

## May 2008 Newsletter

Hello friends and family! As most of you already know, I made a life-altering trip to Rwanda this past year. After visiting Rebero Orphan Center for children affected by the genocide of 1994, for the first time in my life, I felt called to action in a way that I literally could not ignore. With the help of friends and family, I've started a tax-deductible non-profit organization called the Small Voices Foundation, Inc. and have committed to raising \$30,000 to support the 200 women and children who benefit from the Rebero Orphan Center each year.

This is where all of you come in!

Below you'll find the story of how I met the two 27-year-old men who run Rebero and how I came to start my very own non-profit at the ripe old age of 31 (ha ha). I hope you'll fall in love, like I did, with the resilience and spirit of Rwanda's survivors, and feel called to support them in any way you can. These people opened their hearts to me when I happened there less than 6 months ago, and I'm hoping you'll open your hearts, too, and support me as I endeavor to raise \$30,000 for them.

Please visit the Small Voices website for more information: [www.small-voices.org](http://www.small-voices.org) and learn how you can help by donating today.

Thanks, as ever, for your love and support, and I hope to see you (in Rwanda or otherwise!) very soon.

Love,  
Brin

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*On December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007, I had the opportunity to embark on a life-altering trip to the country of Rwanda with a dear friend from New York City, Kathleen Boatman. While visiting, I found myself humbled by the beauty of the country, and by the magic and resiliency of the people who had suffered so much in their lives. I continually marveled that, while I was attending my junior year of high school in Athens, GA, largely concerned with the ups and downs of adolescence, young Rwandans my same age were undergoing a three-month-long fight for their very lives. In 1994, over one million Rwandans, from a population of four million, died during 100 days of incomprehensible human slaughter. And yet, during my visit, I couldn't help but feel that the people of Rwanda appear even happier, and more grateful for each moment since, than most of us may ever be in our lives.*

*Soon after I arrived in Africa, it became abundantly clear that this trip had fallen into my lap for a much bigger reason. I was lucky to make the acquaintance of several Americans working for non-profit organizations and was introduced to Allison Huggins, a young woman from Atlanta living in the capital city of Kigali, working for a non-profit group educating locals about domestic violence. Allison introduced me to the Rebero Orphan Center and the two men who started it. They were both just 14-years-old during the genocide in 1994. They hid in the tall grass while their families were brutally murdered right before their eyes. Both men vowed that if they survived, they would devote their lives to helping other victims. And they have.*

*Now, at the age of 27, Emmanuel Ngabire and Leonce Mupenzi share the work at the center and also work at local hotels, where their tips support over 200 women and children who were orphaned. I had the privilege of visiting with them in Kigali and spent a life-altering day at Rebero. While visiting the center I held a child in my lap, and, with her bright eyes and warm smile, I realized the problem was no longer an ocean away, but, rather, literally curled up in my lap. And I haven't stopped thinking about this moment since.*

*After my trip, I returned to Atlanta and became absorbed in my daily life again, but I continued to*

*feel the tug of Rebero's delightful children at my heart. It suddenly became very real and very clear to me that I had the power to do something. With the help of my father, Tom Greene, I was able to quickly file paperwork to establish a tax-deductible non-profit organization, and settled on the name of Small Voices Foundation, Inc., on the premise that even one small voice can bring great change. My father saw the passion I felt for these people and realized it was a cause worth fighting for. And I'm so grateful!*

*Then, with the help of a friend, I found Peter Majeranowski and his amazing web design company, Wizart Studios LLC, online: <http://www.wizartstudios.com/> who stepped up to the plate after hearing my stories and offered to donate a website to be the virtual home for Small Voices. Other friends came to see my passion for the cause and helped garner some local publicity to announce the launch of my non-profit in the Athens Banner-Herald. You can find the full story on the Small Voices website.*

*This, my friends, is only the beginning!*

*I am now embarking on a campaign to raise funds to create a new destiny for these orphaned children. My life experiences are so vastly different from these wonderful men and the small children they have committed to help... I feel powerless NOT to help them, and I can only dream that, one day, my efforts will be able to provide them and 'their children' with the help they deserve.*

*I have committed to raising \$30,000 in 2008 for the Rebero Orphan Center in Kigali, Rwanda. Every dollar raised will be put towards ensuring that each of these children finish school (education is not free in Rwanda), receive their HIV/AIDS medication, obtain proper nutrition, and to help the Rebero Orphan Center build a school and library.*

*I commit that 100% of the \$30,000 goal will be donated to the Rebero Orphan Center. From day one, myself, along with the Small Voices Foundation Board Members, have personally covered all the overhead associated with the cause and are overseeing the distribution of the funds.*

*In addition, it is my hope to provide updates to everyone who has donated, with stories specific to the children so that all of my loved ones who have donated and made a difference (read: all of YOU!!) can truly see and feel the changes they have made in the lives of these Rwandans. For that reason, I've committed to updating the Small Voices website often with stories and news from all of the people at Rebero.*

*At this time I would like to ask all of YOU—my friends, family, and loved ones—to dig deep into your pockets and donate to these people who deserve this relief. I understand more than anyone that money is hard to come by, but, let me assure you, after meeting these people I realize how absolutely blessed we all are and how the lives of my new friends in Rwanda can forever be changed through nutrition, education, and opportunity.*

*In truth, we are very rich.*

*Please visit the Small Voices website [www.small-voices.org](http://www.small-voices.org) and read more about Rebero and our mission. Then, please donate. Please consider what you can afford, then add a little more on top. I hope you will forward this e-mail to everyone you know and love so that they, too, can give the small voices of Rebero hope for a bright future.*

*Thank you all and God bless,  
Brin Greene*