
Fourth Quarter Newsletter 2017

Another Big Year

We have been particularly blessed during 2017. The success of the sewing trade school, opened in 2016, was recognized with a wonderful article in the British publication, [Sew Now](#); building on the sewing school's success, we opened a second sewing trade school in a different neighborhood; we awarded grants to 28 women who operate a wide variety of businesses and support nearly 200 family members; and we are about to pilot a third trade school that would train impoverished adolescent girls in hair and nail salon operation. It's an exciting time to be involved with FSI.

Recent Grants

Bakery

This three-woman collective operates a successful bakery. FSI funding will allow them to replace their oven, providing an opportunity to significantly increase their production and sales. Together, they support 29 family members.



Aluminum Pot Production



The Democratic Republic of Congo is a country rich in natural resources. These women are leveraging that richness to produce aluminum cooking pots. They melt the aluminum and use molds to produce a variety of pots. They currently work in a space with partial walls and have minimal shelter from the elements. The FSI grant will be used to improve their work space and double their sales. They will build better walls, add a roof, and purchase a motor. There are three women with 32 family members.

Coffins

The death of a family member is a too frequent occurrence in the DRC. This three-woman collective builds affordable coffins for use by low-income families on these sad occasions. With the FSI investment they will expand their inventory and anticipate doubling their monthly sales. They

support 20 family members.



Social Media Assistance, Please

Do you Facebook, Tweet, use Instagram? If so, we want you to “like” us. Research shows that building a vibrant social media platform is one of the best ways to build support for a program. Help us leverage your social media connections by connecting them to First Step. So, take a moment to link us via your Facebook, Twitter or Instagram account.



Volunteer Opportunities

We are actively recruiting volunteers in three areas – grant writing, donor database and online marketing, and as a board member. These are three highly sought-after areas for volunteers so it is challenging to find folks with these skills who are committed to the empowerment of African women. If you or someone you know would like to pursue a deeper involvement with First Step Initiative, please contact us [here](#).

FSI Welcomes Laura Skubic, New BOD Member

Please join us in welcoming Laura Skubic to the Board of Directors. Laura brings a deep commitment to social justice as well as practical experience working with community organizations. This is readily evident in the jobs she’s held and the volunteer work she’s done. Laura began her career with The Food Group (formerly the Emergency Foodshelf Network) - coordinating and strengthening relationships among its over 90 food shelves and community partners. She then moved to the Catholic Charities Opportunity Center. Here, she coaches individuals experiencing homelessness who want to get back into the workforce and builds partnerships with local workforce leaders who are looking to hire qualified candidates. In her volunteer life, she has served as a member of the Young Professionals Board at both the Ronald McDonald House (Special Events) and Big Brothers/Big Sisters (Community Relations). Additionally, Laura knows her way around the digital world and event planning. All in all, a welcome addition to the FSI board. Welcome, Laura!



Give to the Max

A big thank you to all our Give to the Max contributors! We “feel the love” when we see how many of you commit financially to the women of Lubumbashi, DRC. They can’t do it without you.

End-of-Year Appeal

If you missed Give to the Max, it isn’t too late. Our end-of-year appeal will be coming your

way shortly. Watch for it in your mail.

Make lasting change. Give monthly.

Click on the button below and select recurring donation.

Donate HERE!

