



good health through giving...

Afya brings good health to people in developing nations who need it most. We achieve our mission drawing from the experience and knowledge of committed health professionals, business leaders, media pioneers and global visionaries.

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AFYA'S ANNUAL GALA: A Magical Night



On Saturday, October 17th, nearly 150 people came out of a cold and rainy evening into the warm glow of Afya's new warehouse space.

The celebration – Afya's second birthday, (ware)house party, and fundraiser – was brightened by the newly painted orange walls, orange tablecloths and orange pumpkins, as well as the smiles, hugs and handshakes exchanged between old friends and new.

Attendees toured Afya's new facility to the sound of live African drumming, bid on items in a silent auction, and enjoyed wine and hors d'oeuvres served by a small army of youthful volunteers in orange Afya T-shirts.

Several elected officials were present: Representative Eliot L. Engel said he was "proud to represent Yonkers in Congress and so proud of the work Danielle has done with Afya;" Chuck Lesnick, Yonkers City Council President, said: "Not only is this a mitzvah, but you're using this space and we are so glad you're here." Also on hand were New York State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins and Lori Copland from Rep. Engel's office.

The evening was kicked off by Afya board member David Bowen, who told a rapt audience that in the past 18 months, Afya had shipped 21 containers holding 600,000 lbs. of “life-changing medical equipment and supplies valued at over \$2 million to nations in Africa and the Caribbean.” He mentioned that Gloria’s Gathering had added several new donation sites, noted that “Afya’s volunteer force is around 450-people strong,” and described the recently-launched Afya Club phenomenon as “a great opportunity to increase and expand the reach of Afya’s work to thousands of kids across the country.”

Then Afya Founder and Executive Director, Danielle Butin, asked the question: “What makes Afya special?” Her answer: “We grant wishes.” Afya matches “the express needs” of health centers in Africa and Haiti with supplies that are readily available in New York. “We’re also unique because we see the universe as a set of objects and tools that can facilitate magic and access for people who would normally not be heard.”

Switching gears, Danielle declared, “The opportunity for children to get involved in this work is remarkable,” then called out, “Where are our rainboot girls?” Danielle pointed to several raised hands and said “Three middle school children responded to a need I saw on a visit to Malawi. There were midwives delivering babies, in rural areas, with open wounds on their feet from walking barefoot. So we thought about collecting the rainboots that people in this country would normally discard. These three middle school children are on a crusade to get as many rainboots as they can, for us to send to Malawi.”

Danielle then described another, perhaps less-known, aspect of Afya: its “very strong pre-vocational training program for populations at risk.” As an occupational therapist, she said, “it warms my heart” to see “women who have been domestically abused, people with chronic mental illness come in here and learn how to work and learn their own way of giving back.” She said, “I believe these walls create magic. I think there’s something here that we can’t describe, but there is love and energy and heart that goes on in this work that is beyond description.”

Danielle then introduced U.N. Ambassador Stephen Matenje from Malawi, and the Right Honorable Joyce Banda, Malawi’s first female Vice President, who spoke to the mesmerized audience for more than ten minutes. She described how The African Union, which recently established the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA), asked her to serve as “Malawi’s goodwill ambassador for safe motherhood.” She



said, “Out here [in the U.S.], when a woman is pregnant, it is not considered a disease. You look forward to the day she [can] bring home her baby. In Africa, you are pregnant and the whole village is wondering whether you are going to go and come back alive.”

The government has successfully urged mothers to deliver their babies not in the villages, but in clinics. As a result, the demand for clinics has climbed, but “they don’t have beds,” she said, “they don’t have mattresses.” That is why she “came here determined to find Danielle, to say: What is it that we can do together?”



Joyce Banda singled out 13-year old Alex Straus, whom she had met earlier. Last year, Alex gathered surplus soccer supplies from friends and neighbors that were ultimately sent to Neno, Malawi, where they now enable four teams to play and thousands to watch. While Alex stood next to her, she said “Thank you so much for what you are doing. You must come to Malawi.” She concluded with “a story that my grandmother told me when I was nine years old. A severe famine struck an animal kingdom. The animals were dying in the thousands, and the few that remained were flocking together looking for whatever

they could get to eat. The giraffe, with its long neck, said, ‘Your Majesty,’ to the King Elephant, ‘It looks like somebody’s cooking food up ahead.’ King Elephant said, ‘That’s not possible. We don’t have food anywhere.’ But they followed the smoke and found a big pot on the fire. The little hare and some other animals were putting even more firewood under the pot so it was boiling furiously. The King said, ‘So, dear little hare, while we’re all starving, you’re busy cooking food.’ And the little hare said, ‘Oh no, Your Majesty. I’m not cooking food. I’m just boiling stones, because I believe that if I keep boiling them, one day they’ll turn into pumpkins.’”

Ms. Banda asked: “What am I saying? Perhaps that’s where I am. Perhaps all I’m doing with that enormous task back home is boiling stones in the sincere hope that one day they’ll turn into pumpkins. And I believe that Danielle and all who are here are passing on firewood so that we can keep boiling the stones. And until they turn into pumpkins, my humble prayer is: Don’t abandon me. Don’t abandon us. Because you know what? They’ll turn into pumpkins one day. Thank you.”

Danielle then introduced, Mariam J. Mwaffisi, Permanent Secretary of the Tanzanian Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children, who echoed Joyce Banda’s theme. She vowed to “speak to my colleagues in the Ministry of Health and tell them what you are doing, and I’m sure that you will find that we are very, very willing to work with you.” She concluded by saying, “When you give, you get blessed.”

Danielle reminded everyone to take a parting gift from the table – some very special bracelets that were blessed by Masai elders. “I’d like to close with an African proverb: Do good because of tomorrow. Thank you.”

FROM THE DIRECTOR: A Return to AFYA'S Origins



This past summer I spent several weeks traveling with my three children. I returned to Tanzania, the land that launched the AFYA Foundation two years ago. I knew that I wanted my children to witness, firsthand, a country so different from the country of their birth. The moment we landed the energy was palpable. We were greeted with an abundance of warmth, generosity and kindness. People met us with smiling greetings of “Jambo.”

We traveled from the Mount Kilimanjaro area to the most northern section of the Serengeti. We visited numerous health centers and small dispensaries. At one clinic, hundreds of people waited in the fields for medical care, while two lone sutures had been placed on a shelf. The medical supplies were just not there – not even the most essential items.

Before leaving on this trip, I told my children to bring bags of pens and pencils. Now they handed them out to children attending school for the first time. We watched hundreds of other children running towards our car when they realized we were handing out pens. They didn't ask for money or food, they wanted the pens. We saw crowds of additional children dressed in blue uniforms tearing down a nearby hill, running as fast as their little feet could carry them, for that donated pen or pencil. One of my children responded, “We don't have enough. We don't have enough for everybody.” She saw the truth – there is never enough. I turned to her and said, “Focus on those you have handed a pencil to, enjoy their smiles and know that you have helped them.”

This was a humbling moment for us all. If we are determined to make everything better for everyone, we will fail. If we see lasting benefit in helping one person at a time, then we can accept the worthiness and impact of our work. Every one of AFYA's efforts, every suture, every writing tool, every crutch, will change or save a human life.

In the beginning of our trip, a guide walked us down a path that led to a home for mothers of disabled children. During this walk, I asked our guide to tell me about the dark clouds in the sky and what they meant -- I thought a storm was approaching. He responded wisely: “You don't look to the sky to tell you about the weather, you look ahead to the mountains, to Mount Meru and Kilimanjaro. You look to the peaks for the weather, never to the sky that is right above.” Perhaps there lies the goal of our work: to look ahead and embrace the most meaningful possibilities. Looking forward helps us define our present; and possibly impact our life choices as we help the lives of others, one at a time.



Gloria's gathering

Gloria's Gathering is a successful and meaningful program within Afya that allows families who have recently lost a loved one to donate end-of-life and other health-related supplies to people who need them, but have none.

Time and again, we've seen families gratified and moved by the knowledge that their donated wheelchairs and walkers will live on to improve the quality of life for people who could never otherwise acquire them on their own. We've also found that people at clinics to whom we ship such supplies ask for these kinds of items more and more, and are grateful for whatever we can send.

To date, Afya has collected items directly from donors' homes. Each week we get an increasing number of calls and e-mails from people wanting to make such donations – a truly wonderful thing. Unfortunately, we are faced with logistical challenges that grow in proportion to the outpouring of generosity we encounter.

New York City side streets are not noted for their accessibility or ample parking. Our practice of neighborhood-based, private home pickups has unfortunately earned us a mounting pile of parking summons. Fortunately, every challenge contains opportunity.

To ease the collection of supplies, Gloria's Gathering has established three drop-off locations in Manhattan, and is in the process of identifying sites in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Nassau County. It is our hope to have enough convenient locations that families throughout the region will be able to donate without difficulty.

We do not have as many drop off locations as we would like. We are, in the meantime, open to suggestions. If you know an organization or site that would be willing to serve as a collection helper or donation site, please contact us at ellen@afyafoundation.org.

When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.

~Alexander Graham Bell

A door has opened. Gloria's Gathering remains committed to giving those who mourn a way to give to those who need and, thus, to heal.

HEALING THROUGH HELPING

What did you do on your summer vacation?



Megan Bartok, a 31-year old Yorktown resident pursuing her Master's degree in occupational therapy at Columbia University, completed her three-month fieldwork experience in mental health at Afya. Her last day was Friday, August 28.

As Afya's volunteer coordinator, Megan worked with people with various disabilities, using

"altruism to help heal them, as they work on specific tasks they needed help with – how to answer phones, show up on time, even how to count things."

Unique in Many Ways

Megan is the first occupational therapy graduate student Columbia has ever placed at Afya; most fulfill their fieldwork at a psychiatric institution or an outpatient setting. One reason: most institutions are afraid to embrace people with disabilities. Maxine Elkins, Coordinator of the Volunteer Internship Program at The Volunteer Center of United Way, recently told Megan: "I hope you guys still take people [with mental illness] because most places don't do this." Afya is different, Megan says, because Executive Director Danielle Butin, an occupational therapist herself, "was intrigued by these populations and not only wants to help the greater cause of her foundation, but on a personal level, wants to give these people meaningful work."

Megan herself was given unusual freedom, she says, "to shape what I wanted to do with clients." She is also grateful for the chance to work with "such a variety of people," some autistic, others diagnosed with schizophrenia, depression or bipolar disorder. One client, Megan suspects, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder. She helped another, a victim of domestic violence, who was "trying to get her life back together" by helping her "sharpen her computer skills before she went back to work."

Everybody Wins

Megan also found "very inspirational" a young man with cerebral palsy, unable to speak without mechanical assistance, whom she was helping to create a PowerPoint presentation so that he can become an Afya fundraiser – this was his idea. "One thing that really touched my heart: I went to Afya to work with him one day. It happened to be my birthday. And he

bought me flowers. I was like, 'Wow.' He went out of his way to get something for me, to think about...my birthday. It was the best present I've ever gotten."

"Working here," Megan says, "has been so empowering, knowing what the greater cause is. I will definitely keep in touch and volunteer here and there with my children [ages six and eight]. I think it's wonderful for kids to experience. The power this brings you is tremendous: The feeling of walking into a place every day and knowing it's not just working with a client, you're also helping someone far away that really needs it."

Told like this, it looks like a win-win-win – for Afya, for Megan's clients, and for recipients overseas – all benefiting. Megan said: "Absolutely. And I get the great experience of learning from them all."



AFYA CLUBS: THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW, TODAY

Remember the old slogan, "Join the Navy, See the World"? Here's a new one: Join an Afya Club and Change It!

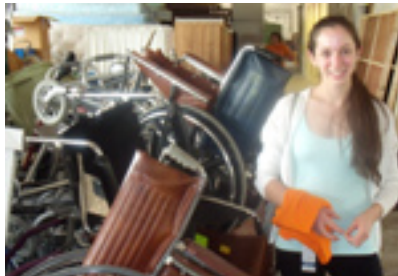
One of the most inspirational and, perhaps, momentous events in Afya's brief history is the advent of the Afya Club, a way for young people to get involved. Clubs collect (footwear, home goods, kitchen and office supplies, sports equipment), sort (if close to the warehouse), or raise funds (for shipments). Several are up and running in the New York region and, with the Weekly Reader soon to tell middle school kids across America how to start their own, many more may be on the way.

No one knows the ultimate impact, but the Clubs' benefits are easy to foresee. Participants get invaluable grassroots organizing experience by positioning themselves as leaders in their schools and communities. Meanwhile, they gather supplies, spread awareness and build good will. As Afya's Director Danielle Butin has said, giving is "a gift that doesn't have to wait until adulthood." Clubs prepare the next generation to be tomorrow's stewards, agents of positive change.

Each Club is tailored to its members' resources and interests. The Afya Club of Long Island, for instance, is a regional organization not tied to a specific school. Its president, Danielle Polland, a junior at Great Neck North High School, says, "It's more the idea of banding together and creating or collecting for whatever good we can do." Like most teens today, she and her peers spread the word via Facebook. A recent project: a drive to gather discarded pens for clinics that lack them. The Afya Club at Hastings High School, just four miles from Afya's door, has a different mission. Its leader, senior Gaelle Feliz, "rallies the troops" to arrive at the warehouse to sort supplies, all at a moment's notice.

The promise of the Afya Clubs is integrally dependant upon not only the energy and idealism of youth, but also upon the goals and ingenuity of its members: consider Ms. Polland's idea to plug into "the real estate network" to collect materials from people selling their homes across Long Island and parts of Connecticut. Indeed, the limitless potential of the Clubs is built into their individual vision.

Their Future Is Ahead of Them



It started with a brainstorming session convened by Danielle Butin and attended by local students, including Emilie George and Meghan Rossini, friends from nearby Bronxville. Their mission, says Meghan, is "to harness the drive of other kids like us."

As Afya summer interns, Emilie, Meghan, and Jillian Kuhn, a graduate of the Masters School, collaborated on a number of projects, including the creation of a donation cannister. Meghan, who is now attending Connecticut College with plans to become a doctor, says, "Emilie came up with the idea, and the three of us just ran with it. We weren't given any instructions, and...we had complete control over [it]. We came up with the design, made a few prototypes, and decided which ones would work best. We produced a bunch then distributed them. It was very cool being able to do a project like this from start to finish."

Thus empowered, is it any wonder these three went on to develop the concept of the Afya Club and then assemble the Afya Club Kit – a registration form, donation box label, ideas for fundraising and items to collect – it's a standard set of tools to help kids anywhere, from middle school to college age, start and run an Afya Club themselves?

A World of Difference

The experience of these three pioneers may well portend the experience of those that follow. Each was deeply affected by the work they did. Before Afya, Meghan Rossini says, "I knew I was interested in medicine. But now I would love to travel to one of the clinics Afya has sent supplies to and work there." What did she learn from volunteering? "I can make a difference." Emilie George, now at Wesleyan University, says, "The Afya experience reinforced my interest in the field of medicine and opened my eyes to the need for worldwide healthcare reforms." Jillian Kuhn, now majoring in Public Health at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, credits Danielle Butin with "always giving us new and bigger projects." Her work at Afya, she says, "reinforced my dedication to world health and making a difference." A similar story is told by Gaelle Feliz, who began volunteering at Afya two years ago. Until then, she says, "I never realized how much I liked to help people." Now her goal is "to spend at least two years in another country volunteering, doing whatever I can to help, in a hospital, teaching, anything."

Their words recall another old Navy slogan: "It's Not Just a (Volunteer) Job, It's an Adventure." One that could last a lifetime.

THE SHIPPING MANIFEST

A Neuro-Surgical Mission to Tanzania



Supplies donated by the staff at Weill Cornell Medical College were packed and shipped to northern Tanzania where Dr. Roger Hartl, Chief of Spinal Surgery at Weill Cornell, is leading a team of health professionals and surgeons on a teaching/surgery mission to the Bugando Medical Center. All equipment and supplies were handpicked by Dr. Hartl's team. Marcela, Dr. Hartl's lead operating room nurse, spent hours at the AFYA warehouse, meticulously selecting instruments and other items. In the end, they selected two ultrasounds, several operating room tables, ventilators, bi-polar machines, and an abundance of surgical instruments and supplies – plus an entire medical library – all safely stowed in their container.

We'd like to extend our gratitude to the staff at Weill Cornell who assisted with this shipment; and an enormous "Thank you" to Dr. Hartl and his team for the great-heartedness that made it possible.

Afya Teams Up with Partners In Health to Help Malawi

Afya shipped its fifth container to Partners In Health in Neno, Malawi. Contents included an entire dental suite, pallets of surgical packs and primary care supplies, desks and chairs. Also packed were 30 walkers, 20 commodes, and other rehabilitation supplies gathered largely by Gloria's Gathering from the hospice community in the New York area – all destined to improve the lives of elders living in rural Malawi.



In what's become something of a tradition, we also sent pallets of soccer supplies for the children. Our gratitude and appreciation to Alex, Harrison and Max; as well as to Harrison Youth Soccer for their collection efforts!

Afya Responds to SOS in Sierra Leone

It's been a year since Afya first worked with New York-based Surgeons OverSeas (SOS) to support their clinical training initiative at Connaught Hospital in Freetown, the capital of of Sierra Leone. Drs. Adam Kushner and Peter Kingham, founders of SOS, arrived at Afya's warehouse with a long list of desired items that had been carefully compiled in concert with the recipient hospital's staff. They then pored over our collection to best match those needs.



Most requirements were basic – thousands of sutures, miscellaneous tracheotomy supplies, chest tubes, metal trays for instrument sterilization and IV poles. A freezer for lab specimens and 20 centrifuges were also among the items that were selected.

Special thanks to Matt at the University of Pennsylvania for racing from Philadelphia with

50 centrifuges just in time to get them loaded and on their way to Sierra Leone.

Finally, the Levowitz family, in a touching tribute to their late father, donated his entire medical library and all of his equipment to Afya, thus honoring his life-long commitment to medical education and dedication to providing the best health care, regardless of the patients' means. We thank Dr. Levowitz's family from the bottom of our hearts for their hard work and esteem for their father's legacy. It will live on among doctors and nurses in Sierra Leone.

WHY WE'RE NOT MAILING THIS

You know Afya's mission – Good Health Through Giving – but did you realize that by redirecting surplus health care equipment and supplies to those in need, Afya also rescues those same items from an ignominious fate: slowly decomposing in landfills, cluttering cellars and supply rooms, or as ashes scattered to the winds?



Africa is a frequent destination for the goods you donate to Afya. It is also, regrettably, a common dumping ground for the world's garbage – legally or not. We try to do the reverse: not rid ourselves of worthless things, but provide people with what they explicitly request and, in most cases, things that they desperately need.

So the reason we're not mailing you this – yes, it's cheaper and faster – is because it's consistent with our philosophy of resource conservation. When you provide financial support, or give medical supplies or rehab equipment to Afya, you gain – by "losing" what you no longer require. And someone you don't know, in a place you've probably never been, will be able to walk or see or breathe or live another day as a direct result.

It's not easy being green, but it's sure worth a shot. In this business, give a little – it can mean a lot.

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