

Kiwanian Changes the World One Child at a Time



Reprinted from *Courier Life Publications* – Local couple helps change the world. Brooklynites featured in President Bill Clinton's book 'Giving.'

By Beth Sarafraz

Kiwanis Club of MAPLETON, Brooklyn Division – Former Lincoln High School teacher and 30 Year Key Club Advisor Mark Grashow (Mapleton) and his wife, Sheri Saltzberg, residents of Park Slope, Brooklyn, have been featured in former President Bill Clinton's latest book, *"GIVING: How Each of Us Can Change the World"* because of their endeavors to save schools and schoolchildren in Zimbabwe.

For the past couple years, the organization founded by the couple, U.S. Africa Children's Fellowship, partnering with the Zimbabwe Organization of Rural Associations for Progress, has been bringing containers of supplies to support the devastated Zimbabwean education system. The supplies are donated by participating sister schools, mainly in Brooklyn, such as Abraham Lincoln, Brooklyn Tech, John Dewey, Midwood, and Lafayette High School, intermediate schools such as the Bay Academy and Mark Twain, and elementary schools such as PS 329 and PS 100.

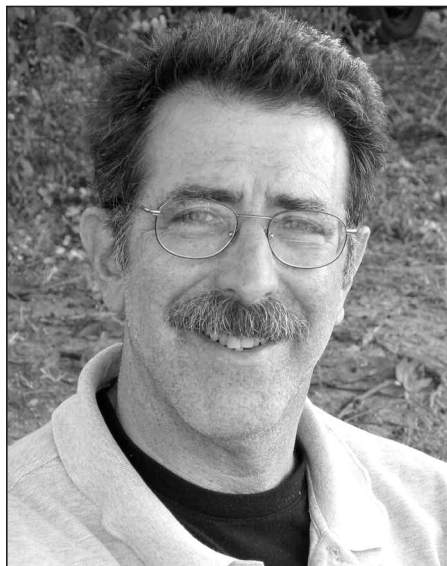
It all started with an invitation to a wedding in Zambia. After the wedding, Saltzberg and Grashow traveled to Zimbabwe to meet a friend of their son's and take a tour of the country and some local schools.

Hardly a vacation paradise, the southern African nation ruled by Robert Mugabe since its independence in 1980 seemed on the verge of collapse. Recent elections threatening to unseat Mugabe won't undo the damage anytime soon. "The inflation rate in Zimbabwe is 66,000 percent, which means the prices double every two weeks," said Grashow. "There isn't any electricity, hardly any food or water and one third of the students in school are orphans, due to a devastating AIDS crisis."

As a former school teacher, Grashow was appalled by the schools he and his wife toured. "Since the 1980s, no money has been invested. The buildings have holes in the roofs and broken windows and toilets. The libraries consist of shelves made of boards and bricks, with no books on them. There are no textbooks or science equipment, no pens or pencils. Blackboards were shredded and

peeling off the walls. There weren't even chairs or desks in the classrooms - students sat on the floor."

When asked why he was motivated to help the youth in another country, rather than right here in America, Grashow replied "If life brings you to a place where you see somebody drowning, you don't yell out to them 'Where do you live? What country are



Mapleton Kiwanian Mark Grashow.

you from? You just do what you can. Our lives brought us to Zimbabwe and we figured out a way we could help a substantial number of people. We also created a model that can be used anywhere."

The model created by Grashow and Saltzberg resulted in a win-win situation. American students got to experience how it feels to give by donating books, sports equipment, art supplies and toys that were no longer used in their schools, to live not only devoted to self-centered goals, but for the sake of others. African students got a chance for an education that could help them rise above the misery in their country.

Saltzberg cited a poignant example of how the things we take for granted in this country could actually change someone's life in another. "We got to a school where we had already sent one shipment - this was our second shipment. The principal asked me if I would go and greet this woman who had been waiting for two hours to meet me. She came over, took my hand and told me that she was raising her orphaned nephew, who had not had a pair of shoes in two years. She

Sheri and the kids from Zimbabwe.

wanted to get him shoes but she couldn't. But because of our shipment, he walked to school in a pair what they call 'tackies' (sneakers). She just wanted to thank me for the shoes."

The venture succeeded beyond anyone's wildest dreams. According to Grashow, "in one school, the kindergarten population went from 15 to 80 in six months, because we brought toys. Sixty percent of Zimbabwe's seventh graders now pass the reading test, whereas formerly it was only five percent. In one district, 38 students passed the A level exams required to be admitted to a university; three years ago, only one student passed.

"Schools now offer art, sewing and soccer, because we brought them supplies and soccer balls. Education is incredibly valued in Zimbabwe. Kids will walk two to three hours to get to school because we gave them all the abandoned sneakers cleaned out of the locker rooms of various high schools over here. We've brought six containers - six shipments so far - so the kids know we'll keep coming back."

Bill Clinton's book *"GIVING"* carries a message of hope and inspiration for ordinary people to realize we all have the power to change the world, to live not just for ourselves, but for the sake of others. Because they were featured in the book, Saltzberg and Grashow say "people have been contacting us from all over the country - not so much for giving us money, but asking us if we can help

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Monticello Awards Scholarships

The MONTICELLO Kiwanis Club, Hudson River West Division – has awarded a total of \$8500 in scholarship's to the follow Monticello High School Grad's: Pictured on the right: 1st row-Taylor Alper, The Max Shapiro Memorial \$1000; Samatha Putzer, The Kathy LaBuda Scholarship \$500; Autumn Eggleton, Florence Leshner Memorial \$500; 2nd row: Daniel Green, Kiwanis Memorial award \$1500; Frank Segro, Ben Golden Memorial \$1500; Maria Pavese, Founder's Award \$1500; Liana Perez, Irving Kaufman Memorial \$500; Ashley Shore, Rose Raimond Scholarship \$500; Rebecca Perlman, Leo Rappaport Memorial \$500 and Dior Jackson,



KPTC Albany

Rick Strum

ALBANY MEDICAL CENTER PEDIATRIC TRAUMA UNIT

It's a wonderful Life!

Little did we realize just how successful the Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Program would be at the Albany Medical Center Children's Hospital! K family members have gone from the ill fated duck race in the Hudson River to providing actual cash payments to the hospital totaling more than \$400,000. Clubs in the Capital and Van Rensselaer Divisions continue to support this worthwhile project.

Genesis – NE Children's Hospital In Boston – Past International President Anton Kaiser.

One cold and snowy Sunday, Tony approached capital district Kiwanians in the hopes of realizing a dream of creating trauma coverage for all of New York State's children. Founding Chairman KPTC Campaign, E. Kenneth James, a past Lt Governor from the Van Rensselaer Division, and many other Kiwanians from the Van Rensselaer, Mohawk and Capital Divisions adopted Tony's goal and planned the OVIDE Fund raising Duck Race in Hudson River. This occurred on 9/11/1993.

Since the race many fund raising efforts were attempted that led to the Bells of Life Program.

The Bell originator Dominick DeCecco of the Delmar Kiwanis Club and Past Lt. Governor approached me with the idea that people would donate \$1 to see their name on one of the Bells.

What a successful program! In addition, this program has been run for all these years with little or no administrative costs. During the tenure of the program, we have also sponsored 3 Black and White Balls and a children's day at the Great Escape Amusement Park in Lake George. The program has also benefitted from donations arising from Convention basket sales and from the receipt of contributions by our District Governors.

Since 1994, It has been an honor and a pleasure for me to have teamed with so many New York District Governors and K Family heroes who have worked so hard to see this program through!

Let's keep the program moving at all locations and associate Pediatric Trauma Coverage with the Kiwanis organization!



Monticello Scholarship Award Winners. Ursula Good Memorial \$500.