due to financial despair. Although, it was surprising to learn that the feminine hygiene crisis affects girls in more developed areas of the world, such as England, who is having a similar issue with the

impoverished population. As I read, tears trickle down my cheek and then my mind starts into full gear – how to do more in resolving this issue. Then comes the realization that the answer is already being demonstrated by one of the communities Sewpportive Friends is assisting, White Waters High School, as well as our friends at Hwange Schools Project, who we helped get their feminine pads sewing started. Adding the production of the feminine items to their curriculum is the answer. All girls who attend school will learn to make their own products. Without discrimination, without embarrassment, without the inability to afford, all of them will have the ability to attend school, be healthy, and be empowered to succeed.

We are meeting with school leaders and work together for a long-term, sustainable plan. This is a big task and with the hands and voices of many, things will spread, will change, will take time but will succeed. We have to continue moving forward even if the pace is slow, never give up hope.

Health, Education, Equality, Success.



Mothers from Sianyanga

VOICES FROM ZIMBABWE

The following is dedicated to the wonderful friends in Zimbabwe. We are pleased to share their insight, talent, and stories. Each friend is an important part of the Sewpportive Friends team in their community.

Fifi is 27 years old and lives in a village near Sianyanga. She has worked hard all her young life and has been blessed with the ability to attend college, by her dedication to study, work hard, and by the generosity of a wonderful charity and family who are sponsoring the cost of her education. Fifi is studying Local Governance and is actively involved with her



community. After college, she hopes to bring new ideas to improve life in her village, surrounding areas and her country.

A Girl Child

Written by Fifi

Girls are Pearls, Ladies are Rubies, Mothers are Molders, and Women are Wonderful.

We are living in a modern society, enlightenment has opened everyone's eyes. Our society has realized the importance of education. Education is the right of every child despite of their gender. During the old times, when grannies were still young girls, education was only meant for a male child. A female child was deprived the right to an education. She neither tasted nor smelled the sweetness of education. The society was backward and blinkered it, thought that educating a girl child was a waste of resources.

A girl child was trained to be a mother. As she grew up, she was supposed to know all the household chores. This de-empowered the girl child. It weakened her thinking capacity and brain-washed her mind. She thought the kitchen was her office. The society was patriarchal – men were very dominant. They felt that they owned these women and their children. Women were weakened, they were submissive and voiceless. The future of the girl child was in the hands of a patriarchy. It was the one which had the power to decide whether the girl child would go to school or be married off to old men with pot belly stomachs, whom they believed were rich. If fortune favoured her, she was sent to school to do her primary education. This was only done for her to be able to read and write her name, and love letters for her future husband. Therefore, this disadvantaged her position, her life and her future.

Now, our society has understood the importance of educating a girl child. There is an African proverb which says "If we educate a boy, we educate one person. If we educate a girl, we educate a family and the whole nation". By sending

a girl to school, she is far more likely to ensure that her children also receive an education.

The above sentiments are cemented as many claim that investing in a girl's education is investing in a nation. I also noted that educating a girl comes with a number of merits that are as follows: decreased infant mortality, children of educated women are less likely to die before their first birthday, also girls who receive an education are less likely to contact HIV & AIDS, chances of passing it onto their children are reduced, decreased maternal mortality, educated women with greater knowledge of healthcare reduces death during pregnancy, childbirth or during postpartum period. Education of girls also leads to more female health providers to assist with prenatal care, labor, and delivery. Also, educated girls reduces the number of child marriages. They will marry later when they are able to care for their children. Lastly, it increases involvement of women in the political process. Educated women are more likely to participate in political discussions, meetings and decision making which in turn promotes a more representative, effective government.

Real change happens when we invest in girls.

Fifi



The following is another beautiful poem written by our special friend, Babongile age 17. She loves reading, writing, history, creative art and helping others. She will graduate from high school November 2019.



Babongile

Down Came My Charm

Down came my charm
Charming me to time
Time of victory
Of a contemporary life
Life that has bright lights
To shore the dreams of many
Dreams that are meant to be dreamed
To put us to the unknown future
Like a frog, I will hip-hop to my goal
Through destiny
I shall chaff into, woods of tragic
Up and down will be my route to success
Here, there
Come down my charm
For the transport, as the school is awaiting me
Come, come charm of life

***Thank you for your
continued support.***