



On the Rugged Red Streets of Jinja

The rain poured down and the red Ugandan dust smoothed into rusty pools. We scrambled for cover and I took refuge in a car with four others -- two Californian university students, Dr. Ammann, and a Ugandan worker from the nonprofit Children of Grace which provides education, nutrition and healthcare resources to HIV orphans.



Hope Walks Jinja Kicks Off

After 45 minutes, the skies cleared and the sun broke out. All 400 of us then participated in Hope Walks Jinja. We took to the streets to march several blocks and celebrate the belovedness and importance of orphans of the HIV epidemic.

What was I doing in Uganda, in a rainstorm, with such diverse folks?

My family and I traveled to Uganda in 2007 to participate in the first international Hope Walks. Two years earlier, I was part of the development team for Hope Walks, an educational and fundraising event centered around HIV orphans. One of my roles was to create curriculum to teach American children about their peers around the world who live with tremendous difficulties due to the HIV epidemic.



Hope Walks on the streets of Jinja, Uganda

As I learned from Dr. Ammann about the realities faced by HIV orphans, my heart broke. Their experiences due to the ravages of HIV were unjust and unfair. I had difficulty grasping the burdens of children with no parents and slim chances of getting the things they needed for a full life -- good food, a safe home, a complete education, the loving embrace of parents. I struggled to understand the orphans' plight so I could relay their stories to American children. But through this process, I also experienced the tug of hope.

I learned that there were already people, including Dr. Ammann, working to help these children. Hope Walks allows us all to join this good work. In the past three years, Global Strategies for HIV

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Prevention has held 13 Hope Walks, raised more than \$500,000 and helped over 2,000 orphans get healthcare, education and food.

For my family and me, that rainy, wonderful day in 2007 walking through the streets of Jinja with the orphans of the HIV epidemic turned the faceless numbers into regular children. We were able to hold their hands, see their beautiful faces, and watch them run and play. These children are beloved, and have the same desires and needs as my own children. Hope Walks gave me an opportunity to learn about these vulnerable children and their precious lives. Hope Walks gives these children a chance to live lives worthy of their belovedness.



Penny, Lucy, Calvin
and John Barthel

- Penny Barthel

Penny Barthel was part of the Hope Walks planning and development team in 2005. As a former science teacher, she created curriculum for Hope Walks. In her free time she enjoys gardening and is President of the Albany Music Fund.

