

A note from our CEO

The message is love

Lives are being changed by acts of generosity and gifts of compassion.

A few examples: A teenage American pianist visited Eswatini to share her talents with children who have not been exposed to classical music, yet understood her songs are about love and hope. Teen girls, left to languish in hopelessness because poverty prevents them from being in school, are getting a new lease on life. Grannies in Spokane are creating quilts to welcome Swazi children who have nothing into homes that will mean everything. Children at the Marekamp squatter's camp are receiving hot meals and the chance to learn at our Hope Discovery Learning Center.

Indeed, hope is rising through SOHO's work in Eswatini, because of the gifts and resources of people who care.

We are also getting closer to opening Lentsaba Children's Village and Farm, where beautiful houses await the patter of small feet and echoes of excited laughter. In addition to welcoming orphans into these loving homes, Lentsaba has an agricultural component to ensure its sustainability, and the farm is already producing small crops of macadamia nuts and honey.

Lentsaba will enable orphans with no home to experience human love and compassion; their cries for help can be changed into songs of thanksgiving and a hope-filled future. Yet we need your help. Consider having your school, church, community or yourself partner with us. In the end, the greatest gift you can ever give is love!

Blessings,

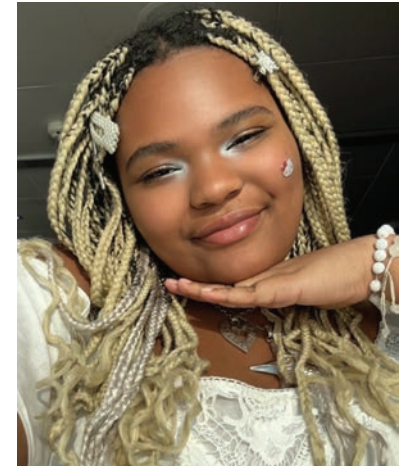
Cynthia J. Prime

Piano prodigy visits Eswatini

One of this spring's highlights was having U.S. classical pianist Melissa Mosley visit us in Nhlambeni and Marekamp on a musical mission to inspire and encourage children.

Melissa, who began playing the piano at age 3, is now 16 years old and performs internationally. The trip to Eswatini marked Melissa's first visit to Africa and she was accompanied by her father, Glen Mosley of Mouseclique Productions, mother and grandmother.

At SOHO's Hope Discovery Learning Center (HDLC) in Nhlambeni, local grannies and youth joined in a welcome celebration for the Mosley family. The preschool children sang and demonstrated what they had learned, including the story of creation and the wisdom of Solomon. Dressed in cultural attire, participants in HDLC's enterprise program also performed welcome songs. Melissa told the audience that all she knew about Africa were stereotypes of deserts and giraffes seen on television, "but what we experienced here is far richer and more diverse."



From left: Glen Mosley holding a traditional Swazi club used in dances, one of the HDLC performers, Lisa Marie Mosley, Ena Benjamin and Melissa.

Lunch was supplied by the visitors and shared with local families and children. Afterward, the team made its way to the Marekamp feeding center, located about 15 minutes away. There, children dressed in SOHO T-shirts gave musical performances while young mothers and grannies from the community whistled and applauded. Melissa's mother, Lisa Marie and her grandmother, Ena Benjamin, who are both nurses, shared health tips with the young mothers and presented each with a gift bag filled with health and sanitary supplies. The children received a hot meal after the

performance and their families received a sandwich and an apple.

Later, Melissa and her father were featured performers at a concert held at Manzini City Church to raise funds for the Marekamp feeding program. Although classical music is not popular in Eswatini, the musicians bridged the gap by adapting sophisticated, intricate arrangements to more familiar hymns and inspirational songs. The audience was enthusiastic, and we are delighted that the Mosley family plans to visit us again next year!



Progress continues on our mountain home

Much has been going on at Lentsaba Children's Village & Farm, the 1,065-acre mountaintop property in Eswatini where we are developing a sustainable, nurturing home for up to 250 orphans and vulnerable children.

On the agricultural front, our farm recently produced its second honey harvest, reports our COO Carey Carscallen, retired dean of Andrews University's School of Architecture & Interior Design. Lentsaba currently has

30 hives in its apiary, moving closer to the goal of 100 hives. Our macadamia orchard now features 2,000 trees ranging from 1-5 years in age. These trees are irrigated with mini sprinklers, and mowing and weeding them is a full-time job for four people. We also have a garden that is producing truckloads of greens and vegetables, feeding more than 400 children in two nearby chiefdoms.

Among construction updates, two children's homes are almost completed, although we still need water, electricity

and furnishings. In addition, existing buildings are being renovated to provide quarters for farm workers and guards, and a house is being built for our foreman, Sandile.

To enhance the farm's infrastructure, the entrance road has been re-graded and berms have been installed to control rainwater. A solar pump is being installed. We have also received an earth block machine that was donated to us. Soils are now being tested to make compressed earth blocks for the many structures that are needed. We also hope to use the machine to make concrete pavers to repair the road to the orchard.

Lacking funds to buy or rent a backhoe, we are using a tractor to plow a furrow and help workers dig the 500-meter ditch between our new well and water tank. Yet it is challenging to keep our old tractors operating — and creativity can only take us so far.

Funding is urgently needed to complete these projects and open Lentsaba to children that need a space to grow, learn and eventually evolve into empowered, productive citizens.

Strategic planning at Andrews University

The SOHO leadership team recently traveled to Berrien Springs, Michigan, to meet with our partners at Andrews University (AU). Working with leaders in its School of Business Administration, key discussions included:

- Lentsaba rebranding efforts.
- Adapting products being created at our Hope Discovery Learning Center for the U.S. market.
- Securing a grant to fund training and research for children trauma services.

We also spent time with Tom Chittick, retired chair of AU's Department of Agriculture who pioneered our very first farming efforts in Eswatini and is guiding the ongoing development of Lentsaba orchards and gardens.

We are so grateful for the support and sage counsel of our AU partners as we continue to build out Lenstaba!



SOHO outreach: Helping refugees from Rwanda

Fleeing genocide in Rwanda and hoping to find a new beginning, the Frederick family arrived in Eswatini a couple of years ago.

The parents and their eight children first stayed at a small refugee camp at Mpaka. Among their many challenges, they did not understand the language of their host country and had few possessions beyond the clothes on their backs. They then moved to Manzini, where they have made a home out of a large shed that is on the property of a local church.

Eeking out an existence has been difficult although the father, a pastor, and mother are hard-working. Until the family was absorbed into the SOHO food parcel program, sweet potatoes from their garden provided their main sustenance. The children would often faint in school because of hunger. In addition to food insecurity, the Fredericks have struggled to pay for school fees, which has often kept the children out of classes.

This spring SOHO co-founders Cynthia Prime and Linda Schultz and board member Dr. Dawn Lewis visited the family. During the visit, they met Kalen, the oldest daughter, who was deeply distressed. About 17 years of age, she desperately wants to be in school even though she is bullied because of her very dark skin. Kalen spoke of her desire to be a model and her interest in journalism. She wants to be admired and respected.

The women encouraged Kalen to embrace her natural beauty. Dawn took a stylish handbag from her shoulder and presented it to Kalen, with a promise to find a sponsor so she could return to school. Smiles replaced the tears on Kalen's face and hopelessness gave way to joy.

The SOHO team is also working to get the other children back in school and regularly assess their progress.



Kalen Frederick with SOHO's Cynthia Prime

Clockwise, beginning with photos on page 2: Our apiary is providing the first jars of Lentsaba honey; one of houses in the children's village; an aerial view of the macadamia orchard, two rondavels, patterned after traditional Swazi architecture, are being built to house guests and volunteer groups; and Sizo Mamba, one of our builders who grew up as an orphan and knows the impact these homes will make for Swazi children.

Welcome home and covered in love

As we get ready to open the first homes at Lentsaba Children's Village & Farm, much is still needed, including beds and bedding.

In response, SOHO co-founder Linda Schultz and her sister Susan Velasquez have launched a "welcome home" project, organizing retreats to engage the talents and hearts of knitting and crochet enthusiasts. The photos to the right take a quick look at some of these fiber artisans and their handiwork:

- Susan Velasquez and her quilts.
- Darle Bartkowsi who is crocheting afghans for infants.
- Jacque Stallinga, who is crocheting stuffed Care Bears that coordinate with each quilt.

These donations become even more poignant because the Lentsaba orphans who will receive the bedding are children who have never known loving parents — or had such beautiful possessions. (Often, the items passed onto them may be defective.) Yet now each child at Lentsaba will receive a quilt and teddy bear of their very own to treasure forever — a gift that lets them know that they are, indeed, at home and well loved.



JOIN US!

We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that is transforming the future of orphans and vulnerable children from one of despair to one of hope and opportunity! There are a variety of ways that you can help:

Operation Open House — We need \$285,000 to open the doors at Lentsaba Children's Village. Funds are needed for security systems, furnishings, appliances, staff and staff housing.

Sponsor a child — Unlike many programs, Lentsaba prioritizes holistic child care and offers a loving, Christ-based family environment.

Current operating fund — Help with costs of our existing feeding and preschool programs in Eswatini along with administration in our home office.

Your contributions are tax deductible. Email us at info@savingorphans.com



To donate online, scan the QR code