



Reason2Smile Gazette

NOVEMBER 2011

WWW.REASON2SMILE.ORG

Letter From the Director

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Letter From the Director	1
New Face at Reason2Smile	2
A Race and a Reason 2 Smile	3
Halloween Levenson Style!	4
2012 Writing Contest	4
Sharing a Love of Soccer	5
Kenya Update	5
Student Spotlight	6
Give Them a Reason2Smile	6



Hello Everyone!

As always, I hope this finds you happy and healthy! The mountains here in the Adirondacks are covered with snow and actually, I recently woke to find my lawn dusted with it as well. Yes, it is that time of the year! Keep the fire stoked and the soup hot!

This month's newsletter seems to be the issue of kids helping kids! I don't know about you, but nothing brings me more joy than watching a young person reach out and help someone else, and that seems to be happening a lot around here lately! Soccer ball donations, Halloween parties turned into benefits, and although it happened a few months back... first graders emptying their piggy banks. If we teach our children nothing other than how to reach out and help others, I'd say we succeeded. And if this newsletter is any proof, you've taught them well! Thank you! This world will truly be a better place because of what you've taught them and what they have done and continue to do!

Speaking of helping others, many of you have given a donation this year to help the kids at Jambo Jipya School. In the January 2012 newsletter I will be recognizing you for this. The categories will be "Child Sponsor", "Monthly Donor", and "Miscellaneous Donations." There will be no amount listed by your name. Many of you have received notifications from me regarding this recognition, and more of you will be receiving it over the next few weeks. If you would like to remain anonymous, please let me know, otherwise I will list your name as I have received it. Thank you!!

Smiles,
Keela Dates

A New Face at Reason2Smile Inc!



Greetings, everyone! I want to take the opportunity to introduce myself. I am Duncan Lawrence, and am very excited to be the new Executive Assistant at Reason2Smile! My role will be filled with helping to manage the social media, webpage, grant research, sponsorships, and everything else that is needed.

For a little bit of background on myself, I have spent about two years of my life abroad, with my gap year in Peru, a semester in Costa Rica, and another in Scotland. In Peru I had the opportunity to help raise money for rural schools with a fashion show, as well as dress as Santa Clause and help give out presents for children whose mothers were in prison. While in Costa Rica I interned with an environmental conservation umbrella organization, and worked with them to streamline their communications and calendars by making use of free web-based systems (particularly Google apps).

My first encounters with Reason2Smile came from my time at Wells College. Keela presented to my Positive Psychology class about her work, and I was amazed by what she was able to accomplish because she was so driven (and continues to be so!). Other events took place during the next few years, and it was wonderful to see the progress that Reason2Smile had been able to create and push from year-to-year.

I have experience designing social media campaigns for a group of small inns, as well as a course in design thinking and innovation that gives me a background in solving complex problems. Those, along with my time abroad, allow me help further Reason2Smile's mission.

I am so excited to be working at Reason2Smile, and I cannot wait to meet many of you throughout the next few months.

Have a nice day,
Duncan

A Race and a Reason 2 Smile



Sam (in black), coming up the big long hill during the Vermont City Marathon.

Jam-bo, breathe in, Jip-ya, breathe out. Jam-bo, inhale, Jip-ya, exhale. Jam-bo, right hip, Jip-ya, left knee. Jam-bo, be strong, Jip-ya, keep running. Around mile 18 of the 2011 Vermont City Marathon I adopted a mantra to help me stay focused and determined as I fought through the stabbing pain in my right hip and the aching soreness in my left knee. Jam-bo, breathe in, Jip-ya, breathe out. Beginning the race on a foggy and rainy Sunday in May, my goal was to run every inch of the 26.2 mile race. In my previous two marathons I had succumbed to pain or exhaustion at some point and been forced to walk for some of the race. This year, I was mentally tougher and more determined to run the entire race, thanks to a cause far greater than a new P.R. I was running this marathon for Jambo Jipya. I was running this race for the children of Mtwapa, Kenya. I spent the winter and spring of 2011 training for this marathon and raising awareness and funding for the Jambo Jipya School, and this day was the culmination of all of that hard work.

While Christmas shopping in December of 2010, I came across a small donation box showing a bright smiling child. The box was stuffed with black rubber bracelets. As I read the information on the box about the Reason 2 Smile Foundation, I immediately wanted to donate. Later, as I proudly wore my Reason2Smile Bracelet, I thought, how could I do more? I contacted Keela Dates and shared my interest in getting involved with the foundation, and

she immediately made the trek over to Burlington, Vermont to meet me and tell me all about Reason2Smile and the Jambo Jipya School. She brought with her two members of the foundation's executive board. As I listened to them speak so passionately about their cause I knew that I wanted to spread the word with them and bring awareness of Jambo Jipya to my family, friends, my school, and community.

I began showing slides and videos from the Jambo Jipya School to my first grade students in Essex Junction, Vermont. My students, colleagues, friends and family helped me raise around \$1200 for Reason2Smile. What blew me away the most was the interest, generosity and dedication that my first grade students showed in responding to help the kids of Mtwapa, Kenya. One student, a six year-old first grader, donated over \$50 from his own savings account to Jambo Jipya. For several weeks, students emptied their piggy banks, and in some cases, withdrew from their savings accounts to donate to students in need. They made social connections to understanding how different life in Kenya was to life in Vermont, and they truly wanted to help improve the lives of kids they had only seen in pictures.

All of this giving and learning and growing began with two one-dollar bills tucked into a cardboard box and a little black bracelet worn around a wrist. After our efforts, there were over a hundred black bracelets being proudly worn around Vermont and around the United States, and hopefully, a lot more people spreading the word about their own Reason 2 Smile. In the coming year, I hope to continue to spread the message of Reason 2 Smile and find new ways to raise awareness to the students I teach and the colleagues I teach with. Thank you to Keela Dates for all of your hard work and for bringing smiles to me, my students, and all the children of Jambo Jipya.

By: Sam Coleman

Halloween Levenson Style!



Andrew (first grade), Marley (third grade), and Nicholas (fifth grade) could easily name the personal benefits of throwing a Halloween party (lots of fun with friends, games, food, etc), but then they took it one step further... what if their fun could ultimately benefit kids on the other side of the world?! They put their heads together and decided that they would ask their friends to bring a donation for Reason2Smile so that they could not only come and have fun at the party, but they could feel good about doing it! On a Sunday afternoon in Wilmington, NY the bouncy houses were hopping (almost literally!), the toilet paper was transforming kids into mummies, apples were evading capture by eager teeth, and over \$180 was raised for the children at Jambo Jipya School!! The Levenson kids and their friends really did use their fun to benefit others! Thank you to these three generous kids and all the friends who joined them! You have truly made a difference in the lives of children in Kenya!

2012 Reason2Smile Writing Contest

Love to smile?! Love to write?! We are starting a **new annual contest for students in grades two through six**. The contest offers students the opportunity to showcase their talent in response to a specific theme. This year's (2012) theme is **"What is Your Reason 2 Smile?"** Competition categories include **prose** and **poetry**. Students are **not** permitted to submit work independently so kids and parents, tell your teachers about this contest! Entries must be submitted by **March 2nd 2012** and winners will be notified by April 27th 2012. Winning entries will be displayed on the Reason2Smile website as well as right here in the newsletter! The award categories include First and Second Place at each grade level. The First Place category recipient receives a Reason2Smile prize pack (t-shirt, cd, sticker, bracelet, etc) and a school visit from Executive Director Keela Dates (either in person or via Skype, sorry... she's not going to fly across the country). The second place recipient receives a Reason2Smile prize pack. To download the contest details and submission release form please visit the "Teachers and Students" portion of the website found on the "How to Help" page or by clicking the link below. We look forward to having you participate and reading all about why you smile! <http://reason2smile.publishpath.com/teachers-and-students>



Sharing a Love for Soccer



Kids at Lake Placid Elementary School decorate soccer balls to send to the kids at Jambo Jipya School.

Have you ever thought about how very few material things it takes to play a game of soccer? Basically... a ball. That's what makes soccer the most widely played international sport and you can bet it's played frequently at Jambo Jipya School! Often times though, a soccer ball is nowhere to be found on the school grounds. With the cost of food rising in Kenya, little or no money is left to spend on something as frivolous as a soccer ball. However, Kenyan kids are known for their resourcefulness and a lack of a soccer ball (at least one as we know it) would never hold them back. All you need is a few plastic bags or rags, and some string and you can make yourself a soccer ball! (Or football as they call it in Kenya.) These homemade soccer balls are great for small spaces where you aren't expecting your passes to go much farther than 10 or 20 feet but out on a field of any size, these

balls don't work so well. That's why the fourth and fifth grade students at Lake Placid Elementary School stepped in! Led by PE teacher Matt Young, these students have been learning about soccer and how it transcends borders, languages, and cultures. They learned about Jambo Jipya School and the love the children there have for soccer, and then they participated in the truest form of generosity... sharing what you have. Sharpie markers were used to write kind messages on the balls that will be sent to the kids in Kenya in order to continue spreading the joy that is soccer! Thanks LPES kids!!

Kenya Update



As you've probably noticed, Kenya has made the news quite a bit lately. It seems that the Kenyan government is struggling to maintain a sense of security for its citizens and tourists. Keela and a couple of the Reason2Smile board members are scheduled to visit Jambo Jipya School in January but please know that they are keeping an eye on the news and staying in contact with Christine at Jambo Jipya School. Christine has assured them that she will make it clear if she feels it is too unsafe to travel, but at this point she says things are just fine in Mombasa and Mtwapa. (Everyone in school is focused and working hard! Exams are coming up so everyone is doing their best to prepare for those!) If you're comfortable doing so please hold Christine, the kids at Jambo Jipya School, and all the innocent people involved in the Kenyan/Somali conflict in your thoughts and prayers. Here's hoping for a quick and safe solution!

Student Spotlight



This adorable smile belongs to a boy named Dennis. He is ten years old and attends fourth grade at Jambo Jipya School. Dennis was one of the very first students to attend Jambo Jipya School back when it first opened in 2004; he was only three years old. Dennis was born to a single mother who was working as a maid. Soon after he was born, Dennis' mother went missing. Dennis has been living with his grandmother ever since. Dennis' grandmother is very poor and she struggles to support him. For that reason, Jambo Jipya has been providing Dennis with food, healthcare, clothing, and an education for many years. Dennis is a very kind and gentle boy. He is typically quiet and even a little bit shy. He works very hard in class and the teachers believe he has a bright future ahead of him. As you can see, smiling comes natural to Dennis and he does it frequently. Dennis is just one of the many students at Jambo Jipya School who needs someone who is willing to donate \$15 per month so that he can continue to attend school. Many of you already sponsor children and for that we are all very grateful! (You will be receiving updates and school progress reports on your child very soon.) For those of you who don't currently sponsor a child, consider how 50 cents a day could keep a child off the streets and give them hope for the future. Contact Keela

at keela@reason2smile.org if you'd like to learn more about how you can help Dennis or another child like him. Thank you for recognizing that you can make a difference!

Give Them a Reason 2 Smile!



Jeremiah making a homemade soccer ball at Jambo Jipya School. This ball is made out of plastic bags and twine. It is great for kicking short distances.

Tax deductible donations can be made 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 continuing to support children who need and deserve a chance at a future!