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Dream Sponsors, Inc.

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**WELLINGTON BASED NON-PROFIT HELPS MAKE DREAMS COME TRUE FOR
KENYAN ORPHANS**

WELLINGTON, FLORIDA – There were endless smiles and a tremendous show of appreciation from several Kenya orphans and their grandmothers after board members of the local non-profit, Dream Sponsors, Inc., brought much needed support to the children recently. The children live in Benyore, a small rural village in western Kenya, and they dream of having enough food, clean water, shoes and schoolbooks – and they dream of getting an education.

Two Dream Sponsors board members were visiting the village as part of the organization's efforts to provide orphan youth in Africa with basic needs, school fees and emotional support to help transform their dreams into reality. The children revealed dreams of becoming doctors, nurses and eleven year-old Abel stated he wanted to be a teacher.

The organization was founded in June 2006 by longtime resident Carla Neumann, a licensed marriage and family therapist practicing in Wellington. Neumann has visited many countries in Africa, and this was her third visit to Kenya. During her last visit in 2006, she met with a professional Kenyan she had mentored online for two years. He introduced her to a group of orphans he was helping to care for, and Neumann was inspired by their life stories. She returned home to begin a local effort to help. She and board members hope to show others that you do not have to be a celebrity or millionaire to make huge changes in a child's life.

Dream Sponsors, Inc., chose to help the children of Kenya for many reasons, including the enormous needs of, and urgency for, the millions of children orphaned by AIDS and other illnesses. While recruiting board members, Neumann's journey led her to Fiston Kahindo, a native of the Democratic Republic of the Congo now living in South Florida. Kahindo was orphaned at age 8, fled his country on foot, and survived the harsh conditions of a refugee camp in Kenya for six years. Through the gift of sponsorship, Kahindo was able to further his educational goals here in the United States and hopes to make a difference in the lives of youth in Africa. He now serves as the treasurer of Dream Sponsors and traveled with Neumann back to Kenya for the first time since he came to the U.S., where he was able to visit friends and his sister in Burundi who he had not seen since 1992.

While in Benyore, Neumann and Kahindo collaborated with board members of Kijana Educational Empowerment Initiative (KEEI), another Palm Beach County based non-profit which promotes and cultivates youth empowerment through educational development; cross cultural dialogue and sustainable and environmentally friendly economic growth. By working with people in the village, the needs of orphans were identified. Kahindo and Neumann visited the children's dwelling units and met with the children, their grandparents and schoolteachers.

"I was overwhelmed by the level of poverty that the children live in," Neumann said. "These children had no running water or electricity, very little clothing and getting enough food is always a struggle."

The elderly grandmother of newly sponsored, eight-year-old Elizabeth was extremely ill with malaria during their first home visit. "It took a small gift of \$5 to provide medication to improve her condition in just a short time," Kahindo explained. "We were able to provide mosquito nets and other supplies to help with their living conditions to keep Elizabeth

functioning in her small rural school. She must walk in excess of two miles each way to her school and had never owned a pair of shoes until our visit.”

The two realized after showing the children their faces on a digital camera that they appeared to have never experienced seeing themselves before. “It was so rewarding to see the smiles on their faces when dressing them in new clothes and to watch them giggle at themselves in a store mirror for the very first time,” Neumann said. “We were delighted to experience many “firsts” with them, including a car ride, tasting chocolate, getting fitted for their first pair of shoes and trying on clothes. They had never been out of their local village prior to our arrival,” Kahindo further commented.

Dream Sponsors board members are also working on plans to assist Kenyan professionals develop their very first official Grief Counseling Center. The organization welcomes volunteers, and donations to help more orphans. Neumann explained that upon leaving the village they were given an overwhelmingly long list of all the children in just one school that had lost one or both parents. One goal is to get Palm Beach County youth involved in fund-raising and other projects, with the hope being that American and Kenyan youth will learn more about each other. Some high school organizations are already helping out including two local Interact Clubs. To contact Neumann for more information, visit the website www.dreamsponsorsinc.org or call the office at 561-795-2223.