



**“IF YOU
EDUCATE A
WOMAN,
YOU EDUCATE
A NATION.”**

African proverb

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AWEF was started in 2004 by a small group of committed individuals in Croton-on-Hudson, NY. AWEF members believe that the education of girls and women is a powerful antidote to the cycle of poverty, ignorance and violence that has increasingly engulfed so many parts of our world.

To this end, AWEF is doing its small part by providing secondary education to deserving girls and young women in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The young women we support are poor, often orphaned, or living with one parent or relative, and several siblings, but all have shown academic promise and a desire to complete their education.

At AWEF every dollar donated goes directly to the education of young women. Since its inception the AWEF Board of Directors has donated all operating expenses.

With your generosity we are doing our part to help improve the future of these young women, their families, and their communities.

Since its local beginning AWEF has expanded to include donors from 15 states across the country! Please see our

An African Pilgrimage

BR. JACK RATHSCHMIDT, a Capuchin Franciscan and a founder of AWEF, made a self-funded “pilgrimage” to East Africa in June to meet some of the girls we sponsor and to see for himself what their situations were. This was his second such self-funded trip. Here are excerpts from his report back to the board:

“My trip was a privilege, long and demanding but very good. Though hundreds of thousands of East Africa’s poor are still trapped in huge slums, most of the girls we support emerge from these hell holes with hope because of our help. We should be both humble and proud. Though it is a drop in a bucket, our work endures and is helping make a positive change in the lives of many families. In Tanzania and Kenya, I interviewed more than 30 of the girls we support. I also traveled more than 600 miles in Kenya and 200 miles in Tanzania, where travel is not easy, but it was all worth it. Seeing the girls we support one on one is both thrilling and demanding. They are working hard to spend the money we raise fruitfully.

Without seeing and experiencing it day after day, it is difficult to describe the life of ordinary people in East Africa. The vast majority walk everywhere or take Dala Dalas in Tanzania or Matutus in Kenya. These are old 12- or 16-passenger vans that take a thousand different routes from people’s neighborhoods to their work places. Alongside bikes, motorcycles, cars, carts pulled by animals, regular buses and 16-wheel trucks, pedestrians are besieged most of the time by peddlers selling fruits, vegetables, candies, chickens, nuts, machetes and almost everything else you can think of. It feels chaotic to the visitor, but has been going on so long in cities that most people ignore it, much like New Yorkers who don’t hear ambulances, police

cars and fire engines. It is always noisy and especially so in the slums of both Nairobi and Dar es Saalam. That the girls we support emerge from the cacophony and poverty and do well in boarding schools always amazes me.

Most of the girls we support in Kenya are at Mamma Africa Secondary School, a new and simple facility that is set in the middle of a 100,000-acre Del Monte pineapple farm 90 kilometers from Nairobi — a world away from the large Mathere slum (one of the largest in all of Africa) where many had previously lived. The school had a full-scale school assembly when I arrived. There were songs, dances and poems, along with speeches from the principal and the matron, who is the one who watches over the girls at night and attends to their personal health and other needs. I was impressed. They also had a festive soccer game between the faculty and students, and I was the ceremonial referee.

The schedule most of our students follow is very demanding, with classes beginning at 5:15 a.m. After a break for breakfast, they attend class all morning, then have lunch, get some exercise and return to class. At 3:30 they do games and outdoor activities until an early dinner. Classes resume at 6:15 and end finally at 8:30. All of this 6 days a week! I asked a few girls whether it was overwhelming, and while they admitted it was difficult, they insisted it was worth it because it was their exit from the futility of life in the slums. These young women are very aware that they have an opportunity in life that they could never have hoped for, and the ones with whom I spoke are very grateful for us and all who support AWEF.”

For more on Br. Jack’s trip, go to You Tube and search for “The Girls of AWEF”.



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Br. Jack with Honorata during his trip in June, wearing a Masai shawl she gave him

calendar for future opportunities to participate. Visit our website www.awef.org for a more in-depth history of AWEF and to learn about alternate giving.

To make a donation by mail: AWEF, 104 Grand Street, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520.

To be added to our mailing list please go to info@awef.org and send us your name, mailing address and email address. By adding your name to our email list we save mailing costs which is most appreciated.

Like us on Facebook@ African Women's Education Fund

CALENDAR

Karibou dinners ongoing nationwide

JANUARY

Winter fund raiser

APRIL

Women's cocktail party

MAY

Mother's day event

OCTOBER

An evening of music

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Annual Women's Cocktail Party 2016

Continuing Our Efforts ...

AWEF'S ANNUAL SPRING women's cocktail party was a big success, both in terms of fund-raising — donations topped \$5,000 — and, just as important, raising awareness in the local community about who we are and what we do. The party, held at the Black Cow in Croton (space donated by the owners), featured wine and appetizers, a talk by AWEF supporter Michele Cortese, and lots of good conversation. Watch for information/invitations next spring.

Smile!

AWEF IS PLEASED to announce that it is now a participating organization in Amazon Smile. This means that if you shop on the smile.amazon.com website, (rather than the regular amazon.com site) 0.5% of what you spend on eligible purchases will go to AWEF. To get started, all you have to do is go to smile.amazon.com and select AWEF as your chosen charity. The website will then remember your selection every time you shop. It won't cost you a penny, and will help us. Thanks.

A Success Story

ONLY 20% OF GIRLS in sub-Saharan Africa complete secondary school, which is comparable to middle and high school in the U.S. And it certainly didn't look as if a bright, hard-working Tanzanian girl named Honorata would be one of them. When HIV/AIDS took both her parents, her brothers told her she had to marry because they couldn't afford to feed and clothe her. Instead, Honorata ran away and lived on the streets until she got a job as a night security guard for a religious community. A man she met there encountered Br. Jack at a conference in Rome, told him about Honorata, and when Br. Jack brought the tale of her plight — and that of so many other girls — back to the U.S., AWEF was born.

Through the generosity of AWEF supporters, Honorata was able to go to a boarding school and qualify as a teacher. Now the mother of two young children, she teaches a fourth-grade class of 56 students. With additional money from AWEF, Br. Jack bought a laptop that she uses in school and to help start a candy business.

Honorata displays a picture of some AWEF supporters in her classroom, and tells her students that we are responsible for her education and her success. And we are proud of her!

Did You Know ...?

- that approximately 80% of young women in sub-Saharan Africa have not completed their secondary education, and that 1 in 3 cannot read?
- that girls who attend school are 3 times less likely to become infected with the HIV virus?
- that there is a 50% increase in survival past age 5 for a child born to a mother who can read?
- that if all girls in sub-Saharan Africa had a secondary education, child marriage would fall by 64%?

THE UNITED NATIONS HAS DESIGNATED OCTOBER 11 THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD. YOU SEE HOW MUCH STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE FOR GIRLS IN AFRICA. PLEASE HELP AWEF HELP THE GIRLS.

We thank all who have so graciously contributed their time, talent and resources in support of our mission to educate young women in Africa. With small efforts such as ours we are contributing to making a better life for African women, their families and communities. AWEF is a 501(c) (3), tax-exempt organization. www.awef.org