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Dear Friend,

It is with excitement and immense pride I am writing you to share information on a project in which I am participating. Thank you in advance for reading this lengthy communication.

Many of you know I am the Director of Youth Seminars for Religious Science International (RSI). This is an experiential based seminar program for teens, ages 12-18, who have some connection to the teachings of Religious Science, or are connected to teens who are connected. To say the least, being a part of this program, and in my current position as the director overseeing all of the seminar programs, is truly my passion in life. It is a significant honor to facilitate and experience the youth of today empowering themselves in an affirmative way and choosing to truly make a difference in their lives - which ultimately makes a difference in everyone's lives.

I could go on and on about the numerous magnificent experiences I have been witness to while working with these youthful and powerful expressions of Spirit - but I am writing to you about one particular project.

Last year, we offered a scholarship to a father and two of his sons from Malawi to attend the annual RSI Summer Youth Seminar/Camp. Walter, the father, and Jabu, the 13 year old son, traveled 20 + hours by airplane to share in this life altering experience. (Unfortunately, at the last minute, Jabu's 15 year old brother was unable to travel). It was a joy to see these two bright beings experience the unconditional love that is shown and shared in this annual experiential seminar. *One of the most amazing aspects of these seminar/camp experiences is that each is designed, managed, and operated by the enlightened teens that travel from all over North America for this "event".*

Everyone at this seminar, with the theme title of **SHI/T happens**, fell in love with Walter, who had chosen to be a foster parent to 14 teens, many of whom are AIDS orphans. And of course, all our lives were enhanced through the experience of Jabu, whose parents died several years earlier of AIDS. He had spent an extended period of time living on the streets, and doesn't speak English - yet shared the brightest light of love through his eyes and thoroughly enjoyed being with all of these loving people.

Turning Possibilities into Realities through Spiritual Awakening

I share this with you to give you some sense of what was shared with these teens, and it is from this place of understanding they committed to making a difference in the country of Malawi. This is a very poor country in the central southeast part of Africa, where the cases of AIDS are staggering, and the amount of education is minimal. In many of the villages where there are schools, girls over the age of 12 are not even guaranteed a place in the schools or classrooms.

Throughout the beginning of the week, many of us had conversations with Walter as to how we could give of ourselves to help his country and the youth of Malawi. It was determined that the one thing most needed is schools and the opportunity for education. *This information was shared with the teens and they were asked what, if anything they would like to do. They responded by deciding to raise money to build schools there. They then donated their ice cream, t-shirt, and food money, and even wrote IOU's. \$9,000 was raised in less than 6 days. One remarkable teen who had worked all summer as a plumber's assistant donated \$350 of the \$400 he had earned!*

With a matching donation made by the RSI Youth Seminar program, a grant made by a Golden Works committee, and other funds raised by the teens and their churches once they returned home, ultimately \$30,000 was raised.

We thought this was perfect, in that we had committed to raising the money required to fund and build 3 schools. *Walter had previously informed us he thought it would cost approximately \$10,000 to build a 2 room school house in the rural areas of Malawi, where they are needed most.*

Everyone was excited!!

The research began and a tremendous amount of faith was required of us in the administrative positions to trust this project would unfold perfectly. To say the least we were concerned as to “how” this would happen, since we had now committed to a project quite some distance from North America.

Of course, the next step appeared. Seemingly out of nowhere, a connection was made with an organization, Building with Books (www.buildingwithbooks.org). This is a non profit organization which over the last 15 years has built more than 180 schools for children in developing countries. AND right now, one of their main areas of focus is in Malawi – exactly where we had made a commitment. *A perfect opportunity for a perfect partnership.*

A fantastic relationship was created in that Building with Books has had great success in not only building schools where they are needed, but they have a very high rate of sustainability and success once they are built. (They do detailed needs assessment on each village, require the villagers participate in the actual building, and then guarantee the schools will operate at an optimum for a minimum of 3 years).

However, we were informed; the cost to build the school is \$15,000 instead of the \$10,000 we had originally planned.

So negotiations ensued, locations were agreed on, celebration openings scheduled, and a check for \$30,000 issued to Building with Books. I am happy to report, that during the 2nd week of June, several of the RSI youth, and a few of us “older” adults will head to the Kusungu district, approximately 58 kilometers outside of Lilongwe, Malawi for the celebratory openings of these primary schools. We are so excited to have the opportunity to be there in person to read the plaques on the schools, Funded by the Youth Seminars Division, Religious Science International.

Furthermore, while we are there, we will do volunteer work, and participate in the building of the 3rd school with the local villagers. Each person going on this trip is raising the money on their own for all of the travel expenses – none of the funds raised or being raised will be used for anything except the schools.

This is where the BIG ASK comes in !

I humbly request your financial assistance in raising money for the 3rd school. The youth and adults are really clear on their desire to honor their commitment to fund the 3rd school, and are working diligently to raise the funds to do so. As well, we are incredibly excited we will have the opportunity to actually participate in the physical building of this structure.

I am attaching to this request some photographs on the next page which is an example of the wonderment brought to the children when given the opportunity to learn in a clean, new, and safe building. And especially one with plumbing! *As of right now, the 1st and 2nd grade of one of the schools that is being built meets under a tree!*

These children value their education and really, really want to learn. Many them walk, yes walk, long distances just for the opportunity to go to school.

Thank you for your attention, your assistance and your friendship. Please take a moment and visit our website www.rsintl.org and click on Youth Education, and you can see several photographs of our past seminar/camp experiences.

Please know that any and all money you contribute is greatly appreciated and will make a significant difference in these children’s lives.

All checks can be made payable to RSI Youth Seminars – Malawi School Project. I am enclosing a self addressed stamped envelope to assist you *in assisting us* with this beautiful and worthy project.

Should you choose to support this project, please provide your email address and I promise to keep you informed of the progress of the schools and our journey to Malawi.

You are all very, very special to me, and thank you for being in my life.

In love and light,

Rev. Keith Cox
Director, Youth Seminars, RSI

MALAWI SCHOOL FUND PROJECT



These are women from the village where one of the schools is being built. They are carrying sand and gravel for the foundation of the school.



This thatched structure will be replaced by the second school we are funding.



This is currently the classroom for the 1st and 2nd grade students at one of the schools being built.



Here is an example of what the schools being built will look like.