

Her Cause Is Your Cause!



Shannon McNamara, a 15-year-old from Basking Ridge, New Jersey, gave power to sisterhood by putting together two facts she learned about girls in Tanzania, Africa: Many girls there drop out after grade school to earn money for their families. But one year of secondary school can raise the wages these girls are able to earn by as much as 25 percent. Shannon's

After-School Reading Exchange (SHARE; www.shareinafrica.org) has since changed the lives of girls in three Tanzanian locations!

Shannon's project, which earned her a Girl Scout Gold Award, is great inspiration for a Sisterhood Project. Shannon received invaluable assistance from a mentor—Smart Baitani, cofounder and executive director of Compassionate Solutions for Africa's Development. "We started to exchange e-mails," Shannon says. "Our similar goal to help the girls connected us together."

Volunteers were also key: Classmates collected books and labeled and boxed them for shipment. Girl Scout troops and

libraries pitched in, too. Best of all, Shannon really changed lives across borders.

"In July 2008, on my first trip to Tanzania, some girls wouldn't look me in the eye and were nervous," Shannon recalls. "When I came back one year later, they started screaming and hugging me. Their confidence had improved and they talked to me in English and Swahili."

sisterhood in Action

"My fight began with a promise I made to my sister Suzy to do everything I could to find a cure for breast cancer. When Suzy was first diagnosed, the world was much different. . . . There was no Internet. There were no information hotlines. There were no global campaigns to educate people and spread awareness."

Nancy G. Brinker, on keeping her promise and her connection to her sister, who died in 1980, by founding the Susan G. Komen for the Cure foundation, the largest source of nonprofit funds dedicated to fighting breast cancer.