



Operation Bootstrap Africa

Dignity

Winter 2018-19 Edition

What Does Operation Bootstrap Africa Do?

Feeding children at Olchoki Primary School; moving, upgrading, renovating and building the new ALMC Nursing School; and the Graduation Ceremony for the MGLSS Form 4 girls are just a few of the many amazing efforts put forth by Operation Bootstrap Africa (OBA) highlighted in this edition of the Dignity.

People ask, "What does Operation Bootstrap Africa do?" Well, how much time do you have? On the surface, OBA has built over 3,500 schools and clinics in rural Tanzania. This is great. However, there is so much more going on than construction projects. OBA provides educational opportunities for children from the time they are in primary school until they reach university or even graduate degree programs. OBA helps to train nurses and care for children with disabilities. OBA helps people to help themselves.

By educating Africans, we are empowering them to create the change they want to see in their lives, families, communities, and even their country. When studying at Tangaza College in Nairobi, Kenya in 2000, I asked a fellow graduate student, "What needs to happen to create real change in your country?" "Education," he replied. "The internet will bring the world to Central East Africa and by expanding our worldview we will be able to dream and create change."



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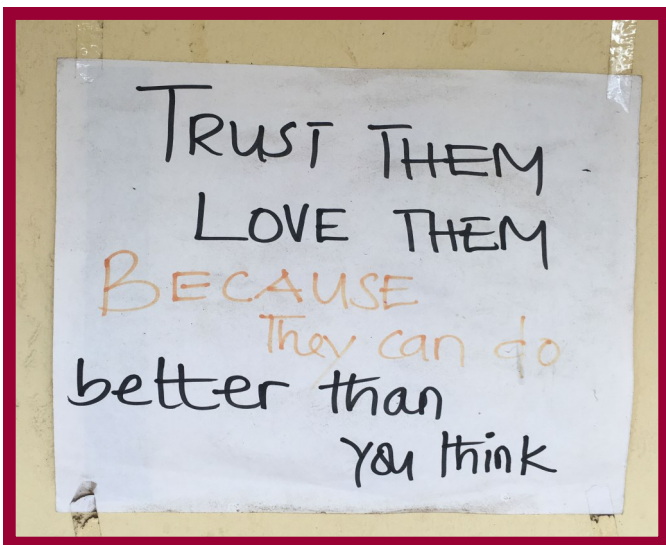
Children at Olchoki Primary School greeting OBA's new
Executive Director, Jason Bergmann

What Does Operation Bootstrap Africa do? continued...

Schools not only bring hope and opportunity, but also meals, stability in a child's life, and options for young people to choose between a traditional way of life, or other. The traditional culture is amazing in many ways, but it also comes with what many might see as human rights issues. Issues most of us don't regularly think about.

What is OBA? It is a conduit for hope, peace, and change. It empowers kind and generous people to make a significant, often lifesaving difference for our brothers and sisters in Tanzania. OBA provides the opportunity to dream and work towards change.

In service of students in Africa,



A sign at the Ilboru Primary School Special Needs Unit

20 Years of Walking for Change



On October 6, 2018 residents of Alexandria, MN and the surrounding areas gathered for the 20th annual Lakes Area Walk. Every year the walk has raised funds through pledges to support a different project with Operation Bootstrap Africa. Over the years the walk has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars and provided everything from school uniforms to dormitories for students in Tanzania.

The 2018 Lakes Area Walk raised over \$13,000 to buy textbooks for the MaaSAE Girls' School.

Students who had previously been sharing one book between five girls now have the tools they need to succeed in their education.



Congratulations to the October 2018 Form IV MGLSS Graduates!



On October 27, 2018 MGLSS celebrated the graduation of its 20th Form 4 Class!

Graduation Day began with a worship service in the school's chapel, followed by a beautiful ceremony filled with speeches and music. The sixty-seven graduating students were joined by family, friends, and other guests, including the school board, the Bishop of the Tanzanian Lutheran Diocese and OBA's new Executive Director. Though the ceremony itself was very formal and traditional, the overall day had an atmosphere of joy and festivity. In a commencement speech to the graduates, the Director shared a message of love on behalf of the students' sponsors and the entire OBA Family. He said, *"Around the world there are thousands of people who are thinking of you, praying for you, and who want you to succeed."*

The Form 4 graduates sat their National Exams in November and achieved excellent results. Some will continue their education at MGLSS in the Form 5 and 6 "A-Level" classes, while others will go on to community and technical colleges. Congratulations to all of our Form 4 graduates, and their families, sponsors, and the MGLSS staff who have supported their educational goals!

A New Home for the School of Nursing

Dear Friends of ALMC School of Nursing.

Well, finally some good and definitive news!

Our Bishop has decided that we should indeed share the Ekenywa site with the Secondary School. The powers that be in Nursing Education demand that we be separated completely from the secondary school.

Dr. Kibira and I met with the school today and very wonderfully, we had a cordial discussion and agreed to a plan going forward which will allow us to use some Secondary School classrooms to start but then eventually have our own complete School of Nursing on about 5 acres of land (about 4 is usable).

This is a huge step forward. I will be getting drawings and estimates going immediately and hope to start work in January. Our goal will be to be able to move to Ekenywa for the October intake but that may be too optimistic.

Dear friends, we are now on our way. More details to follow but wanted to alert you to this huge step forward.

Blessings,

Mark

Dr. Mark Jacobson announces the approval of a new site for the ALMC School of Nursing. For the last three years the school has used rented property, but now must take ownership of a campus in order to maintain accreditation.



Donor Highlight ~ Jeff Ladderud

Tumaini Loth at her MGLSS Graduation



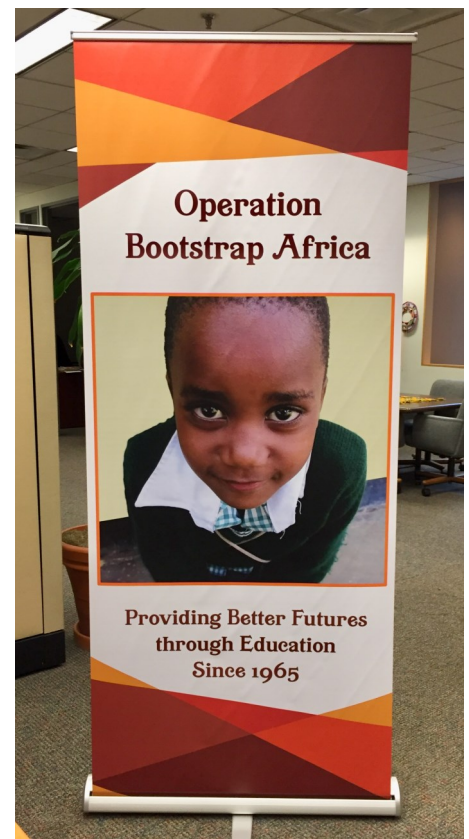
Like most college students, when Jeff Ladderud was accepted to Washington State University in 2009 he applied for every scholarship he could find. Unlike most, he received a full-ride and then some. Jeff's mom suggested that he use the extra money to pay it forward by sponsoring a student through OBA. Though the scholarship money stopped coming in 2013 when he graduated with his Bachelor of Science degree, Jeff continued to sponsor Tumaini Loth who graduated from Form 4 at MGLSS the same year. Jeff later went on to receive a Master of Science degree and now works as an environmental engineer. At the same time Tumaini completed her Form 6 education and was accepted to Mvumi Hospital College. She will graduate this year and begin her own career in the medical field. When Jeff sent in the last sponsorship check for this accomplished student, he said:

"I'm happy to have made a difference. The world is so much bigger than me."

OBA Needs You!

Calling all volunteers!
Become trained as a presenter and share the mission of OBA in your community.

New promotional materials, including pop-up banners, postcards, stickers, and more are available for use in presentations or table displays at conferences, churches, and civic organizations. Please contact us at info@OperationBootstrapAfrica.org to receive supplies for your next presentation!



Help OBA Feed the Children of Olchoki



1,400 Students ~ No Food or Water

Olchoki Primary School in Northern Tanzania serves approximately 1,400 children. Classes run from 7am—3pm each day. Currently there is no food or water anywhere on the campus. Many of the students do not get a regular meal at home.

At 14 cents per day, per child (or \$2.60 per month) a school lunch program will cost \$32,000 per year.

Let's Feed These Kids

Your gift creates change and hope

Ways to Give:

- Give Directly from Your IRA—If you are 70^{1/2} or older your contribution will count towards your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) and will not be included in your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI). You may contribute up to \$100,000 annually from your IRA. In some situations lowering your AGI may be more beneficial than itemizing charitable deductions.
- Make a Stock Contribution—Gifts of stock are generally tax deductible at the full fair-market value and exempt from long-term capital gains tax.
- Create a Donor Advised Fund—A donor advised fund allows your assets including cash, appreciated stock, mutual funds, real estate, and more to be invested and grow tax-free. Contributions to your fund are tax deductible in the year that they are made, but may be granted to eligible charitable organizations over a period of multiple years. Donor advised funds are a useful tool for donors who are affected by the new, higher standard deduction threshold and wish to combine multiple years worth of giving into one year in order to itemize.
- Legacy Gifts—Include a gift to OBA in your will or trust, designate OBA as a beneficiary of your IRA or life insurance policy, or give to the OBA Endowment Fund at InFaith Foundation.

For more information, please contact the OBA office.🌐



OBA is proud to have been recognized as a 4-star organization by Charity Navigator again this year for meeting the highest standards of financial health, transparency, and accountability. We are a mission-driven organization, committed to ensuring your support goes where it is most needed!

For over 50 years OBA has been making a difference in Africa as an independent 501(c)(3). Your contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Operation Bootstrap Africa and its affiliates are not a financial advisor and cannot provide tax, legal, or accounting advice. Please consult your financial planner to learn how gifts to OBA may benefit your tax or financial situation.

January 2020 will be the 25th Anniversary of the MaaSAE Girls' School
Hundreds of students have had life-changing opportunities thanks to
the education they have received at MGLSS.
Thank you for your generous support!

Deana's Reflections...

Envision, if you can, the first meeting between a new volunteer – a short, middle-age woman from MN – and OBA's founder – a larger than life Lutheran Missionary who spent his time in Tanzania preaching, building churches, shooting a lion, being made an honorary Maasai, playing Rugby, raising his family with his wife Eunice, and helping Tanzanian parents build primary school classrooms for their children. An unlikely pairing, but a successful partnership for more than 25 years. Deana went from volunteer to half-time staff, to full-time staff, eventually becoming Director.



While parents in Tanzania mixed clay, sand and cement with water – by hands & feet – to make bricks to build classrooms for their children, the work and mission of OBA was spread across the United States ... sometimes with kids, teens and adults mixing clay, sand and water to make “sample bricks” with bare feet during Mud Sunday Worship, at National Youth Gatherings, and Global Mission events as an example of how OBA “built classrooms” thousands of miles away in Africa. The stories of OBA were told over and over and more funds were raised ... and more projects were completed. Rev. Simonson would schedule trips back to the States; Deana, with the help of a crew of volunteers, would put together OBA events around the country where Rev. Simonson would speak, telling the stories of the various projects ... food would be served ... more money was raised, and more projects happened.

On one visit from David Simonson, he asked the OBA Board to consider funding a boarding school for Maasai girls who had completed primary school. Within the Maasai tribe, fathers often refused to send their daughters to school, allowing only their sons to continue. Bright young girls rarely had the opportunity to attend secondary school. Primary school was compulsory but secondary school was not. The Bishop of the Lutheran Church of Tanzania, Arusha Diocese, Rev. Thomas Laiser realized the importance of secondary education for both boys and girls. Bishop Laiser and Rev. Simonson and a Maasai woman, Mama Ruthie, had met with Maasai elders and received “permission” for a Maasai girls’ secondary school.

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The short version of a much longer story – land was procured in Monduli, funds were raised, construction begun, and in 1995 The MaaSae Girls Lutheran Secondary School (MGLSS) was opened with the first class of female students and three volunteer teachers! Those girls are now teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, non-profit leaders – even a pastor, a pilot, architect, and civil engineer!

Over the 50+ years of OBA's existence, OBA donors have provided "partnerships" with and for folks they would have never heard of without the stories told by Rev. Simonson.

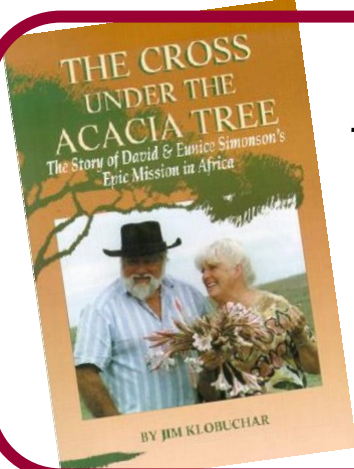
A story often told by Rev. David Simonson has stayed with Deana: He told of being in a village where their first primary school classroom had been completed and there was a big celebration. He was standing with a group of elders when he noticed a young boy walking towards them. David thought – 'he's coming to thank me for the classroom' – but the boy walked right past him and stopped in front of a man a short distance from David. The boy looked up, with a big smile, and said "Thanks, Dad, for my classroom!" This reminds Deana of a former OBA board member, who frequently said "We can accomplish so much – if we don't care who gets the credit!"

All the work and accomplishments of OBA would not have been possible without the support of the Bootstrap family around the world!

Asante Sana for your support!

Submitted by Deana Miller





The Cross Under the Acacia Tree The Story of David & Eunice Simonson's Epic Mission in Africa

As OBA approaches its 55th Anniversary and the MaaSAE Girls' School approaches its 25th, revisit the story of our founder, Rev. David Simonson.

Available online through Amazon and other booksellers

Using Their Resources Wisely

As the rainy season began in Tanzania, students at the Olarash Primary School in Monduli headed outside to continue their lessons. Though pencils and paper are in short supply, an inspired teacher was able to combine math class, art class, and recess by having the children shape numbers and letters out of mud. Students enjoyed the extra time spent playing outdoors and learned a valuable lesson about using the resources they have available to them in order to succeed.



Please welcome our new staff to the OBA Family

Jason Bergmann ~ Executive Director

Lauren Sekelsky ~ Administrative Associate



Jason has been working in nonprofits for two decades, and has a strong educational and professional background in international development. He has also had the opportunity to study in Kenya and Tanzania, and was even able to visit the Maasae Girls School in its early days. Jason has been a longtime supporter of OBA and is excited to be able to share his expertise and passion with the organization.

Lauren has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Global Studies with concentrations in African Studies and Human Rights from the University of Minnesota. She has been working in nonprofits for 7 years, and recently returned from a 4 month backpacking trip around Africa. She is excited to be part of an organization that shares her love for Africa and strengthening communities in need.

Operation Bootstrap Africa Board of Directors

Jeanie Geurink (President), Michael Hedley (Vice President), Gene Mickelson (Treasurer), Mary Nosek (Secretary), Gary Floss, Ward Larson, Judie Lehman, John McAllister, Carol Stark

Operation Bootstrap Africa is a movement dedicated to increased educational and healthcare opportunities in Africa.



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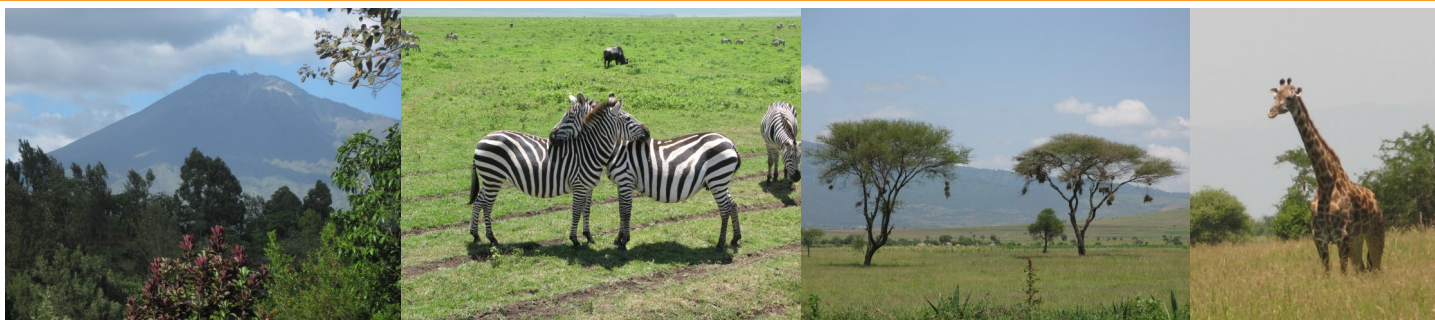
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Dignity is a publication for friends of Operation Bootstrap Africa, a Minnesota-based non-profit dedicated to helping people help themselves in a variety of educational programs in Africa.

In partnership with African communities and organizations, Bootstrap provides support and assistance to projects and programs based on locally-established priorities.

Gifts to OBA are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. OBA may assess up to 10% for administration of these gifts.

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Join us for the experience of a lifetime in Tanzania!

Visit OBA projects including the MaaSAE Girls School, Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre, primary schools, and more. Embark on safari in Tarangire National Park and Ngorongoro Crater. Engage in cultural activities and attend a traditional Maasai Graduation ceremony at the school.

The tour will run May 14–26, 2019 and costs approximately \$6,000 per person. This includes airfare, meals, lodging, tips, and all land travel. Costs not covered include beverages, immunizations, anti-malarial medication, a Tanzanian tourist visa, and travel insurance. A Zanzibar extension and other optional excursions may be arranged at an additional cost. A deposit of \$1,000 is due February 15.

Deposits may be taken after this date as space allows. The tour is limited to 12 participants.