

HOPE RISING!

WINTER 2020 NEWSLETTER



SOHO

SAVING ORPHANS THROUGH HEALTHCARE AND OUTREACH

STORIES OF HOPE!

In Eswatini, there are over 100,000 orphaned and vulnerable children in a population of just over one million, with an estimated 10,000 child headed households. These children are the future. Our vision is to fill their future with hope.



The Pandemic We CAN Cure

It was indeed a Game Changers Event, when SOHO for the first time, went virtual with the annual Hope Seekers program. Despite occasional technical challenges, the program was informative, impacting and memorable. This special edition of our Newsletter showcases stories of generosity, courage, commitment and hope. The conversations and testimonies will inspire and challenge you.

One of the troubling effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the intensification of gender-based abuse affecting girls and women. With schools closed, and displacement of workers from jobs, violence against this population has increased. In Eswatini, one in three girls experience violence. The Game Changers Forum drew notable participants from South Africa and the US in a program co-hosted by Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, to look at how we can work together to cure the pandemic of abuse.

The program began with Oakwood's President Dr. Leslie Pollard,



announcing the University's new partnership with SOHO in the development of a Village of Hope in Eswatini. Oakwood University joins Andrews University as two of the key initial participants in development of INTSABA, a mountainside farm that will house orphans and vulnerable children who are at risk of abuse and human trafficking.

Panelists at The Forum included: Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Princess of Africa, internationally recognized singer and UN Ambassador; Rev Nontombi Naomi Tutu, Associate Pastor at All Saints

Episcopal Church; Dawn Minott, Advisor for United Nations Population Fund; and Chaplain Gail Masondo, Counselor, GBV Activist and South African Advisor for SOHO. The panel was moderated by Christina Hale, Former U.S. Representative and Executive Director of Kiwanis Youth Programs. Each participant shared why this topic is vital to them, as well as discussed ways to change the game in violence. Excerpts from their discussion follow as the task of this area of social change falls upon all.



Yvonne Chaka Chaka

Yvonne is an internationally recognized South African singer, songwriter, actress, entrepreneur, humanitarian and teacher. Dubbed the "Princess of Africa" because of the continent wide impact of her music, she is a champion for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and malaria. She was chosen by Nelson Mandela as the first ambassador for his children's fund, and has also established her own charity, the Princess of Africa Foundation.

"In Africa, every minute a woman gets maimed, gets raped, gets killed by those that are supposed to be protecting them, which are men."

"We need to teach our girl child, that when someone touches you inappropriately you must begin to talk. It is important that you stand for yourself as a girl and say "No, do not touch me like this."

"We need to make sure that our male counterparts are our best advocates."



Rev. Nontombi Naomi Tutu

As the daughter of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Naomi Tutu has sought to blaze her own trail in the world. The challenges of growing black and female in apartheid South Africa have been the foundation of her life as an activist for human rights. Her professional experience ranges from being a development consultant in West Africa, to a program coordinator for race and gender-based violence in education at the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town. She is a sought-after speaker and respected member of the clergy who is a passionate advocate for social change in the area of GBV.

We talk about it as though it is not a crime. We talk about it as though there is something different about being abused by somebody that you are intimate with..... Yes, there is something different, but it is something that is worse."

"Given how important religion is to so many around the world. WE do have a responsibility as the churches to take a much more vocal stance against gender-based violence.

"Part of what allows gender-based violence to continue like this is that it is not challenged, that it is not spoken about by institutions that people listen to. And people do listen to the church.



Dawn Minott

With over 15 years of experience with the United Nations as a social development specialist, Dawn's work spans the empowerment of women and girls and young people; and, in identifying and managing programs that respond to social, development and health problems that affect society. Her work specializes in addressing gender equality and gender-based violence. Dawn is a writer and motivational speaker.

"...because of the magnitude of the problem that we are up against. This has also worsened and intensified under this pandemic."

"In the time that we have been having this discussion, just in this hour plus, thousands of women and girls have experienced one form of violence or the other. It may have been physical, sexual or psychological."



Gail Masondo

A New York native who has had a desire to help others by becoming a missionary. She is best described as an exceptional professional and a conduit to healing and empowering women. With a background in Behavioral Sciences and Psychology, she has served in the “mission field of life.” As a Recovery Coach Expert, she has helped to address social issues including gender-based abuse, and human trafficking. Currently, she serves as the chairperson of SOZO, a non-profit ministry that provides safe spaces for professional women experiencing the initial trauma of physical and emotional abuse.

“Abuse changes the fabric of who we were meant to be. Whether it be physical, sexual, religious abuse, financial abuse...whatever the weapon. It changes who you were meant to be. There is scar on your soul There is a hole in your soul.”

“I think of myself as a survivor... We do what we have seen, not necessarily what we know.”

“Men are needing opportunity to speak too. Some of them have not had fathers or if they have, the father role has been diminished.”

“We all have the potential to be abusive.”



Christina Hale

Christina Hale is well known throughout Indiana as a dedicated public servant. She served for four years as state representative from Indianapolis and was a candidate for lieutenant governor in 2016. A major accomplishment during her public service was her drive for legislative action to curb human trafficking. Christina spent eight years with Kiwanis International, serving as director of executive and board services, and she has also served as President and CEO of Leadership Indianapolis. She is a well-known advocate for prevention of abuse of women and girls.

“Themes that are coming out...the weaponization of girls and women, the commodification of girls and women, the politization of girls and women all over the world.”

“Human trafficking and the selling of our girls and women is not confined to one geographical space or even to a virtual space.”

Abuse does not make for polite conversation at the dinner table or even in the homestead. It's been entertainment fodder at the movies and by virtue of familiarity, is now ignored or treated with contempt. But that is the danger of this pandemic. Left unaddressed, it continues to intensify and the world is deprived of the gifts girls and women could to our society.

It is the six year old who made me weep and the thirteen year old pregnant child that appalled and distressed me, that have influenced this conversation. It is the women and children in Eswatini and South Africa and the United States of America who need to be protected by the societies in which they live.

You can be a voice or you can support programs such as SOHO's so that you can be a part of the lives that are changed for the better.

– Cynthia Prime, CEO and Co-Founder of SOHO

CHEERS FOR SOHO AMBASSADORS!



Hlengiwe Mavuso

Hlengiwe, whose name means Fortunate, was 11 when she came to a SOHO outreach clinic and distribution center in Vuvulane, a depressed, destitute community where the red hair color of many small children attested to lack of proper nutrition. I got to know her as a schoolgirl who showed up with her sister to my hotel room when I was in Eswatini. My weekends were spent mothering them. She loved school and enjoyed reading books, even my Thesaurus. There was no safety where she lived and occasionally, nighttime came with her on the run.

Her first child came because of coercion; her second, a result of financial and emotional need. She knew little of parenting. SOHO sponsors provided school fees and support for the children so that she could finish High school. She is a peer mentor and has ambitions to become a teacher. She is currently taking an on-line course to become a teaching Assistant.



Nomathemba Mthembu

Nomathemba Mthembu was 13 when she lost both parents in a single day. Four suicide attempts found her still alive. She decided that since she failed at taking her life, she might as well do what she could to make something of herself. She loved to study. With no one to support her, she dropped out of school to work at odd jobs and domestic work for three years to save money for school fees. She graduated the head of her class and earned a scholarship to University of Swaziland where she majored in Biology. Throughout her schooling, dedicated sponsor and mentor, Carole Evans kept encouraging her. SOHO provided for her needs until she graduated with her first degree. That is when tragedy struck again.

Once more there was a struggle to overcome and to stay alive, but Nomathemba bounced back, became a model parent to her daughter, and continued studying while teaching. She recently completed a master's degree online while teaching at a high school. She hopes to go further with her education and pursue her interest in medicine. At SOHO community events, Nomathemba can be found helping her SOHO family by mentoring younger girls.



Phindile Mavuso

Phindile was thirteen and a student when SOHO entered her life. Like her sister, she is a gifted singer with a hunger for more in life. While studying at her high school late into the afternoon because she had no electricity at home, her life took a turn for the worse. Walking alone home, she was gang raped. She was courageous enough to represent herself in court and to testify against her attackers. Her assailant was convicted but the rapist had just a few months in prison and returned to threaten her life.

Her journey is heart rending, but she has emerged strong and determined. While employed as a waitress in Pretoria, the manager of a law firm was impressed by her service and offered her an entry level clerical job. Four years later, she is hoping to have a career in the field of law and is working two jobs to save for tuition. SOHO has been her mainstay through a journey of trafficking and abuse. She embraces the reality that the best is yet to come.

The video interviews of these SOHO Ambassadors and the full *HOPE RISING GAME CHANGERS EVENT* can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/cKgOIDNFoeY>

OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY TO PARTNER WITH SOHO

As plans progress for INTSABA, the mountain farm where SOHO will build a Village of Hope for children at risk, strategic partnerships are being developed. A partnership with Andrews University's School of Architecture and Interior Design has produced a Master Plan for the project. SOHO is pleased to announce a new interdisciplinary collaboration with Oakwood University, Huntsville, Alabama, where emphasis will be placed on programs for the children who will be served at the Village.

President Dr. Leslie Pollard announced the partnership at the Hope Rising Forum and Dr. Carmen Bucknor from the Department of Psychology emphasized

how important hands-on service was to undergraduate and graduate students in her department. The university as whole will engage with this important project, bringing young talent and seasoned professional expertise together to help transform the lives of vulnerable children and youth.

INTSABA Children's Village and Mountain Retreat is being developed on a 1075 plus acre farm in the Shisleweni region of Eswatini. SOHO is engaging academic partners to create opportunities for service as well as professional development of the participating teams. Dr. Karen Benn-Marshall has served as facilitator for the Oakwood University partnership.



Dr. Leslie Pollard

Bus Donated For Outreach

For some time, Malvin Moyo had a problem. As Outreach Coordinator for SOHO, he spent much of his time helping those children in greatest need, visiting homesteads, counseling, delivering food parcels and transporting children to school in an inadequate vehicle. He was doing his best without proper transportation. He is so much a part of the fabric of the Marekamp, known

as the Squatter Camp, that the children have made up a song about him, greeting him and dancing around his vehicle when he arrives. Learning of his need, Two Rivers Simple Church, a congregation of less than ten, raised the \$15,000 to purchase a 16-seat bus to transport the growing number of students from the Marekamp area to Hope Discovery Learning Center where they will

attend school. The fundraising initiative was coordinated by Linda Schultz, co-Founder of SOHO and her husband Pastor Clinton Schultz. Malvin's smile could not be broader as he drives the new bus in his service to the children. Thanks to all the kind hearts of Simple Church who made this gift possible. God bless you all!



Mr. Moyo receives keys to newly donated van



Two Rivers Simple Church

Clean Water for Mbali

Earlier this year, Mbali, a homeless child was taken in by a destitute family that was struggling to survive. A SOHO sponsor provided food and clothes for the family; but they lacked one important essential, clean water. Thanks to Dr. Wallen's intervention, we are grateful that the household now has a tank that will supply clean water to the family. Mbali is like so many orphans who slip through the cracks and even die but for the intervention of organizations like SOHO and assistance from people like you.



Dr. Wallen: Champion of the Children

Dr. Victor Wallen is a man who has served in many capacities: College Professor, Pastor, Social Work Administrator and more in his lengthy career. A mission trip with Psychology doctoral students from Nova Southeastern University to Eswatini, introduced him to SOHO and to the orphaned and vulnerable children served. Victor was one of the supervisors of the team who had come to provide mental health services for the children.

On the first of four visits, he offered to get support for the outreach program in a community with dire need. With each visit, his interested intensified. "I know what I want to do with the rest of

my life," he said, smiling. "I'm going to be a beggar for orphans."



True to his promise, Victor has generated sponsorship for 100 children through his network, secured donations to help develop orphan homes, obtained support

for a community development initiative to provide skills training, donated from his own resources, and spends a great deal of his free time coaching, troubleshooting or begging for the orphans who have stolen his heart. To date he has raised over \$100,000 and he keeps on impacting the lives of several children personally.

"This is the work that God has called me to do," he says. "Take care of those little ones who are unable to take care of themselves." SOHO wishes to express deep gratitude for the compassion and commitment of this Champion for the Children.

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INTSABA UPDATES



Report from Pamela Comminetti

SOHO's resident General Manager at INTSABA
She makes sure these projects are carried out by construction crews and workers!

A Visit from the Chief

These past three months have been both a blessing and a challenge. Covid-19 has devastated the lives of the children in our community, who are already suffering. Our team has made several trips to transport produce from the farm to the feeding centers. At one of these centers the children had been subsisting on plain porridge because a recent hailstorm. Upon my return from an errand into town, I discovered that the Chief and his staff had been

waiting for my return to thank us for providing feed for their orphans.

It is customary for formal introductions to be made when a new family or business joins the community. Because of Covid travel restrictions, the US team has been unable to observe that protocol, so it was a significant gesture for the chief to come to us and to wait for over an hour for our arrival. Already bridges are being built and we are extremely grateful.



Leadership meets with Chief

Hope & Blessings of the Macadamia Nut Trees

We have another blessing and challenge with our macadamia nut orchard. Dr. Tom Chittick who has been the driving force behind the agricultural initiative, donated funds for 500 new macadamia nut trees as well as for the reservoir to ensure they are properly watered. We expect to have the permit to bring them across the South African border and pray that there is not another shut down of the Border due to Covid-19. South Africa has just raised their Covid Level from 1 to 3.

The needs are many, water and energy being at the top of the list. But the blessings of service are also many and rewarding. We invite the prayers of our friends as we serve a population whose needs are undeniably great.

Covid 19 Delays Road Completion

The road we have been building has been paused because construction workers have come down with the virus. We are hoping to see them back at work as soon as they are healed. We are at a difficult part of the road, which is steep and requires slow, delicate

work to excavate the rocks. The danger is compounded by the fact that the heavy machinery is working on water-logged soil. I am thankful to God for the efficiency of this team. Already bridges are being built and we are extremely grateful.



Installation of resevoir donated by Tom Chittick

COVID-19 is taking its toll on the children near INTSABA. The community has two chiefdoms, each with hundreds of orphaned children, and limited resources to address even their basic needs. To begin serving them, as quickly as possible, SOHO is raising funds to erect a Cafeteria and multi-purpose structure where children can be fed, taught and nurtured. The campaign is on to raise the first \$50,000 toward this need. As you consider your year-end contributions, your support for this much needed program is appreciated. We have come this far by faith. Thank you to all who have given, and may God bless you as we enter this new year. *Thank you for caring.*



[Go to **saving-orphans.org** to donate](https://saving-orphans.org)

SOHO is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization registered in the states of Indiana and Washington.



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