

Friendship Flourishes In the Face of Disaster

Studley's John Carrick makes "vision" trip to Mozambique

BY CARLA PINEDA

Friendship is a relative word. There are those who send you birthday cards every year, and there are those who will jump on a plane and head to Africa with you, knowing nothing but your vision to bring medical attention to children in flood-stricken areas.

A network of friends is responsible for the now global Real Medicine Foundation's expansion, an organization that caught Studley's John Carrick's eye.

Los Angeles-based Carrick, the managing director of the structured finance group at Studley and now an RMF board member, embarked on a "vision" trip to Mozambique with RMF's founder Martina Fuchs to survey the afflicted areas and assess what the more than 100,000 displaced Mozambicans need most urgently. Upon his return, he has shared his story with his colleagues. Those people are telling others, thus creating a prevalent presence for the real estate industry in this effort.

Six years ago, the self-proclaimed workaholic was more focused on the hours he worked than on taking philanthropy into his own hands. Compelled by his company's tradition of involvement in the community, the attorney and investment banker was not a stranger to the kind of charity that only took the stroke of a pen.

"I had good intentions, my heart was in the right place," Carrick said. "But it was easier and it felt good to write a check and feel like you were participating on some level."

Medical issues caused him to be hospitalized and he spent several months of recuperation "walking the beach" and reassessing his priorities.

"I think everybody has a moment like this in their lives, and it comes in different times and takes different forms," Carrick said.

Finding that the things he deemed important were less so than he previously thought, he concluded that he needed to devote more attention to service.

Carrick never expected a long-term involvement. After closing a deal, he asked a friend about an international relief fund worthy of a contribution. Heeding his friend's advice, he donated to RMF. Fuchs personally contacted Carrick and invited him to breakfast to thank him and explain the premise of the organization.

"When you meet Martina and hear the story, you cannot help but be moved by her personal dedication and passion for the cause and the work that she's been able to do in just three years," Carrick said.

Fuchs said she had a "gut feeling" about him. Carrick was motivated by her enthusiasm. This meeting

was the beginning of Carrick's active relationship with a cause and the reason for the cancellation of his plans to hike the Inca Trail in Machu Pichu.

When Carrick described the program to his travel buddy and explained that he was torn between the Inca Trail and Mozambique, his friend responded, "Of course, we're going to Africa."

An Unforgettable Journey

And off they went to a country battling poverty, epidemics of HIV, tuberculosis and cholera, and the landmines that are the souvenirs of a 16-year civil war.

The severity of the floods that Mozambique experiences has been scaling throughout the years pushing

Mozambicans have returned to rescue their small amount of livestock, crops and property that was spared by the floods. For the people who live in the most rural pockets along the riverbanks, RMF decided to modify its plans to establish a mobile clinic instead. Fuchs said the people living in remote locations need the most medical attention because they often skip out on doctor trips due to the lack of resources, only seeking help once their matter is of high urgency.

Mozambique's Ministry of Health seeks to integrate this mobile unit program into its infrastructure. It will be tested in the mountainous area of Gile in the northeast of Zambezia. The team is working to provide HIV testing and care to those that cannot afford to travel hundreds of miles to find it.

"If you really are a friend, you listen to what your friend needs," said Fuchs about the foundation's change of plans.

Established in Sri Lanka after the tsunami that hit the region in late 2004, the project grew exponentially. The pediatrician had no catastrophe experience or much of a plan but she did possess an urgent need to help, a friend who owned a destroyed vacation home in the country, and a brother in Germany who gave her four large boxes of medical supplies.

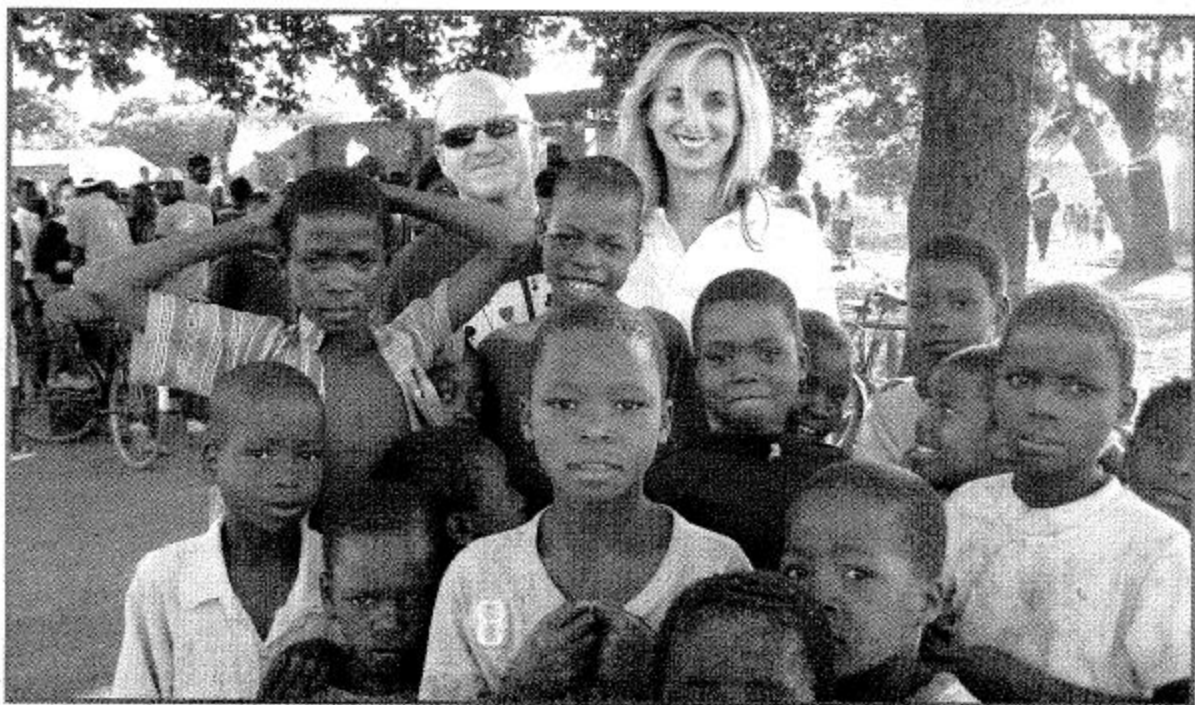
Working with people of diverse ethnic and professional backgrounds, Fuchs was able to establish

a small children's clinic in an abandoned building. "Real Medicine Foundation started because I made a promise there. People approached me for long-term medication for their children, for heart surgeries and I promised, and it is very important for me to keep my word," said Fuchs.

Playing tag with the local children is hardly on the top of an investment banker's vacation activities list but Carrick said he returned from the "magical place" grateful that it helped him "understand the human connection between all of us."

Carrick hopes to create a bridge between the real estate industry and causes such as RMF. A colleague at Studley said his enthusiasm and desire to help is infectious. This type of personal involvement has made his job more meaningful, said Carrick, because you and the people surrounding you are better served.

Fuchs is looking into expanding Peru's operations. Carrick admitted that his interest in this project is a bit biased — he still might get to hike the Inca Trail with friends after all.



John Carrick (back left), managing director of Studley's structured finance group, traveled with Martina Fuchs (back right), chief executive officer and founder of Real Medicine Foundation, on a "vision" trip to Mozambique in mid-May to assess the needs of families displaced by natural disasters.

the already-limited health care resources in the area beyond their limits. In 2000, 800 people died as a result of the heavy wet season that flooded the Zambezi River. The 2007 season almost was as bad with the addition of a cyclone that tore through the area, leaving more than 100,000 people displaced.

If the floods have not taken Mozambicans' homes, their roads have been washed away with their crops, their health centers and educational facilities.

Despite the conditions, Carrick never felt unsafe or encountered resentment. Coming from an industry that he recognizes as being motivated by wealth, he found that Mozambicans were more grateful for the time he was devoting to their aid.

"Time is our most valuable asset," said Carrick about the resource he felt was the most important. "You live everyday as a gift because you live on borrowed time."

RMF was approached by the Sole of Africa campaign to construct a free clinic for the benefit of refugees living in settlement camps set up by the country's disaster management institute in the Zambezia province.

After the team "put some boots on the ground," as Carrick phrased it, they saw that many of the displaced

- For more information, visit www.realmedicinefoundation.org or call (310) 820-4502
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