

Africa (AF) Highlights

The Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad (SOSA)



When speaking of Africa, numbers and statistics never tell the real story. Every volunteer in Africa has a personal story to tell – stories built from moments like looking into the eyes of an orphaned child and watching the joy when she cuddles a teddy bear or receives her first backpack. Or sharing smiles with women receiving sewing machines and earning their first coins from the selling of hand-sewn napkins, or helping students navigate the Internet to find educational opportunities. Experiences such as these are embedded in the memories of U.S. Foreign Service community members. Whether a project lasts for two years, three years, or is designed to last several lifetimes, each and every volunteer in Africa knows the value of being a People-to-People Ambassador, working for the betterment of the human condition, one story at a time. It's the human experience of lending a helping hand that counts.



Since the first award presentations in 1991, seventy-three nominations have come from the African region, with some individuals nominated more than once for their volunteerism. The needs addressed in Africa by SOSA nominees and winners span a wide range of activities, from the most basic provisions of clothing and a daily meal to the improvement of infrastructure (electricity, access to water, and transportation), the delivery of expanded health services, and enhanced educational and training opportunities. During violent outbreaks of civil unrest, U.S. Embassy community members have put their own lives in danger to help fellow human beings. And in the face of the widespread HIV/AIDS epidemic, volunteers have traveled to remote villages to improve the lives of those affected – adults sick, ailing and weak and the children left behind.



Africa's children are often a primary concern for volunteers. Across the continent, the impact of civil wars, AIDS, and poverty have left thousands of young Africans without family members or support. Volunteers have reached out to help orphans not only survive, but thrive in the poorest of communities.



The following four profiles from the African experience show the varied ways in which volunteers have participated in their local communities, raised monies, and touched the lives of those they meet. To provide more of an overview of the entire region, shorter success stories follow.

Maja Patin (winner 1994)

Bravery and Compassion Amidst the Chaos in Burundi

Maja Patin and her family arrived in Burundi in the summer of 1992. When her husband accepted a position at the U.S. Embassy, they had no idea they would become witnesses to bloodshed and death in the streets of Bujumbura. Where most people would have avoided danger at all costs, Maja put her own life at risk to save others.

When Burundi's first democratically- elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, was killed in a bloody coup on October 21, 1993, the country plunged into chaos. The murders of Ndadaye and five associates triggered a killing frenzy that, over the following six weeks, took the lives of some 300,000 Burundians, left thousands wounded, and displaced an additional one million persons from their homes. Hundreds of thousands also fled to neighboring countries.

Maja and her family provided refuge from the killing spree to 50 people over the course of several months. The Hutus and Tutsis who hid at the Patin home were professional contacts (and their family members) who had been targeted for execution by the military. According to Maja, "Every time violence flared up again, we sheltered different groups of people, depending on where the "slaughter" took place at that time, and on who was targeted."

Maja's own words recount the events on the first night of the coup: "... all telephone lines were cut, and a 24 hour curfew was imposed; the city appeared eerily empty. I received calls for help by different means. One of the first calls was from a woman disguised in rags. She had made her way to our house through bushes and tall grass, carrying a piece of paper with a short message: S.O.S. I then made my way to the sender of that message on empty roads, and through a dry riverbed to avoid roadblocks. I hid him under a blanket in the back of my car and took him to safety. That was the beginning, several others followed in similar ways. The pick-ups at night were the scariest. One of the FSNs fled his house as soldiers approached, but didn't manage to take his children; I picked up the children the following day."

While some hiding at the Patins eventually managed to leave the country, others found a place to live in a safer part of town. As the violence shifted from neighborhood to neighborhood, Maja repeatedly drove into dangerous areas to pick up those desperate for help. "I took one person to the airport after it re-opened and we barely made it past a road block where we were attacked by militants." On another occasion, while trying to rescue their household cook, she was shot at as she approached an access road completely covered with slain bodies. The cook escaped from the other side of the neighborhood, where he was met by Paul and brought to safety.

Despite these traumatic experiences, Maja continued her efforts to help. From November 1993 through February 1994, she devoted herself to refugee efforts in four camps, heading up two teams of people, organizing food relief, purchasing supplies and preparing daily meals. For one four-week period, she served as volunteer coordinator for all four camps, coordinating not only food, but handling emergency requests as well.

"The U.N. was pretty quick in providing sacks of rice and beans for the displaced," says Maja. However, since the camps didn't have firewood or cooking implements, the food was eaten half raw, which made it completely inedible for small children who could not digest it. That's why we came up with a feeding program for young children. We had to prepare and serve that food ourselves, since men took the children's food for themselves whenever they could."

Maja's bravery during her time in Burundi reminds us that extraordinary people rise above the crisis to show the best side of human nature. In the midst of chaos, compassion, kindness and caring resulted in the creation of a safe haven for those in need.



Maja Patin, pictured above, says of her volunteering in Burundi, "*It just seemed the normal thing to do.*"

Maja's husband, Paul, was Charge d' Affaires the night of the coup. For several weeks he stayed at the Embassy coordinating the evacuation of American citizens from the countryside, among other tasks.

Burundi experienced periods of extreme violence, followed by periods of calm, followed by more periods of violence. The situation remained volatile and unpredictable for at least another year.

Following the plane crash that killed a second Burundian president and the president of Rwanda, the Patins were evacuated from Bujumbura in April 1994.



Nelda ties laces on new shoes, while a young girl holds her new teddy bear.

Nelda Villines (winner 2006)

Reaching Out to Those Affected by AIDS in Swaziland

At the time of Nelda's nomination, reports indicated Swaziland was the most HIV/AIDS-infected country in the world, with an estimated 42.6% prevalence rate. The result was scores of innocent children left with no parents and often no grandparents. The future still looks grim, with the number of orphans in Swaziland, a country slightly smaller than the state of New Jersey, estimated to reach a staggering 120,000 by 2010.

Nelda worked full-time as Office Management Specialist to the U.S. Ambassador to Swaziland. During her time away from the office, she dedicated her time (and personal finances) to helping HIV-positive orphans and women, visiting some 30 schools and several hospitals across the country distributing food, clothing, books, school supplies, blankets, and toys. Many of these items came from fellow Americans who either sent their donations to Nelda overseas or waited for her to collect them on one of her trips home to the United States. A friend of Nelda's in the

United States, who was teaching fourth grade in Tennessee, sent quilts designed by her students. The quilt program was known as "More Than Warmth."

Orphanages in Swaziland struggle to provide support to the country's growing orphan population. Nelda identified one such orphanage in the village of Ntondozi soon after her arrival in Mbabane in 2004. With 60 orphans between the ages of five and 18, the hardworking directors were hard-pressed to improve the lives of the children. With her husband, Mwana Bermudes, Nelda applied for and was awarded a grant from the J. Kirby Simon Trust to finish the construction of a school for Ntondozi and a family center named Samukelwe. As project coordinators, Nelda and Mwana used the funds to cover the costs of materials and labor for excavation, concrete, carpentry and painting. The J. Kirby Simon Trust, an excellent source of funding for the Foreign Service community, has awarded Nelda and her husband a total of 6 grants over the years at their postings in Lusaka, Zambia and Mbabane, Swaziland.



The Ntondozi schools were not financed by the government of Swaziland, nor did they receive enough additional funding from other organizations. Nelda witnessed children sitting on the floor with classroom teachers standing for hours at a time. The school lacked basic furniture and school supplies. Thinking outside the box, Nelda and Mwana began a project to collect shipping crates. Mwana and a friend drew simple, but solid furniture designs. They set up a wood-working workshop in the basement of their home and hired a carpenter to build tables and benches for rural community schools. This great use of available resources took hold quickly in the Mbabane American community. Nelda and Mwana easily convinced all new arrivals to the U.S. Embassy in 2005 and 2006 to donate their HHE (household effects) shipping crates to the project. "With this wood, we built 20 combos and two heavy-duty teacher's desks and distributed them to rural schools," said Nelda. Each combo — a long table and bench — sat up to 10 students.

Nelda identified more communities in need of assistance. She visited Peace Corps Volunteer sites, self-help projects, and other remote areas to deliver items for distribution to children and women with AIDS. To bring comfort to orphaned children and sick and ailing adults, she brought the Minnesota-based "Mother Bear Project" to Swaziland. In one year alone, over 3,000 knitted teddy bears (made by women all across America) found their way, through Nelda, to impoverished Swazi children and AIDS-infected adults in rural communities. With support from friends in America, Nelda and Mwana also contributed funds to the schooling of two high school children and three adults for computer classes. With technical skills, Swazi women are able to find better paying jobs to support their families.

The impact one can make, one person at a time, grows over time. To travel the dusty roads of rural Africa into poverty-stricken communities and open one's heart to those dying of AIDS or orphaned without family, shows incredible caring. Nelda continued, through innovative means, to reach out and provide support to those affected by the AIDS crisis in Swaziland. She illustrates a commitment to the very spirit of volunteering — giving of yourself and asking nothing in return.



Mwana, who designed the desk combos for Ntondozi schools, poses with a child and new teddy bear at Ntondozi.



Neill Krost, pictured above with a young orphan, says, "Once your heart loves everything becomes possible." The key lesson learned is, "I can make a difference."

Benin is a country of much need, poverty, and hope. A parent of young children himself, Neill saw first hand the disparity between those of privilege and those in need. Neill made this a family activity for himself by involving his wife and children in all aspects of the project. He also encouraged other families to become involved in an effort to enrich their tours in Benin.

Neill G. Krost (winner 2007) Improved Infrastructure at Abomey Orphanage in Benin

Foreign Service Officer Neill Krost spent just two years in Cotonou, Benin, but during that short time, he made dramatic improvements in the lives and welfare of some 250 children at the Abomey Orphanage in the rural countryside. His dedication and leadership stands out as an example of volunteerism at its best amidst the harsh reality of life in West Africa.

Because of its location 4 hours (65 miles) outside the capital city, Abomey Orphanage lacked services and funding. On Neill's first visit, he found children living in very poor conditions, eating while sitting on the dirt floor, sleeping in broken beds or on the floor, and no running water or electricity. The existing facility was in poor repair: the children had no toys, poor clothing, and, according to Neill's SOSA nomination "little reason to smile."

Neill began by organizing Christmas donations from the larger diplomatic and expatriate communities, instilling a sense of volunteerism in all those who participated. The holiday donations were followed by a delivery of clothing, books, toys and furniture. Recognizing the essential need for proper sanitation and infrastructure improvements, Neill persuaded the local mayor of Abomey to provide electricity and water at no cost. Working with the orphanage staff, he wrote a proposal to the Ambassador's Self-Help Program, which funded the construction of a new dining / multi-purpose room. Neill was instrumental in designing the building and other technical aspects of the project. Building the new facility taught the older kids at the orphanage valuable trade skills as they helped with the construction.

Neill teamed up with Population Services International (PSI), an international NGO specializing in malaria prevention and child survival, to provide mosquito netting for the sleeping quarters. With malaria responsible for as many as half the deaths of African children under the age of five, the provision of mosquito netting for every child at Abomey Orphanage was essential to combat illness.

Sustainable efforts require a plan. To that end, Neill developed a business plan, created a website, and raised over \$20,000 in donations from church groups and other sources for future improvements, including major renovations and repairs to the children's dormitory and other facility needs. In addition, he coordinated the delivery of nearly 80,000 instant meals and other food items from a visiting U.S. Navy ship.



Neill Krost left Benin for a new posting in Tunisia. However, despite the distance, he remains an active volunteer for the orphanage and is currently helping to raise funding for new bunk beds. With this ongoing commitment, the children of Abomey continue to benefit from improvements made by an American who saw the need and carries on his vision through the gift of time, energy, and expertise.

Sherilynn Tounger (winner 2008) Chasing Lions in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

In nominating Sherilynn Tounger for SOSA, Maureen Berry said, “Most people who are posted to West Africa are quickly overwhelmed by the abject poverty surrounding them. Even if they want to help, they don’t know where to begin so they end up stuck in the proverbial mud, doing nothing. Not Sherilynn. She dove in with both feet and followed one of her favorite biblical verses, *let us not love with words or tongue but with action and in truth* (1 John 3:18).”

Soon after her 2006 arrival in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, Sherilynn began spending considerable time in a village on the outskirts of town called Nioko, where a local couple had opened an orphanage, a clinic and a school. Initially Sherilynn went to feed and play with the babies in the orphanage, but it was not long before she identified needed improvements and raised \$4,000 to turn a hot and buggy terrace into a functional screened-in porch. In this new space, children could play in the fresh air and escape from the hot rays of the sun and malaria-infected mosquitoes.

By December 2007, Sherilynn had organized Christmas for the children of the village. In true holiday style, Sherilynn purchased clothes, shoes, toys, school supplies and treats and stuffed 450 backpacks with the necessities. To fund the effort, she asked friends and family in the United States to share in the joy of giving through a donation. Sherilynn planned a village party and presented each child with his own backpack. In 2008, she repeated the gesture, adding a sack of rice and bottle of oil for each family.

As her commitment to the orphanage grew, her training as a teacher spurred her on to develop plans for a pre-school on the orphanage grounds. The project, estimated to cost \$60,000, entails the construction of three classrooms, an office, and a storeroom to benefit over 90 village youngsters.

To raise capital, Sherilynn founded a non-profit organization called Chasing Lions (see <http://web.mac.com/alekoshier>). Partnering with a U.S.-based charity allows donors to receive tax receipts for their contributions and 100% of all donations goes directly to the project. The Chasing Lions website illustrates the ongoing projects with detailed descriptions of how one can help. One key element is to provide lunch and sustenance to the children. Sherilynn carefully calculated the needs. \$150 will buy milk for one month for 13 babies. Or one child can afford to go to school for \$50 per year. With clear direction, donors can determine their giving level. Singer/actress Katharine McPhee, a former American Idol, was so inspired by the Chasing Lions project that she gifted the money for the pre-school.

Chasing Lions has attracted many others in the U.S. embassy and expatriate communities to give of their time, volunteer at the orphanage and help with Christmas backpacks. A group of high schoolers from the International School of Ouagadougou visits the orphanage on a weekly basis. Together, Sherilynn’s cadre of volunteers come up with new ways to improve ongoing projects. In routine meetings with the owners of the orphanage, volunteers are encouraging long-term sustainability – with plans for staffing, facilities maintenance, supplies, and budget projections that covers several years at a time.

Sherilynn has demonstrated her devotion to the children of Nioko time and time again. Through Chasing Lions, she is realizing the NGO’s mission: to give African orphans and the children of Burkina Faso the chance at a better life; to create a safe, loving and nurturing orphanage and school environment for the children in the village of Nioko; to provide them with a warm lunch and a start to a good education. Her vision has inspired many as has her genuine care for all those around her whose lives she touches through action and in truth.



Sherilynn, pictured above, says, “There are so many people (now across the world) who have made Chasing Lions a reality.” During her time in Burkina Faso, Sherilynn and her family fell in love with and adopted a Burkinabe child. Her devotion to help all children in the village continues.



Country Highlights

“The depth and breadth of experience and compassion of Foreign Service officers are one of our most valuable resources. Experiences and expertise gained both in and before joining the ranks of America’s diplomatic community are sometimes called upon to benefit many.”

— from the nomination of Laurie Meininger (Cameroon 2003)

In **Liberia (1992)**, where the civil war had caused the deaths of tens of thousands, Betty Frankfather helped the Good Samaritan Shelter evolve into a full-fledged orphanage with over 100 children and a school serving over 400. Like many volunteers who care so deeply for children, Betty brought Thanksgiving and Christmas meals to Good Samaritan’s doorstep. Through her fundraising efforts, the orphanage received athletic equipment, cooking utensils and a stove, dining tables, and a piano. She organized movie nights, started a garden project and traded excess vegetables for clothing and supplies. She connected the orphanage director with relief organizations, and spearheaded two “Liberians for Liberians” days where local Embassy staff donated their time and talents to rehabilitate two buildings at the site. Betty Frankfather was nominated again for her volunteer work in Lagos, **Nigeria (1996)**, at a home for physically and mentally challenged and abandoned children.

In **Senegal (1997)**, Margaret Ndiaye promoted the Martin Luther King Holiday as a day in which Americans and Africans could focus on ways and means for enriching the lives of others around them. Raised in a family that believed that education was the answer to poverty, Margaret became involved with the Martin Luther King (MLK) School in Dakar. Over the course of her tour, she arranged for a delivery of desk chairs from Detroit for the school. The chairs traveled via a U.S.-based trucking company to the U.S.S. Tortuga, and were delivered to Dakar during a regularly scheduled cruise off the African shore. Six years later, another Embassy member, Christopher Paul Bates (**2003**) provided soccer and playground equipment for poor Senegalese children and solicited sporting equipment from manufacturers to provide hundreds of dollars worth of balls, bats and gloves to neighborhood kids. And the following year in Dakar (**2004**), Zina Lynch helped the "Ker Yaakaaru Jigeen Ni" (House of Hope) shelter for raped, abused and pregnant girls. She began her involvement by asking friends back home in the U.S. for clothes, linens and hygiene items. Later, she garnered support from the U.S. Air Force in Dakar to raise funds for the House of Hope's new building. She enlisted support from Catholic Relief Services to manage the fundraising account and to establish a website for the shelter. All this was accomplished through shared responsibility, involving many hands to bring improvements to the House of Hope.

In **Mozambique (1999)**, Michelle Johnson directed a successful "Friends Across the Border (FAB)" cultural event celebrating the increasing commercial, social, and cultural links between Southern Mozambique and the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. A series of musical performances, highlighting the talents of African musicians from both countries, featured jazz ensembles, traditional African music, and song and dance. At its peak, the event involved the assistance of many volunteers from the Mission community and under Michelle’s leadership, FAB found support/endorsements from local embassies and consulates, and from Mozambican and South African ministries and offices. Some 40 individuals and corporate sponsors provided financial support. Over \$30,000 was raised for local charities serving youth with HIV/AIDS in Mozambique and South Africa.

In **Ghana (2000)**, Ola Criss served as an advisor to Help Aged Ghana, established in 1988 to advance the interest and welfare of older persons. She provided valuable information on programming for the elderly, counseling for the elderly, and biological, psychological and the sociological issues affecting the aged. Based on her work with Help Aged Ghana, Calvary Baptist Church and Kaneshie Baptist Church asked Ola to help them establish senior citizens centers to provide Accra’s senior citizens a place for recreation, arts and crafts, fellowship, fun and educational programming. Ola also served as a mentor for girls

Guided by her philosophy of "**what more can I do for someone else,**" Ellen Kramer Wright devoted herself to improving the quality of life for the young women of **Kenya (2001)**. She taught Junior Achievement at the Muslim Girls School of Nairobi and the basics of marketing and business management at the Product Design Center of Nairobi. By lending her teaching skills, she helped improve the skills of many poor and disadvantaged Kenyan women, thereby expanding their economic opportunities.

in the Gender Project, run by the Peace Corps to develop youth as leaders of tomorrow. In **Ethiopia (2001)**, Patricia McCarthy worked with the Sisters of Charity Mission (Mother Teresa's order), where orphaned children, many of them handicapped, benefited from Pat's love and attention. Knowing that children with disabilities were routinely passed over for adoption, Pat spent quality time at the playground, completing jigsaw puzzles, making beaded jewelry, drawing and painting, with each activity designed to limber muscles and stimulate minds.

In **Botswana (2002)**, Laurie Bopp made a dramatic impact by improving the capabilities of several local organizations, including Shining Stars, a day care center for orphans and children of AIDS patients, and the Holy Cross Hospice, which cared for those dying of AIDS. By sharing her expertise in identifying sources of funding, grant application skills and institutional management, she assured their future viability.

In **Burundi (2002)**, Nancy Alain launched a successful campaign to clothe hundreds of Burundians who were clothed in rags. Nancy began writing letters to a network of friends back home in America, and as word spread, a YMCA in Indiana, adult church groups, and a grade school class in Virginia joined the effort to send clothes to Burundi. A toy salesman in Indiana sent two boxes of educational toys. Nancy partnered with World Vision International, a local NGO with access to vulnerable and isolated populations, who agreed to distribute the clothing. Nancy's efforts restored dignity to a portion of Burundi's poor who would have otherwise suffered the public humiliation of having no clothes.

In the **Central African Republic (2002)**, Mark Biedlingmaier revived an English Club where some 140 local students met on a weekly basis to participate in English-language discussions about international events and the American political system and culture. Mark recruited other Embassy personnel to address club participants and answer questions. To formalize the club's existence, he helped them register with local authorities. With charter and by-laws in hand, members of the English Club began a Big Brother-type program with local street children.

In **Cameroon (2003)**, then Junior Officer Laurie Meininger used skills from her previous training as a social worker when tragedy befell the diplomatic community in Yaounde as they coped with the deaths of three children and a teacher, and injuries to many others. Laurie organized individual and group grief counseling sessions for all who needed a safe place to work through their shock and pain. Upon the arrival at post of the Regional Psychiatrist, she continued to help, motivated by a desire to ease the suffering. Her caring hand, extended to the diplomatic and Cameroonian communities during a time of grief, was a source of inspiration to all.

In **Guinea (2003)**, Mother Teresa's Mission ran a hospital, treating children from Guinea, Sierra Leone, and refugees from Liberia. Judie Pruett used J. Kirby Simon Trust grant funds to build a playground at the hospital, organized a yearly Christmas party for hospital patients, coordinated a humanitarian project with the U.S. Department of Defense to build a multi-purpose pavilion, worked to install two refrigerators, a freezer, water purifications systems, a hot water heater, mosquito netting, bedding, and solicited medical supplies and medicines. To improve the environment, she arranged for children from the International School of Conakry to paint a mural on the facility's walls.

Consular Officer Erin P. Sweeney became an unstoppable humanitarian advocate in Lagos, **Nigeria (2009)**. In a post considered by many to be one of the most difficult in the Africa region, she helped establish the Consulate Community Service Program (CSP). Recruiting both American and Nigerian embassy staff, she built a leadership team to keep CSP sustainable for years to come. CSP's volunteer endeavors directly impacted the Pacelli School for the Blind, the Ife Oluwa Maternity Clinic, and the Nigerian Anti-Trafficking in Persons Shelter. With two grants from a J. Kirby Simon Charitable Trust, CSP projects realized the completion of the surgical wing of a local maternity clinic and a renovation program at the Lagos State Girls Correctional Center. Erin made a tangible difference in the lives of marginalized Nigerian women and children and, as a model of civic and social responsibility, served as an inspiration to her Consulate colleagues.

In Kampala, **Uganda (2003)**, Giovanna Brennan, spouse of then Ambassador Martin Brennan, turned the ground floor of the Ambassador's residence into a free computer training center for Ugandan students. Lack of mentors for female University students was a serious problem in Uganda. The training center featured 12 computers with wireless Internet connectivity 24/7. Students accessed free online courses from colleges around the world and learned basic computer skills. Giovanna taught computer classes herself and later hired an instructor to ensure continued quality. She also launched a micro-credit fund for a knitting cooperative. While most of the 42 borrowers used their loans to produce roadbed rock, some opened small shops, clothing stalls, eateries, and even a local beer shop. When Giovanna left Uganda, the repayment rate to the credit fund was over 95%.

In **Madagascar (2004)**, Sandra Bagley, nurse practitioner, initiated a project to provide Malagasy nursing mothers with the necessary food and nutrition to properly feed their malnourished infant children. Sandra teamed up with a Malagasy medical colleague. Each child accepted into their program was below normal weight for his age. Each week, mother and infant received a well-baby check-up. By engaging the local medical community, the volunteer project attained sustainability and continued after her departure.

In Lusaka, **Zambia (2005)**, Sandra Patterson became deeply involved with HEAL, a local support facility and school for over 60 children who have lost one or both parents to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In a neighborhood where most families had no electricity, access to water, transportation, or toilet facilities, she undertook the construction of a borehole and several toilets with grant money from the J. Kirby Simon Trust. Sandra also supported the HEAL project by transporting ill children to clinics for treatment and enrolling them in appropriate HIV/AIDS programs, including testing and ARV treatment. In addition, she created a project called HEALING STITCHES and, with a donation of sewing machines, taught women how to sew and to set up a business selling their goods. She also sought private U.S. donors to help older Zambian orphans attend trade schools.

In Pretoria, **South Africa (2005)**, Debby Harrison founded "Hearts and Hands," the Embassy-affiliated charitable organization. Using the skills and talents of many Embassy volunteers, the organization raised over \$50,000 to purchase playground equipment for an orphanage, sewing machines for a local trust that supplies school uniforms to disadvantaged Soweto Township students, and bunk beds and bedding for a child and youth center. Debby established an organization that outlived her stay in South Africa. Two years later, Victor Williams (**2007**) was elected chairman of Hearts and Hands. Victor completed the necessary paperwork for Hearts and Hands to be granted non-profit status. As a member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, he also served as president of the Johannesburg-Pretoria-CapeTown alumni chapter (the first black Greek Letter organization to establish a presence in South Africa).

SOSA Award Winners and Nominees

Winners are noted with an asterisk (*)

ANGOLA

2006 Sara Sparrow (Luanda)

BENIN

2007 Niell G. Krost (Cotonou) *
2007 Anne Martin (Cotonou)

BOTSWANA

2002 Laurie Bopp (Gaborone) *
1991 Ms. Yoder (Gaborone)

BURKINA FASO

2008 Sherilynn Tounger
(Ouagadougou) *
1998 Elizabeth Lavernge
(Ouagadougou)

BURUNDI

2002 Nancy Alain (Bujumbura)
1994 Maja Patin (Bujumbura) *

CAMEROON

2003 Laurie Meininger (Yaounde)
1991 Teresa Kramer (Yaounde)

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

2002 Mark Biedlingmaier (Bangui)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

2008 Maruja Conway (Kinshasa)

DJIBOUTI

2008 W. Stuart Symington VI (Djibouti)

ERITREA

2009 Ajani B. Husbands (Asmara)

ETHIOPIA

2001 Patricia McCarthy (Addis Ababa)

GHANA

2000 Ola Criss (Accra) *
1999 Timothy Brown (Accra)
1995 Bonnie Lea-Brown (Accra) *

GUINEA

2003 Judie Pruett (Conakry)
2000 Tarja Nigro (Conakry)

IVORY COAST

2005 Luisa Bonaguro (Abidjan)
2005 Gerard Imbaking (Abidjan)
2001 James Snyder (Abidjan)
1997 Linda Kester (Abidjan)
1993 Carol Hedges (Abidjan)

KENYA

2007 Cleo Kyin Oo Appleton (Nairobi)
2001 Ellen Kramer Wright (Nairobi) *
1997 Debra Anderson (Nairobi)
1995 Rita Gordon (Nairobi)

LIBERIA

2008 Kristen K. Grauer (Monrovia)
1992 Betty Frankfather (Monrovia)

MADAGASCAR

2009 Laura S. Rumpf (Antananarivo)
2004 Sandra W. Bagley (Antananarivo)
2000 Linda L. Wood (Antananarivo)

MALAWI

2009 Mary Y. Warner (Lilongwe)

MOZAMBIQUE

2004 Mira M. Hankins (Maputo)
2003 Michele Johnson (Maputo)
1999 Michele Johnson (Maputo) *
1997 Fatima McKinley (Maputo) *
1991 Jairo Granados (Maputo) *

NAMIBIA

2008 Mark J. Cassayre (Windhoek)

NIGER

2001 Helene DeJong (Niamey)
1994 Toni Brown (Niamey)

NIGERIA

2009 Erin P. Sweeney (Lagos) *
2009 Carolyn Jensen (Abuja)
2009 Stephanie Tansey (Abuja)
1996 Betty Frankfather (Lagos) *
1993 Mary O'Brien (Lagos) *

SENEGAL

2009 Ayse A. Tat (Dakar)
2004 Zina Lynch (Dakar) *
2003 Christopher P. Bates (Dakar) *
1997 Margaret Ndiaye (Dakar)

SIERRA LEONE

1991 Sharon Maybarduk (Freetown)

SOUTH AFRICA

2009 Alberta B. Mayberry (Cape Town)
2008 Linda C. Ingalls (Pretoria)
2007 Victor Williams (Pretoria)
2005 Debby Harrison (Pretoria)
2001 Sarina Penn (Cape Town)
1992 Ruth Spector (Pretoria)
1991 Edward Szrejter (Pretoria)
1991 Fiona Addleton (Pretoria)

SWAZILAND

2006 Nelda Villines (Mbabane) *
2005 Nelda Villines / Fernando Bermudes (Mbabane)

TANZANIA

1998 Cindy Murphree (Dar es Salaam) *
1993 Joyce Bradley (Dar es Salaam)

TOGO

1996 Angelina Young (Lome)

UGANDA

2006 Raine Alexander (Kampala)
2003 Giovanna Brennan (Kampala)
2000 Diane Bodeen (Kampala)

ZAMBIA

2009 Michelle R. Marshall (Lusaka)
2005 Sandra Patterson (Lusaka) *
1992 Pamela Philip Whelan (Lusaka) *

End