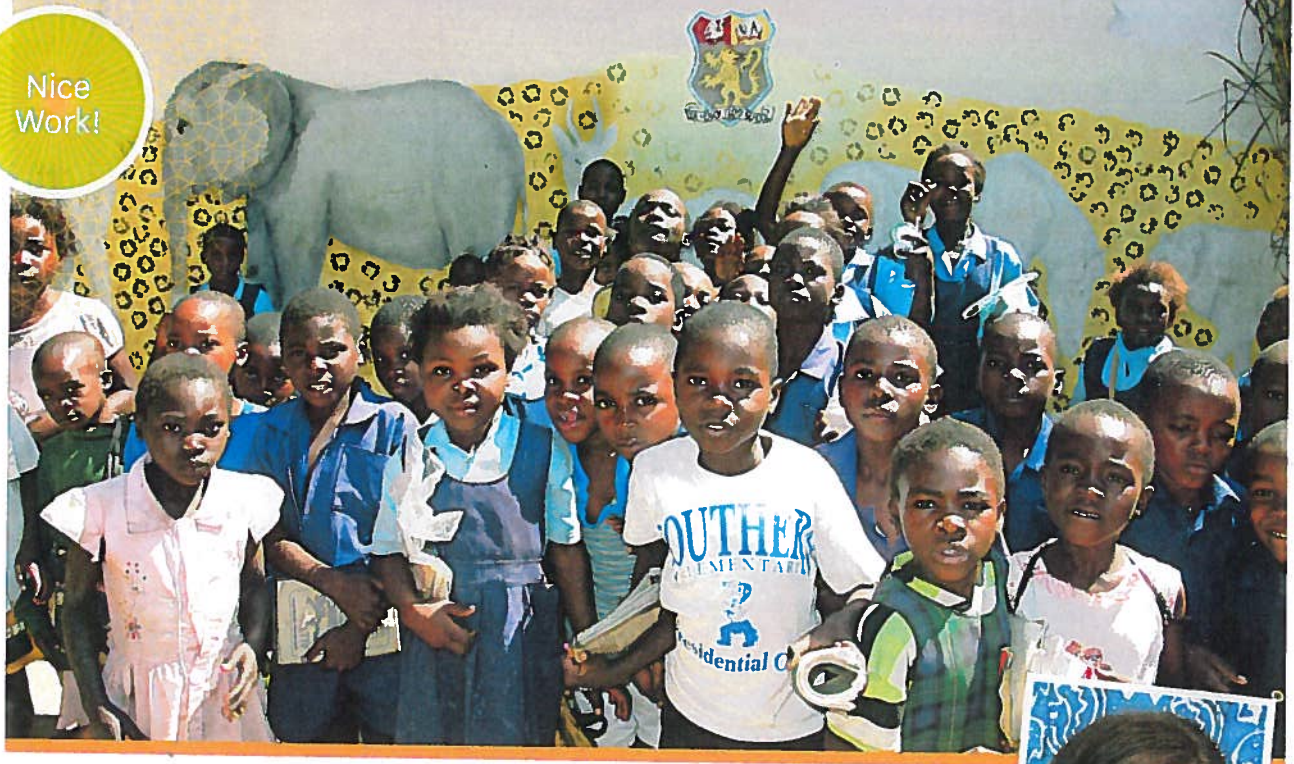


KAKUMBI BASIC SCHOOL

Nice Work!



Generous Journey

Going on holiday? Explorer Rebecca Rothney suggests giving back while getting around. By *Hollace Schmidt*

Rebecca Rothney

AGE: 62

FOUNDER OF PACK

FOR A PURPOSE

UNITED STATES



IN 2002, WHILE preparing to go on safari in Botswana, Rebecca Rothney first loaded up with pencils and crayons. The former teacher then donated them to a local school, and in her four trips to Africa, she continued to give to communities in need – like the village where she saw children playing soccer with a ball made of rags, or the town whose clinic lacked a stethoscope. Aware that most airlines allow 23 kilograms of luggage free on international flights, she had an idea: Why not help travellers contribute to the communities they'll be visiting – simply by leaving a few outfits at home?

Seven years later, Rebecca started Pack for a Purpose, a nonprofit agency that shows tourists how they can reserve about three kilograms' worth of space in their luggage for items needed in schools and clinics near their destination. Just by packing selectively, you can fit in a stethoscope, blood pressure cuff and 500 bandages, or five deflated

soccer balls plus an inflation device. "Leaving a single pair of shoes at home lets you take 150 pencils or four solar calculators," Rebecca says. The organisation lists lodgings in 31 countries that have partnered with local groups; they post lists of their needed items and allow visitors to donate right at the front desk. So far, Pack for a Purpose has helped deliver more than a thousand kilos of items worldwide. One group of friends filled eight bags with shoes for orphanages in South Africa.

Rebecca says the gifts have a ripple effect: "The funds that would've purchased those items – if they were even available – can be reallocated to other needs." And the rewards go both ways. Travellers tell Rebecca that helping the locals made their trips more meaningful. "If you're going to a different country to have a great time," she says, "this is a way to express gratitude."

Hollace Schmidt is a contributor to O US.

Help From Home

Local travellers can also get involved in this initiative. Here are a few participating establishments:

- **Cape Town:** The Living Art Farm is an organic smallholding where visitors can share their skills in support of the Masiphumelele Centre for Peace Project. Call ☎ 021 789 2494 or visit livingartfarm.co.za
 - **Limpopo:** The Ant Collection of private bush homes supports African Community Outreach and The Fold, who both need stationery, toiletries and books. Call ☎ 014 755 3584 or visit waterberg.net
 - **Eastern Cape:** The ecofriendly Bulungula Lodge supports Jujurha Early Learning Centre Primary School, which needs stationery. Call ☎ 047 577 8900 or visit bulungula.com
- Visit packforapurpose.org for more South African partners.

–NORMA YOUNG