

## **Traverse Bay Sunrise Rotary Club Global Service Project Opportunity**



**Candidate Organization: Warm Hearts Foundation**

**Main headquarters: Grand Rapids, Michigan**

**Contact person: Paul Brink (Acme, MI resident)**

Domestic and international partners: World of Difference organization of Salt Lake City, UT. We are currently in discussions with the Rotary Club in Blantyre, Malawi about a possible partnering on this project.

### **Brief Overview of Project**

We propose that the Traverse Bay Sunrise Rotary Club partner with the Warm Hearts Foundation on a classroom building expedition in Malawi sometime in 2017. Because of the long distance involved and the size of the project, the expedition would require a two-week commitment assuming the Club was interested in fully staffing the project (15 – 25 people). Realizing that two weeks is beyond the reach of many of your busy club members, another option would be to send representatives to join with a larger group for part of the time, in which case we could accommodate up to 5 – 10 people.

### **Brief organization history**

The Warm Hearts Foundation (WHF), founded in 2004, is a non-denominational, volunteer led, donor-funded organization. The WHF mission is “to provide a loving hand to lift those less fortunate out of poverty and into self-sufficiency by providing clean water sources, safe shelter, nourishment and educational opportunities.” The WHF vision is “for the children in our programs to become productive, compassionate citizens of the world, inspired to achieve their dreams and empowered to lift others.” The WHF’s work has been focused on improving the lives of women and children in the slums of Nairobi Kenya, and the Mangochi area of

Malawi with a primary emphasis on health and education. Since 2004, WHF has provided clean water, classroom buildings and latrines and solar powered lanterns for schools by constructing 275 deep-water wells, building several classroom blocks and outfitting 15 schools with sufficient lanterns for 320 kids in each school to return to school in the evening to do homework or attend night classes.

For the past two years WHF has partnered with World Of Difference (WOD) to offer the opportunity to people interested in helping to build classroom blocks and related structures to join an expedition to Malawi for that purpose. WOD has a wealth of experience leading these types of expeditions, having done more than 40 in Kenya before branching to Malawi last year at WHF's request.

### **Project Background**

Location: Rural Malawi in the Mangochi District (near the southern end of the Lake of Malawi).

Time of year: In 2017, anytime of the year (except December through April, which is the rainy season).

### **Description of Project**

Helping to construct a two or three classroom block, latrines and desks at a new secondary school we are helping to start in the northern end of the Mangochi District. Local technical assistance is provided; Rotarians would be performing manual labor under supervision as well as interacting with children (reading, playing, singing).

### **Has this type of project been completed before? YES**

We have completed classroom blocks at the Chaona primary school in 2014 and at the Mkumba primary school in 2015. We plan to construct one or two more in 2016 all in partnership with WOD.

### **Need and Goals:**

With a per capita income of only \$270 Malawi was recently ranked the poorest country in the world (compared to \$810 in Haiti). Most of the schools in the rural areas do not have enough classrooms to house all of the students. For this reason many classes are held outdoors under trees which creates a feeling of being inferior to the children who are fortunate to be attending classes inside. It also creates a problem during the rainy season and makes for a challenging learning environment when the teacher is trying to maintain the students' attention.

Our goal with this project in partnership with TBSR is to have completed 2 classrooms for a fully functional secondary school (high school) in the northern end of the Mangochi district. Currently there is only one public high school in the entire district, located in the town of Mangochi, with a population of over 200,000.

Students who have passed the exam to attend high school but who live too far away to walk to the one available school are often denied the opportunity to attend. This is especially true for girls.

### **Potential Impact**

Currently only a small percentage of the girls in Mangochi who pass the exam to enter high school actually attend. Distance from the school is the primary obstacle. The only public secondary school is located in the town of Mangochi. Unless they can afford bicycles, students who live in the northern end of the district must walk as many as 15 miles or more each way to attend school. The other option is to find a place to stay in the town. Both options are considered by many to be too hazardous for young girls.

### **Is this project sustainable in the long term? YES**

In Malawi the government will provide teachers once the classroom has been built, so as long as the project is approved in advance, it is sustainable. WHF and WOD will ensure that the project receives advance approval.

Also we are confident the WHF donor/volunteer base will be excited to know we now have a high school connection. This will provide donors/volunteers with future opportunities to interact with and mentor teachers and students at the high school, outfit laboratories with rudimentary equipment and provide opportunities for student/student interaction with local Traverse City high schools.

### **How will Traverse Bay Sunrise Rotarians be involved?**

Rotarians would be performing manual labor under supervision, this includes mixing cement, carrying blocks, wall construction, desk construction, etc., as well as interacting with children (reading, playing, singing). There is work for all levels of ability and participants are encouraged to work at their ability level. Sunrise Rotarians will be working along side a local crew who will direct the construction work. Parents and kids from the school will also be lending a hand.



Although part of the cost of the trip includes a contribution to the cost of materials, we typically try to fundraise an additional amount for materials and the local labor. On our most recent project we raised \$10,000 for this purpose.

**Is there a possibility for future involvement?**

Yes. The need for classrooms is great. WHF and WOD are working village by village to create classrooms and latrines so that more children can attend school within a reasonable walking distance and without interruption during the rainy season.

Also as mentioned above there will be future opportunities to interact with/mentor teachers and students at the high school, outfit laboratories and provide opportunities for student/student interaction with local Traverse City high schools.

**Lodging and ground transportation summary**

Participants will be met at the airport in Lilongwe, the capital city, and travel by large minibuses with professional drivers hired for the duration of the visit. The drive to Mangochi takes about four hours over good roads.

Transportation to the job site each day will be provided by these same buses. The distance is approximately 15 miles each way, primarily on good roads.

When in Mangochi participants will stay in a modest hotel near the town. It will have modern plumbing facilities, running water, electricity and a bed. However please keep in mind that the electricity and water may not always be available.

Purified drinking water will be provided at all times. Breakfast and dinner will be served at the hotel and prepared under sanitary conditions. Lunches consisting of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, etc. will be provided at the job site. Boiling water will be available for those who prefer to bring freeze dried camping meals from home.

In case of accident or illness we will seek prompt medical attention. Your trip fee will include a travel health insurance policy that will provide for medical evacuation in serious situations.

**What is the cost of the trip?**

In 2014 and 2015 the cost was \$3,850. We try to keep the cost under \$4,000 per person. This includes all airfare, lodging, meals, transportation, a weekend safari trip, and a contribution of approximately \$1,000 to building materials.

**How long is the trip, and how many people can be accommodated?**

Because of the long-distance involved (travel takes two days each way), we schedule these trips over two weeks. However we will do our best to accommodate those who need to arrive late or leave early. The ideal group size is approximately 12 – 25 people. As noted previously, another option would be to send representatives to join with a larger group for part of the time, in which case we could accommodate up to 5 – 10 people.

**What are the safety and/or logistic concerns?**

We will be accompanied at all times by WHF staff who is Malawian and WOD volunteer leader(s) who are experienced with supervising identical projects in Malawi. Malawi is called the "Warm Heart of Africa." Malawi locals exude friendliness; the country is safe, stable and peaceful. Founded in 1964, Malawi has never experienced a civil war. Its natural resources are beautiful beaches and wildlife—not oil and gas. Malawi was named one of the top 10 places to visit in 2014 by Lonely Planet. Travel on the roads is relatively uncrowded due to the paucity of motorized vehicles in Malawi.

**We are not 'All work and no play'!**

During the intervening weekend, the group will spend three days and two nights at the Liwonde National Park, located about two hours from Mangochi. The lodge is very nice, the food is good and the game viewing is exceptional. The safari trips are conducted both on land and by boat on the Shire River.

Sundays are rest days. Opportunities will be provided to attend church services in the morning and an optional tour of Warm Hearts projects in the area will be provided in the afternoon.



**Final comments**

Thank you for allowing us to make this proposal. WHF would very much welcome the opportunity to work with the Traverse Bay Sunrise Rotary Club on this and other projects in Malawi. The best part of all is the chance to get to know these wonderful “Warm Hearted” people.

