



# Livelihood Infrastructure Food Education For Health

## Newsletter - Summer 2013

### Project Updates

#### ***Helping a family flourish in Kigali, Rwanda***

We are delighted to share an update on how our support has helped turn around the lives of a family in need Rwanda. This year and last, you may recall that L.I.F.E. For Health provided educational support to three vulnerable children and youth in Kigali, Rwanda. Their mother, a widowed genocide survivor living with HIV, lost her job over two years before and the family was teetering on the edge of disaster. She was no longer able to pay for the children's school fees, and the family was struggling to eat and maintain the very basics of life. Fortunately, L.I.F.E. was able to provide educational support, first for two of the youngest children for their secondary school studies, and then for an older sibling's nursing studies at the Health Institute of Kigali.

In addition to supporting the children, in partnership with our implementing local agency, Survivors Fund Rwanda, we were able to provide a partial grant and partial micro-loan for the family's mother to start her own small business, a take-out eatery. She meets regularly with a group of women trained in running a small business for additional support.

We are thrilled to share that the family is now back on their feet! The mother's business is up and running and doing well. One daughter has received a scholarship to study at Harold Washington College in Chicago. A son is first in his school for electronic sciences, while another daughter is en route to write the national examinations. Finally, the future nurse is excelling at school and will continue her studies at the Health Institute of Kigali this September. We wish this family well as they continue on their journey forwards out of poverty.

#### ***Memorial scholarships continue to change lives in Rwanda, the Philippines and now Guatemala***

We are so proud to report that, this year, seven young genocide survivors from Rwanda – five young women and two young men – will complete university thanks to support from L.I.F.E. For Health's Marie Claudine Mwizerwa Memorial Scholarship. These students are studying a variety of topics, including management and travel/tourism. All of them have come through the horrors of 1994 genocide violence thanks to their own strength and resilience, as well as the kindness of neighbours and others willing to care. Now, these courageous young men and women will embark on a new chapter in life, armed with post-secondary education, soon able to support themselves and their surviving families. We wish them much happiness and success in their future endeavours.

Our Filipino scholars continue to demonstrate success in their studies as well. Thanks to the Dr. Migriño-Stephenson Memorial Scholarship in Bohol, Philippines, Cerilmae Furog graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education in March 2013 and is preparing to write her board examination to become a teacher in September 2013. As you'll remember from our interview with Cerilmae in our Spring 2012 issue, she is striving to serve her community with her new skills. Meanwhile, two other scholarship recipients, Ronald Salisai and Jose Bugas (pictured right), continue their post-secondary studies. Jose lives with serious congenital physical challenges and we will be assisting him to be fitted with prosthetics so that he can enjoy the full benefits of his education through the freedom of his own mobility.

Lastly, L.I.F.E. For Health has recently initiated support of an indigenous young woman from Santa Cruz la Laguna in the Western Highlands of Guatemala. Our support will enable this 18 year old young woman to complete middle school (the years following grade six) and qualify for scholarships to complete secondary studies. Without our support, she would be left without an education, as members of her family consider education of girls to be a useless investment as girls are meant to provide unpaid labour to the family of a future husband. We are pleased to be able to offer this young woman a chance at a better future by making an education available to her through a scholarship.



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## ***"one" Dance Performance by ReActive Dance Theatre***

On February 1st, ReActive Dance Theatre presented their first full length work "one" at the Dancemakers Centre of Creation in Toronto. Inspired by the work of L.I.F.E. for Health, ReActive created an evening of dance that displayed the effects of what it truly means to help another human being. The work was performed to a sold-out audience, and was followed by a reception and raffle. All proceeds from the show were donated to L.I.F.E. For Health, and will be put towards future projects helping children and families and some of the poorest parts of the world.

ReActive Dance Theatre is a creative partnership between Rhanda Jones and Amanda Pye that began during their time in Ryerson University's Dance Program. While in school, they explored what they truly wanted to say as artists, and how they wanted to contribute to the dance community. ReActive Dance Theatre is the outcome. As a company, they aim to explore many social, political and humanistic themes. For more information visit them at: [www.facebook.com/ReActiveDanceTheatre](http://www.facebook.com/ReActiveDanceTheatre)



*ReActive Dance Theatre members perform "one".*

## ***Members and Volunteers are the Lifeblood of L.I.F.E.!***

As you know, we're a registered charity with a mandate to improve the social determinants of health for residents in impoverished areas globally. Membership with L.I.F.E. For Health is so important to our work, as our organization is run purely on volunteers, allowing all of our funds raised going to the people we serve around the world. Regardless of background, members share one commonality: their passion and determination to make positive changes to improve the lives of those living in impoverished countries like the Philippines and Rwanda, where the everyday quality of life looks quite different from ours in Canada. Members and supporters – individual and corporate – have the option to become active volunteers with the charity.

All of the work that we do is by members who volunteer their time and energy to ensure that we take on meaningful projects that can make a difference in the lives of others, and to help raise funds to ensure we can support sustainable, small-scale, large impact projects. Because we are volunteer-run, we are able to devote 100% of our net profits directly to those in need, with only 1% of our income allocated to administrative costs.

We'd like to thank our members and volunteers for their ongoing support of our many initiatives! For those who are not yet active volunteers, we'd like to extend an invitation to become involved. There are many ways to do this, depending on your time, interests and talents. Some examples include helping us to spread the word about our organization and encouraging the support and involvement of others, attending some of our special events, increasing awareness of our charity by starting a work or school club, joining a committee, running for a position on our Board of Directors, or sharing thoughts and ideas for new and exciting initiatives! If you can spare a little bit of time, we would love to welcome you as a volunteer. Will you share your time and talents with us? Reach out today to [info@lifeforhealth.org](mailto:info@lifeforhealth.org) to indicate your interest or to ask for more information.

## L.I.F.E. Giver: Jennifer Samson

*Jennifer Samson is a volunteer of L.I.F.E. For Health. We are proud to feature her as a dedicated L.I.F.E. Giver!*

*When did you join LIFE for Health?*

Last year, I took a Sociology of AIDS course at the University of Toronto and towards the end of the year, around April (2012) we had a guest lecturer, Louise Binder. Ms. Binder talked about how she was involved with L.I.F.E. for Health and I immediately knew that I wanted to work with the organization.

*Why did you get involved?*

Being a proud Filipino, I always knew that I wanted to do work that involved helping people from the Philippines. I was born in the Philippines and was raised there for the first four years of my life before moving to Canada with my family. I still have many cousins in the Philippines. My family in Canada does a lot to help out our family in the Philippines because it's such a struggle to make a living over there. I know, however, that there are people in the Philippines who are not fortunate enough to have family abroad that can help them with their day to day living. So when Ms. Binder said that L.I.F.E. did work in the Philippines, I knew I had to get involved.



*L.I.F.E. volunteer Jennifer Samson*

*What is your current role?*

I have two positions with L.I.F.E.: First, I am a social media intern. I help out with the social media that help spread the word of our projects and events. Second, I am part of a fundraising team. From my Sociology of AIDS course, a few other girls were interested in working with L.I.F.E. as well. We met up and formed a fundraising team called the SOC309 Fundraising Team. We are currently working on our third fundraising project.

*What is it about the organization that keeps you engaged?*

What I love about L.I.F.E. is the many projects we do. Not only do we do work in the Philippines, but we also do work in Rwanda. We don't raise money and just to give it blindly to people. Our projects raise money to give people opportunities that they otherwise would not have, such as an education from our scholarship programs in both the Philippines and Rwanda and employment from our banana chip facility in the Philippines.

*What L.I.F.E. accomplishment/success are you most proud of?*

What I'm most proud of is the SOC309 Fundraising Team's very first project, which was a BBQ. Our goal was to make \$500 for the scholarship program. We were worried that we wouldn't even make it close to the goal, but to our surprise and excitement, we ended up surpassing our goal! It was such a huge success and I'm so proud of our accomplishment. However, I know this will not be the last and only thing I will be proud of. I can't wait to see what else the organization can do.

*What would you say to others who are thinking about volunteering for L.I.F.E.?*

DO IT! Get involved! As cheesy as it sounds, volunteering will be one of the most rewarding things you can do. I think our purpose in life is to help people. We were all put on this earth to help each other out. Working with L.I.F.E. for Health has been so rewarding. Knowing that you're doing something to make a difference in another person's life that lives all the way on the other side of the world gives you such a lift. Doing something small here is doing something HUGE for someone who doesn't have anything. So I say, volunteer and get involved. Every helping hand counts!

*Anything else you'd like to add?*

I just want to say how excited I am for the future of L.I.F.E. for Health. More and more people are starting to get involved and it's so nice to see the organization doing so well. I am so thankful to be a part of L.I.F.E.



*Jennifer and friends at the L.I.F.E. fundraising BBQ*



## ***Champagne & Strawberries Social***

On Tuesday, June 11, 2013, we hosted a Champagne and Strawberries Social at the Stephen Bulger Gallery on Queen Street West. Many thanks to those who joined us for this fun evening in support of L.I.F.E. For Health!



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