



June 2023 Newsflash

We are back from Rwanda!

On May 16, for the first time since 2018, a small group of volunteers from INSPIRE!africa travelled to Rwanda to teach English, meet survivors of the Genocide Against the Tutsi, and have the opportunity to see first hand how your donations have changed the lives of survivors.

Here are some highlights:

- We met two beneficiaries of the counseling and legal support Helpline that is supported by INSPIRE!africa. The support these women received has completely changed their lives. They have gone from their lowest low to lives full of hope.
- We went to a Volcano National Park for the experience of a lifetime, seeing the gorillas!
- We hiked over the ridge from Lake Ruhondo to see Lake Berero. It was so peaceful!
- We dropped in on the nineteen young adults attending vocational training that INSPIRE!africa supports. Nine were learning to be baristas – fancy coffee is a thing in Rwanda now! – and the rest were attending other training such as hair dressing, tailoring, and carpentry. They are set for success!

- We helped repair a road during Umaganda – a monthly event where residents come together to make their community better.
- We visited the Fair Child Deaf School for poor deaf children. They gave each of us a name in sign language and we played soccer with the balls we gave them. The kids won!
- We had a lot of fun spending our mornings helping beneficiaries improve their English.
- We got together with students we have sponsored in the past. We are so proud of all they have overcome and accomplished!
- We visited the Genocide Memorial Centre in Kigali, Murambi Genocide Memorial Centre, and Nyamata Genocide Memorial. We were moved by the memorials, but also inspired by the resiliency the people.



We did so much, met so many wonderful people and saw so much of this beautiful country. Visit our [Facebook](#) page to see photos of these highlights!

“Out of Darkness and Into Light”

THANK YOU to everyone who donated before the trip so we could give pigs, goats, and solar lights to survivors! Your gift has changed lives.

We distributed pigs and goats to 30 survivors living in Kabigali. The recipients will breed these pigs and goats, providing them with much needed revenue.



We distributed the solar lights to 30 families living in a rural area with no electricity.

The solar lights provide a sustainable alternative to kerosene lights, repel mosquitoes, and charge cell phones – a critical method of communication in Rwanda.

The families were so grateful. They talked about how you have moved them out of darkness and into light. They no longer have to walk into a dark house, will not have to pay for costly kerosene, and will be safe from risk of fire and hazardous smoke.

On behalf of survivors, **THANK YOU!**



A Word from Our Volunteers

We asked our volunteer Brenda about her impressions of her trip to Rwanda. Here's what she had to say:

Our fellow traveler Marsha asked us daily, "What surprised you the most today?" I always laughed and gave her some trite answers as I really hadn't found the words yet to describe what I had experienced.

I was surprised by how clean and developed Kigali was. It is a thriving urban centre with infrastructure I had not seen in other parts of Africa. I was awestruck by the beauty of Rwanda. "The Land of a Thousand Hills" is an apt description and the vistas were spectacular as we travelled across the country.

Despite having read extensively about Rwanda and the genocide, I was surprised by the overwhelming wave of emotions I experienced standing at the Murambi Genocide Memorial Centre. The stories of the atrocities that were inflicted against fellow Rwandans are incomprehensible. What surprised me the most was the unbelievable resilience, optimism and capacity for forgiveness shown by the survivors.

While I expected to find a pervasive sadness and anger, I saw instead a hopefulness and optimism and an unswerving pride of their country.

We also witnessed firsthand the Trojan work ethic of the Rwandan people. Rwandans are hard-working and could definitely teach others about exemplary customer service. Our day experiencing Umuganda, the community work day, was surprising and inspiring. I can only imagine what could be accomplished if this model of community service was adopted globally! The young adults we were asked to do English lessons with came to class every day ready and eager to learn, some travelling up to three hours just to attend. They came prepared and were active

our mentorship through on-line chats and videos so they can continue to improve their English skills now that we are back in Canada.

Although not surprising, I was amazed at the difference one person or organization can make.

INSPIRE!africa has clearly made a huge difference in the lives of many Rwandans. Meeting graduates from the Learning Centre, I saw young men and women committed to improving not only their own lot in life but also "paying it forward" and helping improve their communities. Seeing the joy and appreciation of the recipients of the goats and piglets in the village of Kabagali, the pride and industry of the Tujembere Women's Cooperative creating and selling their crafts, and the heartfelt gratitude of the SURF project recipients, I saw love in action.

Lastly, I was pleasantly surprised at how five very diverse women could come together and immediately build a collegial team, inspire each other, and build lasting friendships.

I am so grateful to have been able to travel to Rwanda with INSPIRE!africa, Margaret and the other volunteers.



2023 Fundraiser!

In November we will have our annual in person fundraiser. It will include our always popular African market with items purchased in Rwanda! Stay tuned to future newsletters for a sneak peek!

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