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Hampton-Piggs Peak Partnership Newsletter

been deeply affected, as the AIDS pandemic has torn many families apart. A generation has been lost, resulting in over 20 percent of Swazi children being orphaned.

As you might expect, many of the 500 students we are sponsoring in Eswatini have no mother or father. Our partners there – Linda, Mathie, and TK – often step in as surrogate parents, advocating for the students in their dealings with the schools. The concept of “family” extends even further. The students view their sponsorship, even though it comes from someone thousands of kilometers away, as an expression of love. In their eyes, sponsors become a part of their extended family.

Earlier this month, TK wrote to us: “Firstly, I would like to thank the Piggs Peak Partnership for always being there for their family in times of difficulties. You started as a small family, but look, today the numbers are unbelievable to people when we tell them. You first served with education full fee, now you take care for them with food and some uniform to those very desperate cases.”

It's worth noting that, in addition to expanding our Starfish program to support 500 students, the Partnership has expanded its food program, now providing groceries to about 40 different families every month. Our distribution in December was especially important as schools were closed over Christmas and often the only meal our students receive is the lunch at school.

TK continues, “This sponsorship is very unique. You are the only charity which goes to this extent in helping people for no gain, but have a heart that is willing to help and see the Eswatini kids being better people in future. Keep it up. We are also grateful to be part of you because working with you helped us to understand and broaden our hearts in loving and working with a lot of people.”

Our partners in Eswatini are integral to our success. They not only serve as our “feet on the ground,” carrying out our operations, but they are also an extension of the compassion from Canada that fuels our donations. They share that compassion as love with those receiving our support in the form of school sponsorships and grocery deliveries. In turn, they feel it reciprocated from the people in need, and share it with us. It’s a powerful feeling. I hope you feel it too.

The philosophy of Ubuntu teaches that, as humans, we are all connected. When it comes to the Partnership, you could even say we are all one big family.



Last June, I had a video chat with Nonhlanhla Dlamini, the Executive Director of Swatini Action Group Against Abuse (SWAGAA), an NGO focused on ending gender-based violence (GBV) in Eswatini. During the call, we discussed our organizations' work and explored potential areas for collaboration. Following up on that conversation, the Piggs Peak Partnership's representatives met with Ms. Dlamini in Eswatini to solidify plans for joint efforts.

In the January 21 edition of *Africa Renewal*, a United Nations digital magazine, Ms. Dlamini was interviewed about GBV in Eswatini. She said, "The most critical thing is prevention of GBV. Why is prevention key? Because once GBV takes place, it is difficult to pick up the pieces. And it is not just hard for the survivors only, even their family members become secondary victims. Everyone is affected. So, for me, the most crucial thing to focus on is preventing GBV because once it takes place, it is like spilled water. We may provide counselling and support to the survivors, but we can never change the narrative."

One idea for cooperation and mutual support that emerged from the October meeting is the Partnership paying school fees for victims of GBV and vulnerable individuals identified by SWAGAA. This is important because school can provide a protective and healing environment for young women. Unfortunately, it often comes after "the water is spilled."

The most important thing the Partnership can do to prevent GBV is through the work we already do: empowering women and girls through education. Research shows that when girls are educated, they are less likely to experience various forms of violence, including intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and harmful cultural practices such as early marriage which is often linked to increased vulnerability to violence. Educated women are also more likely to be

aware of their legal rights, access support services, and resist abuse.

Education also leads to greater economic independence for women, which reduces dependence on abusive partners. Educated women are more likely to find stable employment, giving them the financial freedom to leave abusive situations. They also tend to have healthier relationships, as they have better negotiation skills, higher levels of self-esteem, and a greater ability to make decisions about their personal lives.

Studies also show that educating girls creates a ripple effect within communities. Educated women are more likely to advocate for the rights of other women and girls, raise awareness about GBV, and challenge harmful gender norms.

By providing education for girls, the Piggs Peak Partnership is playing a vital role in reducing GBV. By giving them the opportunity to learn on equal terms with boys, we are helping to disrupt the cycle of violence and contributing to long-term social change.







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