

PACK for a PURPOSE®

Small Space. Little Effort. Big Impact.

Rebecca Rothney is founder and chairperson of Pack for a Purpose, a newly founded nonprofit organization dedicated to providing needed educational materials and simple medical supplies to children around the world. Pack for a Purpose is founded on the belief that individual travelers want to make a difference in the lives of others, and small quantities of supplies, over time, have a big impact.

Rebecca took her first overseas trip at age 11 and never looked back. She has since visited 40 countries and 7 continents. After graduating from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1971 with a BA in English, Rebecca began her first career as a middle school teacher of European and non-western cultures. At 40 she started her second career as an entrepreneur with the founding of RHCreatations Inc., a boutique manufacturer of cufflinks made from authentic postage stamps and images from her travels around the world. Her products were sold at Nordstrom and cufflinksdepot.com, among others.

For 24 years Rebecca has hosted visitors from around the world as a member of the International Affairs Council in Raleigh, North Carolina. She has served on the board of directors for 12 years. Rebecca was the first woman president of the Cary Toastmasters Club, and co-president of the Cary Women's Business Owners Network. She is also a docent at the North Carolina Museum of Art and has been involved with and served on the board of the Sierra Club.

The idea for Pack for a Purpose evolved from Rebecca's travels in Africa with her husband Scott. On their second trip they had the opportunity to visit an elementary school. Working with Wilderness Safaris to find out what supplies were most needed, they brought 150 pounds of supplies to the children at the school. Seeing the students playing with the first soccer ball the school had ever had, and watching the principal's joy at receiving the first rulers was a powerful experience for them. Over several more trips with friends and by themselves, they managed to bring more than 1250 additional pounds of supplies. On their trip to Kenya, Rebecca asked their travel agent in the states, "Why don't all your guests use the extra space in their luggage for this?" "Because they don't think about it" was his reply. That was Rebecca's aha moment.

Rebecca knew that taking large amounts of supplies required a great deal of time and close logistical cooperation with the touring company. She felt she needed to come up with a simpler and more direct way for travelers to take supplies where they were going. By asking travelers to pack 5 pounds (2.27 kgs.) of supplies, everyday travelers could easily get involved without the need for logistical support. That amount would take only a small space, require little effort, and still make a big impact.

Details are available at www.packforapurpose.org