

Gifts for a strong Future: a donor profile

When Liz Byrne heard that the company where she worked, Morneau Shepell, had announced it would raise \$1 million over three years to support UNHCR's Project Kakuma, she was excited. It felt like the stars were aligning perfectly.

Liz's father had been a teacher in Africa when she was a child, and last year, she went back to Africa, this time as a teacher herself. She spent two months teaching English, computers and girl's health in Tanzania.

And now Morneau Shepell, where she'd worked as Operations Supervisor (Care Access Centre) for over 4 years, was going to throw the full weight of its global operations behind a cause dear to her heart. Project Kakuma would raise money for technology and training centres for this UNHCR refugee camp in northwest Kenya. Established in 1991 primarily to offer haven to people fleeing the Sudanese civil war, Kakuma is still home to over 61,000 people!

Like refugees in other UNHCR camps around the world, the needs of its inhabitants go well beyond the basic necessities of food, water and shelter. For a chance at a real future, Kakuma residents desperately need education and training. The programme will train women in new fields of work and non-traditional areas where they can find jobs.

Liz immediately expressed her interest in Project Kakuma in response to an email from Bill Morneau,



Executive Chairman of the company, and quickly signed on as a volunteer in the Communications Group. Her team is responsible for raising awareness about Project Kakuma, by blogging and providing progress updates. She also signed on as a monthly payroll donor.

“When you look at what a modest donation can do every month, in terms of buying a textbook or a school uniform, it's really an easy way to have a tangible impact,” she says. “From my experience with the stories on our blog, I know our support is having a direct and long-lasting effect on the futures of Kakuma's children, their families and their community.”

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Morneau Shepell's fundraising efforts to date have resulted in the completion of a Community Technology Access (CTA) Centre. The centre's 45 computers will facilitate learning for schoolchildren, youth and adults in an area where teachers and education resources are scarce. The entire camp will have access to the centres, which will use solar panels and low-energy computers to make

the programme self-sustaining.

Morneau Shepell's fundraising efforts are now aimed at the second phase of the partnership; to raise money to construct a girls' boarding school that will provide secondary education to refugees in Kakuma.



UNHCR struggles to help fresh waves of Somali refugees

The flood of desperate humanity continues to flow. Somalis fleeing deadly famine are arriving at UNHCR camps by the thousands every day. Exhausted, malnourished and often sick, some of them are in critical condition by the time they stumble into camp.

UNHCR emergency teams are struggling to provide basic aid to Somali refugees in Ethiopia and Kenya border camps, along with 1.4 million internally displaced people in southern Somalia. Ensuring that newcomers get food, water and medical attention is key.

Supplies continue to be shipped from our stocks in Dubai, along with locally purchased items like tents. Blankets, plastic sheeting, jerry cans, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, buckets and mosquito nets are pressed into service as soon as they arrive.

UNHCR staff are also battling persistently high death rates in many camps, particularly among children. If

treated early and correctly, most malnourished children can recover physically. But so many are taking longer than normal to recover, sometimes up to eight weeks, possibly because they arrived in such terrible shape to begin with.

In their weakened state, people in these camps are also succumbing to measles and difficult hygiene situations. Even as our

emergency teams frantically provide therapeutic feeding and initiate mass immunization campaigns, it's not enough.

“We still do not have all the resources for food, clean water, shelter and health services to save the lives of thousands of Somalis in desperate need,” says Mark Bowden, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia.



Donors join the ERTeam

Monthly gifts from donors means our Emergency Response Team (ERTeam) has the steady, reliable support they need to prepare for future emergencies – and go straight into action when a crisis like the Somalia famine arises.

It is the best possible way donors can help. Monthly donations make such a big difference that UNHCR monthly supporters are honorary members of the ERTeam. Please consider this convenient option that also reduces fundraising costs.

To learn more, visit us online at www.unhcr.ca/ert or call 1-877-232-0909.

Donations bring dignity to refugees – An ERTeam member profile



About once a year, Denise Otis puts her work as a Legal Officer at the UNHCR office in Montreal on hold, makes sure her teenage sons will have the care they need, and heads off on an Emergency Team assignment to help people around the world.

This March, Denise's legal expertise was put to work in Salome, a small border town in Egypt, about seven hours from Cairo. For two months, in challenging desert conditions, Denise listened and then did the difficult work of determining legal status.

"While the 1951 Refugee Convention defines who is and who is not a refugee, people fleeing desperate circumstances often don't have the appropriate documents with them," she says. "I have to study their case, review the evidence, and interview them through interpreters to determine the reasons for their migration."

Updates on Rapidly Evolving Situations

Libya

A flood of more than 540,000 Libyans fleeing conflict at home has put tremendous pressure on the resources of nearby Tunisia.

High Commissioner Antonio Guterres, during a tour of refugee camps, praised the Tunisian people but said their generosity should not be taken for granted by the international community. He said more help is urgently needed for those who cannot return to their country and cannot stay in Tunisia. So far,



Often people have been traumatized, and Denise is the first "official" to listen to their stories. It can be heartbreaking to hear what people have endured. And she is all too aware that for many of them, being returned to their homeland could be life-threatening.

Still, there is the reward of helping people have a chance at a new life. The first group of 243 people that she helped to designate as refugees in Salome was accepted by Sweden for resettlement.

"I actually received an email from the first person I recognized as a refugee, a man named Alex, who thanked me and UNHCR. It was clear from his approximate English that a fantastic new life had opened up for him," she says. "I was quite touched that he took the time to write, because often you don't know what happens to the people you meet."

Denise likes to tell the generous people who support UNHCR about Alex, rather than talk about the millions of refugees around the world who need help.

"Alex is a concrete example of their money at work," she says. "Not only was he able to survive because of the food that he got, not only was he able to be heard, but he also found a new home in Stockholm where he has the opportunity to reach his full potential as a human being."

"A donation means dignity to people like Alex, and for me, that is just fundamental."

UNHCR has registered 2,100 refugees and Emergency Teams are striving to register the remaining camp population.

Côte d'Ivoire

Widespread rumours of a looming coup d'état led to displacements of people in Côte d'Ivoire ahead of the country's Independence Day in August.

There are 48 different IDP (internally displaced people) sites across the country following political instability and violence after a presidential election was hotly contested early this year. While populations in those sites are decreasing due to spontaneous returns or integration into host families, the former capital, Abidjan, is seeing a marked increase in IDPs.

A message from Furio De Angelis, UNHCR's Country Representative

It was the most striking image of my entire 20-year career with UNHCR.

Quite by accident, I happened to be at the border between Rwanda and Burundi just a few days after the famous plane crash that sparked the monstrous genocide. We'd heard rumours that "something" was going on in Rwanda, but nobody knew exactly what.

It was near the end of the day, and suddenly on the road before us appeared an orderly column of people, walking silently from Rwanda toward the border. After crossing, they immediately sat down on the ground, wherever they found themselves. Within a few hours, we were busy assessing the needs of thousands of people. It was the first glimpse of what would become a massive displacement of Rwandans fleeing horrific violence.

In the face of such tremendous need, it can be easy to feel hopeless and helpless. So many people that I meet express that feeling of paralysis about the plight of millions of refugees, displaced people and other vulnerable individuals around the world.

And I say to them, "Every single bucket of water contributes to extinguishing a fire. That fire may seem so big and unreachable by one individual, but together, we can put it out. I'm one person, carrying my own small bucket, how about you?"

During my career with UNHCR, which has taken me from Belgrade to Afghanistan, Croatia, Pakistan, Turkey, Kenya, and the Ukraine, I have come

across many Canadians carrying their own little buckets.

I have strong memories of working with Canadian officials in large refugee operations in Ankara, Nairobi and Kiev. Canadian interest, support and especially settlement placements, have always been enormously important to the work of UNHCR.

Of course, I also have fond personal memories of Canada, having visited here during my 20s. I went

canoeing in Algonquin Park, and was impressed by your beautiful natural heritage that is so different from my native Italy.

So, perhaps you will forgive me for being a little positively biased toward your lovely country when I arrived as the UNHCR's 12th Representative to Canada! My fantastic reception here has only confirmed that this is the kind of place in which I can be wonderfully happy, both professionally and personally.

I look forward to getting to know more Canadian friends like you, in the months ahead, and doing everything I can to ensure UNHCR continues to be a strong conduit between your generosity and those who desperately need your help.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Furio De Angelis".