

Geist Residents Judy Kendall and Kevin Donnelly Cast ‘Anchor of Hope’ to Zambian Orphans

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When Judy Kendall left her Beam Reach home for a vacation to Southern Africa in 2004, she had no idea how her life – and the lives of many others – would be impacted.

She always wanted to visit Africa, having heard so much about it from her good friend, Kevin Donnelly, a Zimbabwe-born British immigrant. So Judy did not hesitate to arrange a trip to South Africa and Zimbabwe with Kevin, to see Africa first-hand and meet some of Donnelly’s relatives.



Like the rest of us, Kendall had heard the disturbing news reports of the AIDS epidemic there, yet she still wasn’t prepared for what she saw. The death toll among adults has left orphans, hungry and ill-clothed, everywhere, many sharing a small thatched hut with up to 30 other children and cared for by one or two elderly “grandparents” (whether related or not).



A fervent philanthropist, Judy vowed to do something to help. Most people would lament that the problem is too big – maybe give some money to one of the numerous international aid organizations and move on. Not Judy.

She began working with the Kettering Medical Foundation (based in Ohio), traveling back to Zambia in Southern Africa in 2006 to help with medical clinics. On that trip, she had the opportunity to visit several Zambian orphanages, including one founded by Mother Theresa, located in the capital city of Lusaka. There, she found infants lying in row after row of compact cribs. With only two caretakers to look after about 60 infants, these babies were desperate for care and attention, even just physical touch. And that was one of the better orphanages.

Further out in rural Zambia, hundreds of orphans live day-to-day without physical necessities (like daily food and safe drinking water), education or any emotional nurturing. While the government is trying to provide access to care-giving and education, those in rural areas without transportation are left out.

“It’s almost as if there’s no hope there,” Judy laments, then quickly adds, “That’s why we’re starting Anchor of Hope.”

Judy, along with Kevin Donnelly and other board members, recently launched Anchor of Hope Charities, which is dedicated to providing education and youth development to orphaned and abandoned children in developing nations of Southern Africa. Judy is a natural to head up this grassroots effort based right here in Geist. Aside from being a certified project manager, Judy has experience in raising funds for worthy causes like the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer Research and the American Heart Association.



Adding to the expert team is Donnelly, a medical researcher at Lilly, and several others with ties to Southern Africa, including Dr. Sula Mazimba, a Zambian native and practicing cardiologist with Kettering. It’s important to have board members who understand the drastically different culture in that area of the world, Judy said.

“You have to have Zambian solutions to Zambian problems. All we are trying to do is facilitate that,” said Donnelly, who lives in Shorewalk with his wife, Abigail, an Indiana University med student who recently traveled to Kenya, Africa, to work in medical relief efforts through an I.U. program.



Anchor of Hope’s first project is to improve and expand Anchor Orphanage in Zambia, a facility which currently houses 24 orphans (mixed ages and genders all living together) and provides education up to sixth grade for about 125 children. The man who runs the program, Pastor Mulendema, owns about 140 acres but lacks the infrastructure to help all 400 orphans living in the area. Anchor of hope aims to raise \$732,000 to install an irrigation system, provide land

development for crop production and build dormitories, classrooms, a medical clinic and a chapel on site. The organization also seeks to expand the educational program through 12th grade and add more training in “life skills” such as rearing a family and growing life-sustaining crops and marketing them.

“There’s a lack of mentorship because there’s a lack of that middle generation,” said Judy, adding that half of Zambia’s 11 million population is under age 15, and more than 1 million of those are orphans.

Although the AIDS epidemic has gotten worldwide publicity, that’s not the only thing taking lives in Southern Africa. Without access to vaccinations and vital medications,

thousands are dying from malaria, tuberculosis and diabetes—a situation confounded by warfare and famine, Donnelly said.

Anchor of Hope vows to put 100 percent of donations directly to use to benefit these children. All board members are giving their time for free. The organization plans to send a team over to Zambia after the rainy season ends in May to begin construction at the orphanage.

The organization's first fundraiser will be a 5K run/walk on September 22, beginning at the marina by Bella Vita at 8:30 a.m. The \$22 registration fee will help Anchor of Hope begin its mission. To register for the 5K run/walk or for more information on how you can get involved, visit www.anchorofhopecharities.org or call 750-4244.

Join Judy Kendall in filling young lives with hope in Southern Africa.

