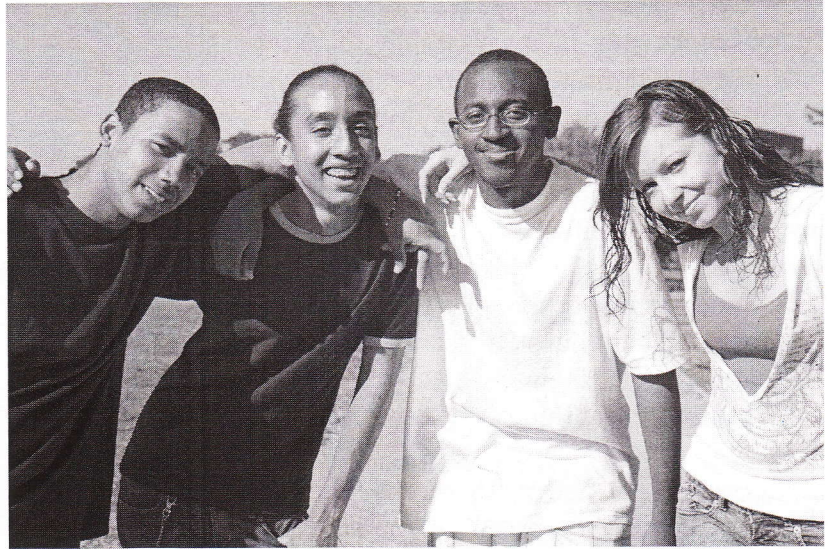


One Child's Village

OCV Finds a Partner in Scona High

One of the greatest current challenges facing NGOs is generating a "presence" in the community that can sustain the NGO's activities, and establish collaborative partnerships to benefit the vision and purpose upon which the NGO was developed. Every Director knows that even the most trivial note of interest in your undertakings can lead to unimagined success. Such was the case when I received a call in the early fall of 2008, asking me to give a short talk to a Leadership 35 class at Edmonton's Strathcona High School, on the value of engaging in global action. Our organization, One Child's Village, has a mandate to promote social awareness of the world's most critical issues, particularly HIV/AIDS orphans and their plight. The Leadership 35 class, lead by visionary instructor Tom Yonge, was seeking a global project to engage with during their Fall semester; I attempted to give them as many options as possible within the limits of their program.

It was a tremendous and unexpected reward to receive a call for a follow-up session several weeks later. After some deliberation, the students had chosen One Child's Village as their semester project and they were already deeply immersed in determining a path for their aspirations. With a goal of \$15,000 toward the expansion of our school in Bumala, Kenya, these young social entrepreneurs set to work to achieve their vision. They developed a five-week fundraising plan, with daily and weekly events to challenge all students, faculty, and families of Scona High. As they approached the end of their program, the students became concerned about meeting their fundraising goal so that these enthusiastic youth made a final Herculean effort. At the finale ceremony, several Leadership 35 students worked feverishly behind stage, tallying last-minute pledges as the entire student body and faculty crowded into the gymnasium to hear the grand total. As the oversized cheque was unfurled to an appreciative group of Directors from One Child's Village, a collective gasp of surprise and pride echoed throughout the gymnasium: \$27,000! The students peaked their efforts the previous day



and clearly demonstrated the power of *hope in action*.

I can't stress how moving this event was for me to see these leaders of tomorrow recognize a need in the world and respond with absolute commitment to success. There seems to be no challenge too large for them to undertake, and it instils in me a faith that the critical issues of our world may, indeed, be resolved by this generation.

The dividends of this relationship continue to pay for everyone connected to the project. Our children in Kenya are receiving an expanded school, new desks, uniforms, electricity, computers, increased nutrition, and much more as a result of the generosity of the Scona High students. The Scona students of 2009 received the incredible gift of giving in a way that transformed the lives of over 250 underprivileged children in Kenya. Tom Yonge, himself inspired by the enthusiastic response of his students, plans to visit our Bumala school this month with the aim to bring the next Leadership 35 students on a field trip in 2010. And me? I am once again renewed to continue this work after witnessing the generosity of the human spirit and seeing that the heart of humanity is well and alive.

— Todd Lorentz

