



Sewpportive Friends

A stitch of compassion goes a long way.

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Volume 5



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

A NOTE FROM ZIMBABWE

The following is a note from Phiona Nabusheka, a native Zimbabwean friend from the village of Sianyang.

"The introduction of recyclable pads by Julie and her team has helped girls and women in our community. Empowerment has knocked to every door of a woman in our community. Women have been enlightened to see that they have capabilities to sustain themselves in their lives. Sewpportive has changed the mindset of woman, where a woman thinks that she is a woman she has to depend on her husband every time.

Julie has inspired women in our community. They have realized that with the skills acquired from Sewpportive they can climb the ladder of success and transform their lives.

The parents were grateful such that they asked her to teach them how to sew the pads. During her next visit she brought materials and taught a few women how to sew the pads. The number kept on increasing as more women joined the group.

We are looking forward to teach nearby villages because we are in remote areas where there are no shops, whereas most

people are unemployed so they have no money to buy sanitary pads for their children.

There is no way to fully express our gratitude for what you have done. You have transformed the life of women and girls in our community. Girls were facing menstrual problems at school sometimes they had to absent themselves from school during periods but with Sewpportive all these problems had been solved.

We at Sianyang we will forever be indebted and inspired by your generosity. Thank you.

With love from Fifi"

The Alchemist, Waterbury-Stowe, Vermont

We are so excited and grateful for our new corporate sponsor, The Alchemist (www.alchemistbeer.com). For the month of November, the donation box in their Stowe brewery benefited Sewpportive Friends. In lieu of tips for tastings, their loyal, generous customers donated to our cause. The Alchemist then matched these donations, providing enough funding to help over 100 girls!



Sewpportive Friends is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and grassroots organization. Contributions are tax deductible and delivered for each gift.

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We thank The Alchemist from the bottom of our hearts for your amazing support and generosity!

Our November Visit

November 11th, we departed with 200 pounds of supplies and kits. There were only two of us flying to Zimbabwe but many friends who were there in spirit. We had many friends who generously donated so we could help more girls and women, providing a healthy option for managing their menstrual cycle so they can stay in school, go to work, and live a life without interruption.

Our journey overview....

Rise N Shine Girls Club: 8:45 a.m., our driver picked us up and drove us to Lupinyu village, and villages B27, B28, and B29. These villages are named after the borehole which is closest to their homestead. Our native Zimbabwean friend, Charlene Nolan, joined us. She introduced us to Sfe Sebata and her husband Shorai Matambanadzo, who live in a village in this area. Sfe and Shorai founded an after-school girls club, Rise N Shine, to teach the girls a vocation through art.

Before heading to meet the girls for our sewing class, we headed to the village "head leaders," Florence Mkhandlas and her husband, Mthelisi Mkandla, as well as the village "secretary." It is respectful to get approval from the leaders before helping their villages. We sat with Florence and Mthelisi, listened and conversed. Sfe was our interpreter. We enjoyed learning more about their village life.



Head Leader, Florence and Sfe



We then went to meet with the girl's club in Lupinyu village. There we sat and visited with another Community Leader, Gama Siwelas, who provided a space for all of us to meet. A little rain had moved in so we sat in his kitchen hut. A truly beautiful place with incredible handmade details.

The rain passed and we moved our growing group to an open-air space. Our two-hour sewing class passed quickly. Success. They showed confidence in their ability to create their own padlets and pad inserts with the sewing materials we provided.



Rise N Shine Girls Club – Sewing Class

We distributed the remaining kits, fabric and sewing supplies to the club. The mothers displayed a variety of hand-crafts they had made. We purchased beautiful placemats, wooden statues of Zimbabwean wildlife, elephant straw baskets, carved serving utensils, painted table runners, and the children's artwork, which was created in Sfe and Shorai's afterschool art classes. The visit ended with the girls performing a song about Jesus and gratitude. Harmony from these young angels surrounded us. We were full of joy from the day's meetings with our new friends, and felt blessed for this opportunity, yet were sad to say goodbye.

Sianyanga Primary School: Our next visit was at Sianyanga Primary School. The students range from 4 to 12 years old. Our

*Sianyanga Primary School*

Sewportive Friends focus is on the 10-12 year old girls. The girls, mothers, grandmothers and village elders participated in a celebration of gratitude. Students of all ages sang, recited poems and shared speeches. We enjoyed an 1½ hour, beautifully organized program.

After the celebration, the girls and women joined us in a classroom to chat about their sewing progress and about life. We laughed and had a nice visit. We then moved to another classroom which was filled with hand-made baskets. We bought as many beautiful hand-crafts that we could carry. They were so excited to show us their artistry and thrilled to have an income. There were hugs and waves as we said goodbye to our friends.

*Beautiful handmade baskets*

White Waters High School: We woke to a cool African morning, so an extra layer was added for our drive to White Waters High School with Tawanda and Lin from Big Cave Lodge. The school is about 45 minutes from the lodge. Quickly our fleece was peeled away as the morning warmed up to a lovely 80 degrees.

We had met with the teachers and girls this past July so we wanted to focus on their sewing progress and to provide additional fabric, Velcro, scissors, cardstock, etc. Their sewing club is excited about this sewing project and so grateful for the supplies and support to their community.

We also met with Charles, the Headmaster, discussing academics, school needs, and future projects. Our visit ended with Zimbabwean handshakes, hugs and goodbyes until next time.

This trip provided kits and supplies to make life a little easier for many girls and women. After our many conversations, we could hear and clearly see the hope, joy and happiness brought into their lives from the love and compassion shared by all of you. They send a sincere “THANK YOU and may God bless you and your families.”

*White Waters High School - Matopos*

December - Women's Guild Meeting

After returning from our trip, it was time to get prepared to present to the Women's Guild group at the Most Blessed Sacrament in Wakefield, MA. We had been invited to share the Sewportive Friends story and mission.

We shared our story accompanied by a photo presentation and then the women's group joined us in cutting patterns, padlets and pad inserts, adding snaps & Velcro, and packing kits. We had such a wonderful and productive evening with this incredible group of women. We are so grateful for the invitation to share our story and have all the helping hands. Thank you very much for your kindness, interest and support! A special thank you to Elaine Mead and Christine Carlson for inviting us to join your group for an evening. We hope to meet again.

Happy New Year – 2018

We wish you all a very happy, healthy, and prosperous new year.

In July, a group will be heading back to Zimbabwe. We will continue to work with these communities providing materials and supplies, and work on a long-term, sustainable plan so they may continue producing the feminine products for themselves and others in their region. “Give a man a fish, they eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, they eat for a lifetime.” That is the Sewportive Friends philosophy.

Every girl deserves

Healthiness

Oppportunity

Promise

Education

A note from Julie

A special thank you to Norma for joining me on the November trip. You are an amazing supporter, instructor and special friend to our mission and to me personally. Thank you for being part of this journey! You have touched the hearts of many, and now they call you their friend.

We are so grateful to all our Sewporters for the helping hands and for our friends sharing our story and purpose!

All our volunteers and contributors have an important role. With your generosity, hundreds of girls have been given hope through your love and support.

With gratitude and love,

Julie



“Kindness in words creates confidence.
Kindness in thinking creates profoundness.
Kindness in giving creates love.”
~Lao Tzu



Norma admiring the crafts.

