

# Step Up! American Association for Rwandan Women

January 2013

1214 Steelhead Ct, Ste 3B, Columbia, MO 65203, 573-445-5820, [www.StepUpRwandaWomen.org](http://www.StepUpRwandaWomen.org)

## Message from the President

*"The true meaning of life is to plant trees,  
under whose shade you do not expect to sit."*

**Nelson Henderson**

Step Up is happy to report that from the seeds you planted in 2004 when the organization was launched, came a healthy and thriving tree whose branches are starting to spread all over Rwanda, bringing shade and protection for those whose lives were shattered in 1994. Some of you may never sit under this tree, but your fingerprints are all over it. Thank you for your assistance to Step Up!

Happy New Year! May you be abundantly blessed in 2013.

Rangira Béa Gallimore

## April 2012 Fundraiser

The April 2012 Step Up biannual fundraising event was a big success. The fundraising banquet took place on April 28, but Step Up was also active during the symposium on the genocide in Rwanda (April 26-28) organized by the Afro-Romance Institute in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Symposium participants came from the US, Canada, Europe, and Africa. The Step Up fundraising banquet served as a closing ceremony to this truly international symposium. The fundraiser consisted of the dinner banquet, a silent auction, and the sale of Rwandan souvenirs and crafts.



**Canadian Senator Roméo Dallaire**

Canadian Senator Roméo Dallaire was the keynote speaker at the banquet and his lecture addressed "The Casualties of Humanitarian Intervention." Senator Dallaire's speech was based on his own battle with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) caused by his military experience in Rwanda in 1994. The theme for the fundraiser was, "The House of Hope" because proceeds will go to building and maintaining a counseling center in Butare, a town in southern Rwanda. The purpose of the center is to assist women survivors of rape and other gender-based violence. Obtaining a building for the center has been a major goal for Step Up since its founding in 2004. The center will be called Nsanga, which means "come to me" and it will be a place for hope and healing. We are thrilled to report that Step Up was able to raise \$10,000 towards our goal of \$50,000, the cost of the building in Butare that we are interested in buying.

## Nsanga Service Award



Rwandan Baskets for sale during the Silent Auction

The Nsanga Service Award was established in 2012 by the Gallimore and Bihomora families. The Award is in memory of Béa's mother, Marciana Mukansanga, who was killed during the genocide in 1994. The name "Nsanga" comes from Mukansanga, a nickname that was given to her by her own siblings. The name also has a very significant meaning in Kinyarwanda, the local language of Rwanda. It means, "come to me". Nsanga refers to Mukansanga's generosity and hospitality.

During the Step Up fundraising banquet, Nsanga Service Awards were given to three University of Missouri students who have worked diligently with Step Up and Step Up Mizzou. The latter is a University of Missouri student organization that supports the work of Step Up by educating the University population about genocide and promoting its campaign to stand against genocide. Members of Step Up Mizzou also provide free tutoring to young refugees from Rwanda, Burundi and Congo who live in the Columbia community.

The Service Award was also given to Step Up Marquette, a student organization that does fundraising for Step Up at Marquette

University and in the Milwaukee area. The third recipient of the award was Dr. Greg Swartz, a dentist from Centralia, Missouri. For the last three years, Greg has been supporting the Step Up projects that assist the women of ABASA genocide survivors group. He was also recognized for doing charity dental work in Rwanda under his own non-profit organization "Smile Rwanda": <http://www.smilerwanda.org/>



Dr. Swartz, recipient of Nsanga Award

## Jeanne Nyirakamana and the Nsanga Association

Step Up has been successful in Rwanda thanks to the work of its representative there, Jeanne Nyirakamana. Béa Gallimore and Barbara Bauer met Jeanne in 2006 in Butare. Jeanne, who was a nurse, then worked as the head of the Family Planning Center in Butare and was also a part-time student in clinical psychology at the National University of

Rwanda (NUR). When she received her bachelor's degree in 2009, Jeanne decided to pursue a master's in clinical psychology, which had just opened at NUR. We are happy to report that Jeanne graduated with a master's last fall.

Jeanne is also the founder of the Nsanga Association. This Step Up sister organization includes other graduates from the NUR Clinical Psychology Department and many of them took subsequent training in trauma counseling that Step Up has been providing in Rwanda since 2006. Jeanne has managed to get a temporary facility from the local government where her Nsanga Association colleagues are able to provide a few counseling sessions for the women of the ABASA and other survivors of the genocide. They provide counseling during their free time on the weekend. Once Step Up is able to buy a building for the Nsanga Center, Jeanne is hoping to work full time there. She is presently applying for government grants and other funding that would enable her to work full time with Step Up.

### **Training in Rwanda in July 2013**

Step Up has been recruiting trainers including psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, and gender violence advocates to teach 2-week workshops in psychosocial trauma counseling in Rwanda in early July. This year we want to include training on how to counsel the victims of sexual violence and substance abuse. Previous workshop participants requested training on these topics. Thanks to your financial support, Step Up plans to provide \$1,000 towards the airplane ticket, local transportation and lodging in Rwanda for the volunteer trainers. We hope also to provide some training sessions in Gisenyi, a city on the border between Rwanda and the

Republic Democratic of Congo. We will train Rwandans and also the Congolese who requested training workshops in Gisenyi. Such training is needed especially for those who will work in the Congo where gender-based violence is prevalent. With your help, we plan to provide at least 3 to 4 days of training there.

### **Micro-Finance Projects for Abasa**

Step Up donated \$ 2,500 to the women of ABASA to set up small business enterprises that they are using to support themselves and their children. So far 25 women have benefited from the loan. Some of the women are paying their loans earlier than planned.

### **Scholarship/Sponsorship**

The children in the ABASA community are now starting to attend high school and college. Step Up is trying to get sponsors in the U.S. to support a few of these children who are furthering their education. One young woman of the Abasa who was raped at the age 7 during the genocide is now benefiting from this effort. She just finished her first year at the University, and she is now entering the second year thanks to a sponsor from Saint Louis, MO. If you are interested in sponsoring a child of the Abasa for University studies, please let Béa know : [gallimorer@missouri.edu](mailto:gallimorer@missouri.edu).

### **Membership and Donations**

If you are interested in sustaining the ongoing Step Up projects in Rwanda, consider joining Step Up or making a tax-deductible donation. Membership information is available below or on our website. If you are already a member of Step Up, we appreciate your support and encourage you to renew your membership for 2011.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Donation Amount \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Levels**

\$500 - Platinum Level

\$300 - Gold Level

\$200 - Silver Level

\$100 - Bronze Level

\$60 - Basic Membership

\$25 - Student Membership