



Freedomstones



We are thankful for our supporters and volunteers

The work we are doing with Freedom Stones seems to be growing in leaps and bounds. With this growth, God is providing help. I am so thankful that each month I seem to meet more and more people that have a heart for this cause. First of all, as you know, Kara Ulmer is coming on board with us full time in February. Even as she is finishing up her current position in the UK, she has already been adding value by helping us strategically plan, work logistics for our jewelry making in Thailand and Ghana, helping with our website construction and generally being a great sounding board when I feel overwhelmed by this growing organization. Additionally, now we have Jessica Hooten who has been working as a volunteer office manager and bookkeeper. We have had many jewelry sales and home parties in this holiday season, so her help was sorely needed. She even drove with me down to Austin this week for a sale at a fair trade store called Tesoros and was a tireless saleswoman. She is absolutely on fire for this cause and is becoming a true advocate reading anything she can get her hands on about the issue of human trafficking. She has become an incredible source of encouragement to me, especially on those days when I feel I just can't get everything done.

As I am getting used to life in Dallas Fort Worth, a circle of wonderful women from The Branch Church (pastored by Chris and Tara Seidman) has really adopted the joint project of Touch a Life Foundation and Freedom Stones which is going on in Ghana. I actually had two jewelry training workshops with ladies from this church this last month. They learned how to make the same jewelry I will be teaching new artisans in Ghana to make in February. They made beautiful pieces voluntarily with leftover beads we had from Ghana.



Jessica Hooten, our beautiful office manager.

Then we were able to turn around and sell these necklaces to raise money for our official launching of the Ghana project in February. Two teams of these women plan to come with me and help teach the mothers on Lake Volta this skill of jewelry making so that they can earn an income and relent from selling more of their children into slavery. If you are also

interested in coming on one of two 10 day trips in February or sponsoring a woman to come help train this village, please email me at leah@freedomstones.ws for more information. In addition to having help at headquarters in Dallas (well more specifically Frisco), the gals leading the Women of Purpose at Overlake Church in Seattle have made a tremendous effort at hosting home parties before Christmas. This being our first real marketing push to sell our Thailand jewelry, it has proven to be a successful way to get the word out. When one woman hosts a party she invites friends unacquainted with Freedom Stones and by the time they leave the party, they have learned about human trafficking and are often new advocates for our cause. They in turn sign up to host parties and things grow exponentially. My only regret for this holiday season is that we were not really ready for the response to our products and our jewelry inventory has quickly run out. We also had some hiccups with getting the website up and going in time for Christmas and so have put it off till we can get some significant inventory. It will be up hopefully by January 1st at www.freedomstones.ws. The good thing about everything we are doing right now, is that we are learning some great lessons for how to approach things better in the future. I am confident that by next fall we will be poised and ready for an onslaught of orders which will only help employ our artisans more consistently throughout the entire year.

PRAISES

Lots of Interest in our jewelry!

We are excited that there is such demand for our jewelry, and praying we are able to meet the demand for it soon.

Jessica Hooten

Jessica has been a tremendous source of help and encouragement in the last month for Freedom Stones. We thank God for her servant heart!

Trademarking our clasp

Jason Fulmer, attorney with Gardere Law Firm is graciously giving his professional services to us pro-bono in order to trademark our clasp and our name.

Wisdom and Mercy

We are in the middle of negotiating a very large contract with a large jewelry company. We need for God to give us wisdom in this possible contract.

Capital funds for FS

As we continue building up the work of Freedom Stones we are in need of some capital funds to help our operations of these projects.

Support

We are currently unable to pay any salaries to our American staff or expatriate staff abroad. Please be praying how you might be able to support us.

PRAYER NEEDS



Some thoughts from Kara Ulmer, our new Director of International Operations and Strategic Development for Freedom Stones

As Pam Cope of the Touch A Life Foundation said in a video about her organization, anyone who has had that little voice speaking up saying, 'is there more than this?', can listen and choose to make a difference in the world. That small voice has been in my head for some time now. I have spent the past ten years of my career working my way from a temporary data entry clerk to becoming an international director of strategic performance & planning, setting the operations performance agenda for 5000+ employees, working for the third largest bank in the world. I have been blessed by God with multiple opportunities to build my skills and talents along the way. And during this journey, the small voice becomes more demanding and I remember the verses in Isaiah where God is weary of the loveless routines of his people and says, "Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow." (1:16,17). These along with many other verses call for Christians to reach out to those who have been abused, violated, and powerless to speak for themselves.

As happens when we experience our own personal loss, we become weak and God's presence in us becomes strong. During a recent pain-filled personal experience, I prayed for guidance about how to spend my efforts and energy in a more meaningful way; I specifically prayed about Leah and her ministry. I asked that God would inspire Leah to call me. Although Leah and I had been out of touch for almost two years, within the month, Leah did call me. In the course of our conversation about a completely unrelated topic, she explained her need for someone with the skills to develop processes and define strategies to help formalize her Freedom Stones concept. I laughed and said, 'Well, I have those skills'. So after much prayer, a trip to Abilene to see her for a week, and development of many Freedom Stones spreadsheets, I turned in my resignation to Barclays, and will officially start with Freedom Stones on February 1, 2010. The opportunity to directly touch the lives of the oppressed, the fatherless, and the widow,

is one I do not take lightly. I am immensely blessed to participate and I feel in some way all of my work over the last decade has brought me to this time and place. I put my hope in Jesus and take comfort in his own ministry as described in Luke 4:18: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." I pray that God provides me the courage and strength to walk in this same ministry with him through Freedom Stones.

Thanks so much for listening, -- Kara



This column shows pictures taken at a Freedom Stones jewelry making workshop with volunteers from The Branch Church. Sales from the jewelry these women made will be used for startup costs for our formal project launching in Ghana.

Sowing into Women and Children



*If the Lord is calling you to support Freedom Stones, please send your intentions and checks to: **World Concern, 19303 Fremont Ave. North, PO Box 33000, Seattle WA 98133-0016, USA.** Make any checks payable to "World Concern" and on the memo line write "UWCCDDOOLC". Also include the card enclosed with our newsletter which has codes that are a second insurance that your donation is properly designated.*

On World Concern's new website it is now easier to donate to my support. Simply go to www.worldconcern.org/ Under the "who we are" tab go to "people in the field" and scroll down till you see my name and click on it. There you will find an archive of my newsletters and online donation instructions.

You may change or stop any monthly payments you designate at any time by contacting Ron Stoufer at rons@worldconcern.org

