



Reason2Smile Gazette

MAY 2011

WWW.REASON2SMILE.ORG

In The Wake of “Three Cups of Tea”

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As you have probably heard, a leader in the international charity world has recently been placed front and center in the media for very negative reasons. I must admit that Greg Mortenson has been a role model of mine for many years. Upon returning from my first trip to Kenya, I heard about his book “Three Cups of Tea” and instantly read it. His words served as inspiration for me as I dove into starting up an organization to support the children who I had come to love so much. During my time working at the Bookstore Plus in Lake Placid, NY I made it my goal to sell three copies of “Three Cups of Tea” every day, as I believed it was a book that everyone should read. I even had the opportunity to meet Greg last year and although it was a short conversation, he encouraged me in my work and gave me a hug. He struck me as a humble and real individual. He didn’t seem to be anyone too spectacular, just a person with a passion to help those in need. That said, I am as

shocked as you may be by the recent information. I am honestly not sure what to think or who to believe at this point. As we all know, the media has a way of twisting the truth and making the numbers say what they want you to hear, but there’s also a level of trust in Greg and the Central Asia Institute that seems to have been severely shaken.

One could argue that no matter what misgivings and errors Greg and the CAI have made, they have changed the lives of thousands of children throughout Pakistan and Afghanistan; more of an impact than most of us will ever be able to claim. However, it is important that we hold the CEOs and Boards of non-profit organizations to the highest standard possible. No amount of good deeds exempts them (us) from this. There are far too many organizations which pay their CEOs massive amounts and whose funding doesn’t go where they seem to say it will. Hesitant individuals who have been deceived in the past by organizations they believed in and trusted, often question me on the effectiveness of Reason2Smile Inc. I want you to know that myself and the Reason2Smile board of directors are continuously in conversation about how we can become more effective and create more sustainability. We meet quarterly as a group and exchange multiple emails weekly discussing just these issues. I’d be lying if I said it was a piece of cake to do good work and use donors’ generous funds effectively. As Nicholas Kristof said in his recent article titled *‘Three Cups of Tea’ Spilled*, “helping people is more difficult than it seems.... Giving money away effectively is such difficult and uncertain work.” However, that doesn’t mean we stop doing it.

I believe in the mission of Reason2Smile Inc. and will continue to work hard everyday to uphold that mission. In the world of international charity, it is so important to not become disillusioned. I know this cause is an important one and I appreciate you recognizing that too. We will stay true to ourselves, to our donors, and to those we support. We will persevere.

Smiles and Many Thanks,
Keela Dates
Executive Director, Reason2Smile Inc.

Passion and Gratitude



Donna and her youngest child, Ryan, soon after shaving their heads for St. Baldricks and children’s cancer research.

“Does the school have a library?” Finding out that they had no real “library” (only about 150 books) I decided that that was my goal – to finance a school library for Jambo Jipya - and plowed full steam ahead.

This was the beginning of an incredible experience for me that I feel blessed to be apart of. My husband and I have always been involved in community organizations and volunteer work, raising our children to be active and caring citizens as well. Whether it was gift-wrapping on Christmas Eve at the mall, shaving our hair for children’s cancer or unloading food for a Long Island hunger relief agency – taking action and getting involved is a necessary part of being a Rosenblum family member. My children will tell you that Reason2Smile has brought us to a whole new level of community service and that I am just a little compulsive about it. Jambo Jipya is now a household word and we share Keela’s and the Board’s commitment and passion in improving the lives of children and giving them the opportunity to get an education.

I became an educator because I love working with students, making a difference in their lives and the reward that comes with knowing you helped them achieve their goals and dreams. Now I get to do this on a global scale. For me, Reason2Smile has filled a void that I was not cognizant existed. I am so grateful to be a part of this organization and its members and if that wasn’t enough I have been asked to serve as a member of the Board of Directors. In the words of Muthami, a 14-year-old orphan from the school, “Life is Good.”

Thanks for making me smile!

Donna Rosenblum
Reason2Smile Board Member

In January of 2009 an article in New York Teacher Magazine (NYSUT) featured a story about a Middle School in Upstate New York that had fundraised through their musical productions for an organization called Reason2Smile. The article jumped out at me for two reasons. One because it is a wonderful human interest story and two because I had honeymooned in Kenya and had a soft spot for the country and people. I clipped the article and filed it away in one of my charity folders to look at in the future. I began to monitor Reason2Smile’s website and in March 2010 I emailed Keela that I was ready to get involved.

As a school librarian my first question was



Donna in her library at Floral Park High School.

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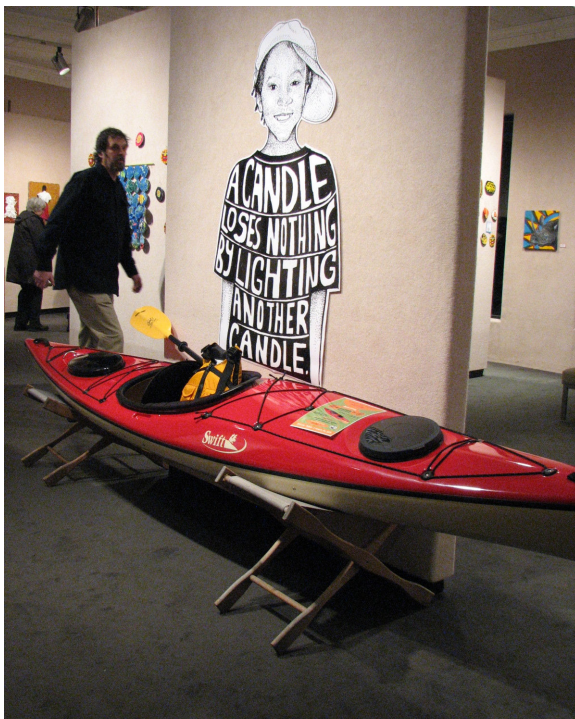
4th Annual Reason2Smile Art Show



The art show is hanging currently at BluSeed Studios in Saranac Lake, NY and will be there until May 15th. We are having a reception on Friday May 6th from 6-9pm. Come and check out the art (by a variety of artists), the kayak, and lots of Kenyan goods! Oh and there will be some food too! We hope to see you there!

Kayak for Kenya

The "Kayak for Kenya" raffle will continue through July 4th. If you would like a chance at a beautiful kayak, paddle, and life-vest (total package valued at \$3,000) please let us know! Tickets are \$10 each or 3 for \$25. Special thanks to Steve Doxzon at Adirondack Lakes and Trails in Saranac Lake, NY for this generous donation!



"Kayak for Kenya" Raffle

Benefitting

Reason2Smile Inc
www.reason2smile.org

- Swift Saranac 14 Sport Kevlar Fusion Kayak (Red with Champagne hull)
- Werner Skagit Kayak Paddle
- Stohlquist Get Away Life-Vest

Donated by:
Adirondack Lakes and Trails Outfitters
www.adirondackoutfitters.com

2010 Retail Value of Package:
\$3,005.00

\$10 per Ticket/ 3 tickets for \$25

Sam's Marathon



In November 2010, Sam Coleman purchased a Reason2Smile bracelet in a shop on Church Street in Burlington, Vermont. He then contacted Keela and asked how he could be more involved with the organization. Sam is an avid runner and decided to dedicate his participation in this year's Vermont City Marathon to Reason2Smile and Jambo Jipya School. He is working hard to raise funds and hopes to be able to contribute a large amount toward the construction of one of the future classrooms at Jambo Jipya. If you would like to give in support for Sam's run, please make a check payable to "Reason2Smile Inc." with "Sam's Marathon" on the memo line (mailing address on the last page of this newsletter). Sam will be running on Sunday May 29th. We look forward to cheering him on and sharing photos with you in the next newsletter!

Give Them a Reason 2 Smile!

Tax deductible donations can be made in support for the children at Jambo Jipya School by giving online via the website www.reason2smile.org or by making a check payable to "Reason2Smile Inc." and mailing it to:

Reason2Smile Inc.
151 Hillcrest Ave.
Lake Placid, NY 12946

For any questions or further information please contact Keela at: keela@reason2smile.org

Thank you for your continued support and faith in this organization! Together we are truly making a difference in the lives of needy children!

