

Ride 4 a Woman Helping Women, Children and Rural Communities



R4W is an organization that helps women and children in dire circumstances in Bwindi, Uganda. They started by renting bicycles to tourists (thus the name) and then added basket weaving using natural fibers and dyes and using the beautiful African fabric they began sewing a wide variety of clothing, bags and Quilts to sell to tourists. These sales along with donations is how they exist.

Without private school, children have little hope for an education. Young girls who cannot attend school because of lack of funds end up doing hard labor working in the fields with no hope of change so they begin “working along the road” or “working at night”. Or they get married very young and begin having babies. The average women has 6 -7 children and the husband rarely stays around to help. Multiple wives are not uncommon.

School Sponsorship for one year of private school costs \$500.

This includes classes, boarding, nutritious meals, medical services, uniforms, shoes & everything required to attend school. Ruth, 5, and Miracle, 8, are in private school thanks to sponsors.

Bwindi is a small rural village with staggering poverty, little electricity and no running water. The only reason tourists go to Bwindi is because the main road dead ends at the Mountain Gorilla Refuge.

R4W helps support over 300 women and children in and around Bwindi and from what we know, it is the only organization helping the community. Tourism is seasonal – no one visits in the rainy season so there is no income from sales during those times.

In 2021 Ron and I were on a trip to see the Great Migration of wildebeests & zebras in E. Africa. Our trip began in Bwindi, Uganda where we were to trek to see gorillas.



The first afternoon our Natural Habitat Adventures guide took us to R4W where we watched women using **treadle sewing machines & charcoal irons making clothing & quilts.**

In 2023 we returned to R4W & I worked with the women for 5 days teaching quilting techniques. They made 9 quilts and they had never seen a quilt pattern!



Before Christmas, Evelyn raised funds to purchase basic food items for needy families. A \$25 purchase included maize flour, rice, sugar, salt, cooking oil and maybe a few fresh onions and very little meat. She was able to present 100 such gifts to needy families. Imagine considering these basics a Christmas gift!



R4W conducts programs such as Hope for a Girl Child. This program counsels young girls to delay marriage as well as provides birth control information and lots more.

Similar to the Heifer Project, a goat can be donated to a family. **A goat costs \$80** and first kid born is returned to R4W. From then on the goat belongs to the family and is a safety net when funds are needed for an emergency such as sickness. The goat is the savings account.

R4W is also installing solar panels on homes. **One solar panel with battery and cables costs \$200** and the rule is that a family who receives a panel must invite the children in 5 surrounding homes to come use the light to study at night. The added benefit is that the children are helping each other with school work.

There is no running water in Bwindi so R4W has a purification system set up for the community to come and fill containers of clean water. Women carry this water to their homes. You simply cannot imagine what these women endure in their private lives. Every morning, the work day at R4W begins with "Shake Off". The women sing and recite Bible passages. One woman will stand and tell her wrenching story. This is so they can shake off the horrors that they may endure at home and have a pleasant and positive work day. The women are happy at R4W. They are paid and receive a nutritious free lunch. They laugh and life is good - for the day. R4W gives these women hope for a future they otherwise would not have.



If you are able to make a donation, no contribution is too small. Every dollar makes a difference! All funds go directly to R4W because Ron and I are covering all fees. If you donate \$100, we deposit \$100 in Evelyn's bank account.

For more information feel free to contact Ron or Ann Lauer Waterman at 406-443-2694 or Ann@GrizzlyGulchGallery.com.

There is an article on my website that tells the story of R4W with lots of photos. Please share this link with anyone who may be interested.

<https://grizzlygulchgallery.com/african-quilters/>

To Donate use this QR code for Go Fund Me or the link below.

<https://www.gofundme.com/ride-4-a-woman-in-uganda-africa>

