

Together we are changing lives... one girl at a time.

Jambo Sponsors and Friends,

It was a very tense and sad time for Kenya in December 2007, when I arrived for Walkathon 2008. The election violence in Kenya has now dissipated, and the country has returned to nearly normal. Fortunately, our sponsored girls, their schools and communities were not in harm's way. The fear, however, led several families to move from our region and several girls have retired from the BEADS' sponsorship program. Our thoughts and prayers are with Kenya and all the people who were affected by the violence.

WALKATHON 2008 was postponed from January until February 2008, when the American walkers/sponsors joined me in Kenya for an amazing and successful journey. We raised more than **\$50,000** to support BEADS for Education and our programs. This is our only formal fundraiser and is **critical** to raise the money necessary to support BEADS' programs and operating expenses.

### **THANK YOU walkers and sponsors for all your efforts.**

The trip started at Top Ride Academy in Isinya, where BEADS sponsors more than 150 girls. During our four days in the BEADS house/office/workshop, the walkers met their sponsored girls, visited their families and homes, enjoyed the 6,000 volume library by reading books like *Little House on the Prairie* or *The Rains Come to the Kapiti Plains*, used the students' computer center and art room, attended classes, planted trees, and sang and danced with the girls and their families.

The 100-kilometer walk took us to Amboseli National Park, where we saw the beautiful wildlife and a traditional Coming of Age Ceremony sponsored by BEADS **without the traditional cutting**. We also saw the Elephant Research Center and ended at luxurious Serena Lodge/Amboseli. Everyone returned home with their new Maasai names, friends and memories they will cherish forever.

Together, we now sponsor more than 300 girls, including 25 high school graduates who are either in college or volunteering through BEADS' sponsorships as teaching interns at the public schools. In 2008, we will realize our first college graduates. Florence Maina was sponsored in 1999 when she enrolled in high school through BEADS. She then worked as a BEADS intern and attended college at Keswick College in Nairobi, majoring in social work. Now she is engaged to be married. In

August, she will become the sole wife of a man she chose, and she will begin her career as a teacher and social worker in her home community. Pictured below: Florence in 1999 (left) starting high school and January 2008 with her fiancé (right).



The following true story was written by Margaret, a 12 year-old BEADS-sponsored girl, during our BEADS writing workshops. (January 2008 – Top Ride Academy – Isinya, Kenya)

*It was some years ago when I was 10 that we enjoyed the best moments of my life with my mum. She was such a lovely mum. She gave me everything I needed.*

*The worst days of my life was on. My mum was forced to get out of the house by my father. She took all her things and we went together.*

*After some weeks my mum was very sick and had to see a doctor. I had to face the hard life after a few days. My mum died not knowing anyone or anything.*

*My grandmother was forced by the chief to stay with me. I had to stay with her. During the first days she was nice and good to me. After some days my grandmother turned to an animal to me.*

*She was not the grandmother I knew before. She forced me to sleep without eating. She even didn't give me all my basic needs.*

*She made me to come out of school. I had to go outdoors to find food to eat. It took me two weeks to find food. When I got food I was happy like a king or like Wangari Maathai after discovering she was the Nobel prize winner.*

*My mum's best friend came to Isikuyo where I was busy finding for food and told me about Beads for education. She told me to go there and she was there for me.*

*It took a few days and I got a person who would help me. Her name is Sue Little. She has been my help most of the time.*

*I am happy for Sue Little and God too will be there for me.*

This powerful story shows how a sponsorship can change a girl's life. A truly amazing part of the story is that Margaret stood up and volunteered to read her story in front of the school, not knowing that her sponsor, Sue Little, was just yards away in the process of organizing Top Ride's library. It was a remarkable and emotional moment when Margaret read her story. The next two weeks that Sue was at Top Ride, she and Margaret got to know each other. Margaret loves music and math and hopes to go to University. She is a true testament to just how much a chance for education means to a sponsored girl—and how much their sponsors mean to them.

BEADS is pleased to announce that we have been selected to represent Kenya with 500 artists from around the world at the **Santa Fe International Folk Art Market**. The market is July 12 – 13 in Santa Fe. We hope to see you there. The Folk Art Market is sponsoring Agnes Papatiti to represent the BEADS' women's groups and her husband Patrick Papatiti as her translator. Patrick has just finished high school through BEADS. He is the leader of 8,000 men in the Amboseli Region—a position he will hold for life. He also manages the sponsorship program in the region. After their visas are issued, I will announce our travel schedule and hope that you will be able to meet Patrick and Agnes.

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Thank you for your support.



Debby Rooney

BEADS Co-Founder