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This apron is
one of many
that played
a part in a
fundraising
project to
help nurses
in Kenya.
SUBMITTED



Apron strings tie Nashville to nurses in Kenya

By Diane Hughes
TENNESSEAN CUSTOM
PUBLICATIONS

How could vintage kitchen aprons possibly fund nursing efforts a world away from Nashville?

When it comes to the enterprising efforts of dedicated nurses, nothing is impossible.

This intriguing story begins back in 2006, with a group of Vandy nursing alums getting together for a 40-year reunion. Though they didn't meet with the intent of making an impact far across the globe, the result of their gathering was the birth of The Nurses' Apron Partnership, a fundraising effort based on the adoption of — of all things — kitchen aprons.

A novel approach

During that reunion weekend, Vanderbilt nursing grad Ginger Manley hosted a gathering at her home. While looking through some boxes with her former classmates, Manley came across a collection of vintage aprons that she inherited from her aunt.

"While looking through the boxes, the aprons started tumbling out," Manley says. "That's when people started telling stories. Stories started tumbling out."

And that's when these innovative women came up with a novel idea: They would take the aprons and use them to raise money for nurses in Kenya.

Through word of mouth, the original group of 19 grew to include a total of 50 nurses from 15 states (and Kenya) who joined together to make literary contributions to a book they named *Gotcha Covered*.

They would, in turn, sell the book and donate proceeds to nurses in Kenya. So, each nurse in the group adopted an apron and used it as their inspiration to write a related essay, story or poem.

The idea was, Manley says, that in the same way an apron keeps you covered while cooking, "we're trying to get these nurses covered." Manley notes that

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Africa is experiencing a health-care crisis as nurses are leaving the country to find better opportunities elsewhere.

The apron idea caught like wildfire, but the nurses soon realized their lofty goals to reverse the crisis in Kenya would require more funding than the book could provide. That's when The Nurses' Apron Partnership teamed up with Burning Bush Inc., an organization established in 2005 by their fellow nurse and former teacher Poppy Buchanan.

Small ideas, big results

While visiting Kenya in 1999, Buchanan met a nurse there and witnessed her struggle to provide basic medical care. Because of that encounter, Buchanan was moved to establish BBI, a nonprofit that could send money to the medical field in Kenya through microloans, small loans given to the very needy in an attempt to foster entrepreneurship. Using that concept, BBI has since been able to provide funds to build and sustain a clinic in Kenya.

"The clinic has become self-sufficient, as of Octo-

ber of last year," says Buchanan.

But Burning Bush continues working to raise money for education, supplies and equipment to nurses who provide health care in remote areas of Kenya. According to Buchanan, these nurses provide care that residents wouldn't otherwise have access to.

"They have free health care in Kenya, but (the people) can't get to it," she says. "They may have to drive 45 miles."

According to Buchanan, nurses go into these remote areas and set up clinics that

they own and operate.

"They're the backbone of the health-care system in Kenya," Buchanan notes, adding that the clinics there are "very ill equipped" for the work they are doing.

"I know the nurses in this area are very capable and already give excellent care, but they are in serious need of supplies and equipment," Buchanan says.

The spirit of giving

In addition to raising funds with their book, Manley and her fellow nurses are encouraging people to give whatever

they can to BBI to help the effort in Kenya.

"We want people to give \$10," says Manley, noting that even in this economy, that's an amount that most of us can afford.

Gotcha Covered will be available later this year; Manley projects an early summer release. All proceeds from the book (minus publishing costs) will pay for the continuing

education of Jocelyn Macharia, a nurse in Kenya.

"She is working with AIDS orphans and widows and feels vastly under trained in what to do for them," says Manley.

To learn more about Macharia, see the adjacent story about this nurse and her work in Kenya. For more information about TNAP, visit www.thenursesapronpartnership.com.

Nurse in Kenya to get aid from local nurses

By Diane Hughes
TENNESSEAN CUSTOM
PUBLICATIONS

Nashville nurses are joining together to raise money to help a comrade a world away. And their efforts are helping to put a face on the health-care crisis in Kenya.

In this case, the face is that of Jocelyn Macharia.

Jocelyn is a registered nurse in the central highlands of Kenya, an area in desperate need of medical and nursing care. As a registered nurse and nurse midwife, Macharia owns and runs a health center that provides maternity and youth services, with a focus on sexually transmitted diseases and treating patients affected by HIV/AIDS.

Feeling the need for additional training in order to provide a better level of care, the 50-year-old nurse has been accepted to begin studies on a master's

degree in Community Pastoral Care & HIV/AIDS through the distance learning program at St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya. She will begin her studies on May 25.

In a recent e-mail to *The Tennessean*, Macharia said her greatest challenge is the number of people in the area living with HIV/AIDS.

"They need somebody to support them, counsel them — and actually they have no funds to meet their treatment and the services. There are also very many questions they ask, and I have no answer for them due to lack of enough knowledge," Macharia says.

Macharia says she is heartened by the support of her fellow nurses and other people so far away. She believes this opportunity for additional training will allow her to help more people than ever before.



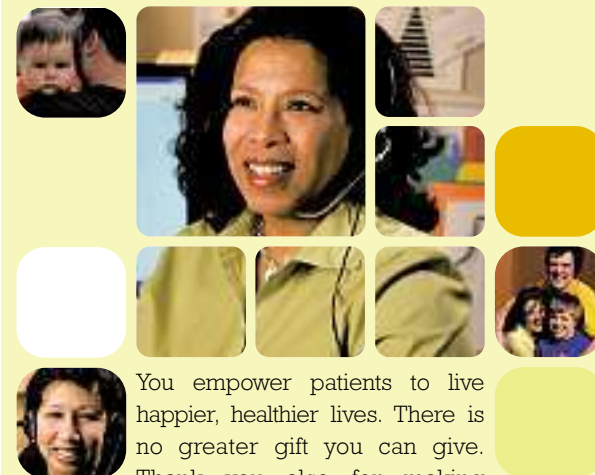
Jocelyn Macharia, a nurse in Kenya, will further her education with the help of fellow nurses in Nashville and across the U.S. SUBMITTED

"I am grateful and excited, and I give all glory to God that He may also prosper those who are helping me."

The cost of the program is about \$7,200 (in U.S. dollars). While nurses

are encouraged to donate at least \$10 each (more, if possible) anyone may send a donation. If you'd like to join the effort and help the cause to educate Macharia, visit www.burningbushkenya.org.

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