

SUSTAINING SERVICE

By Ashley South

Meet the Bailey Family—Sabrina, Jeff, and their two daughters, Elsie and Jessie. The Baileys moved to Naperville in 2015 from Seattle, Washington when Sabrina took a new job in Chicago for Northern Trust Asset Management. Sabrina is currently the Global Head of the Wealth, Data & Analytics Division at the London Stock Exchange Group. Sabrina has a successful background in helping businesses and start-ups grow. (This detail will be important later in the article!) Jeff is the backbone of the family and keeps everything chugging along while also managing his full-time position. The Bailey family love spending time outdoors, biking downtown,



Discussing painpoints
Sabrina Bailey,
Sierra Leone

and helping where they can both locally and globally.

Sabrina and Jeff met in college. They bonded over discussions of the service trips they took

in middle and high school. From Oregon, Sabrina and Jeff (separately) would pile into their respective church vans and head down to Mexico to help communities in need.

They built homes, planted gardens, and painted schools. Each spring break was spent in Mexico until they both went to college. Service projects in Africa started after college



First season peanut harvest
Grow for Hope,
Sierra Leone

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graduation. “We found a heart for people there and fulfillment in giving back,” Sabrina told us.

In 2012, Jeff went to Sierra Leone on a service trip to work in rural schools. He tells us that there he found most people were starving. The government-set food prices exacerbate the problem to the extent that one bag of rice that feeds a family of four for a week is 25% of a week’s salary. The price of food has continued to rise, so preparing regular square meals for a family is an impossibility. In addition, ninety percent of women have undergone female genital mutilation, many are single mothers, and their children’s schools are in disrepair. A planned trip in 2014 was postponed due to the Ebola outbreak. The next chance was 2017. Jeff and Sabrina took their girls, and as a family they worked at schools to help teachers and mothers in need.

On this trip, the seed was planted to help the women and girls of Sierra Leone as Sabrina listened to the women of the villages: their needs, pain points, hopes, dreams.

They wanted to be respected and empowered. Sabrina was moved and saw a way to use her entrepreneurial talents to help these women. In 2018, Sabrina and Jeff founded **Grow for Hope** as a small peanut farm of 2.5 acres to give the women a hand up instead of a handout. Women work the farm and earn money for their families. Five men work the farm for income and to provide protection to the women from gangs of men who could sexually assault them or threaten them for money.

At the end of the first harvest, they asked the women to save seed to plant for the next year. Would they make it through the off season while suffering from food insecurity? They did. In fact, they saved enough to plant five acres the next year! That first sacrifice created a now almost four-year-old business.

They were able to grow the peanut farm to eight acres. In 2020, they started a pepper farm on the eight acres as peppers and peanuts grow in off cycles. This means that they can employ 40 women year-round. Through their employment, the women are also funding 145 girls to go to school, and the surplus of funds provides additional food and support as needed. The organization is focused on funding education, supplying a living wage to single moms, and providing education to stop female genital mutilation. 100% of every dollar made goes back to the community.

Meanwhile in Naperville, after two years of belonging to traditional institutions that they found took in far more than they gave back, the Baileys wanted to challenge themselves

to start an organization where 95% of every dollar taken in is directly given back to service causes. **True Reflections**, a house church and faith-based service organization, was founded in 2018. Jeff is the pastor and administrator of the organization. With about 40 members, the organization collects about \$50,000 a year. Each year since its founding, they have met the goal to give back 95% directly to the poor, widowed, and youth in our local community. Decisions about where the money is spent are held during a monthly meeting. All members, including children, vote on where they want the money to be directed. Sabrina reminds us that even

in our own neighborhoods, it is easy to miss or not see the need.

Obviously, the Bailey’s are unique in the approach they take to service. Sabrina and Jeff encourage people to do small acts of service in their everyday: water a neighbor’s plants or invite those who live alone over for dinner. Serve one other person in a way they didn’t expect. During this time of giving thanks, even one small act can go a long way.



growforhope.com
truereflections.org



At home
Sabrina and Jeff Bailey,
Naperville

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