

Pack for a Purpose helped travelers donate items to these Zambian students; Rothney (below).



Special *Delivery*

World traveler Rebecca Rothney is helping vacationers share the wealth abroad.

IN 2002 Rebecca Rothney went on safari in Botswana—loaded up with pencils and crayons. The former teacher donated them to a local school, and in her four trips to Africa over the next several years, Rothney continued to give to communities in need—like the village where she saw children playing soccer with a ball of rags, or the town whose clinic lacked a stethoscope. Aware that most airlines allow 50 pounds of luggage free on international flights, she had an idea: Why not help other travelers give to the communities *they* visit—just by leaving a few out-fits at home?

In 2009 Rothney founded Pack for a Purpose (packfora.org), a nonprofit that encourages those visiting places like Kenya or Belize to reserve five pounds' worth of space in their luggage—enough room for a stethoscope, blood pressure cuff, and 500 bandages, or five deflated soccer balls plus an inflation device—for items needed in schools and clinics near



their destination. “Leaving one pair of shoes at home lets you bring 150 pencils or four solar calculators,” Rothney says. The site lists lodgings in 31 countries that have partnered with local groups (who post lists of their needed items), letting visitors donate right at the front desk.

So far, Pack for a Purpose has helped travelers deliver more than 2,700 pounds of items worldwide. One group of friends filled eight duffels with toothbrushes, shoes, and socks for orphanages in South Africa; four teachers brought supplies to schools in Ecuador. Rothney says the gifts have a ripple effect: “The funds that would’ve purchased those items—if they were even available—can be re-allocated to other needs.” And the rewards go both ways. Travelers tell Rothney that helping the locals made their trips more meaningful. “You’re going to someone’s country to have a wonderful time,” she says. “This is a way to express your gratitude.” —**HOLLACE SCHMIDT**