



Global Friends
FOUNDATION

Students are Compassionate and Lovely People

By: Catherine Mulvale, Founder and Director, Global Friends Foundation

“I believe the students in Oakville are compassionate and lovely people,” affirms Anna from half a world away. She is tiny for a 17 year old - likely due to malnutrition suffered during her younger years – but her size belies her strength. Despite her past, Anna is strong of spirit, mind and body and her stunning outward appearance reflects the beautiful mind and soul that reside within that petite frame.



The students of Oakville’s St. Thomas Aquinas High School’s Peace and Social Justice group (the PJs), are indeed compassionate and lovely people. Through Oakville’s Global Friends Foundation, they are giving Anna a precious gift that is changing the trajectory of her future. The PJs are providing funding so this orphaned girl can get a quality education and realize the future she dreams of.

“Linking with Anna opens our eyes to what other youth our age are going through,” says Sebastian Morales, incoming co-chair of the PJs. “It is important to be aware that we are a part of a global community and must live in solidarity with those in other parts of the world.”

Two weeks ago, Anna was attending a sub-standard school that was ill-equipped and didn’t have enough teachers. Her chances of gaining an education that would empower her to be independent and self-reliant were essentially non-existent.

The PJs will learn over the next year just how meaningful their donation truly is as they witness Anna’s transformation. “We chose to support Global Friends so the PJs could engage with someone on a personal level,” says Beth Robertson, teacher at St. Thomas Aquinas and a mentor to her students. “Knowing we have helped Anna makes me smile and feel good about the direction her future can now take.”



“It means a lot to the PJ’s to have a direct connection,” says Caitlin Mehrotra, who will be sharing the co-chair position next year with Sebastian. “Being able to see the impact that our projects can have on the global community is truly inspirational.”

Education brings respect and opportunity, particularly to girls in Africa. Without an education, unwanted pregnancy, prostitution and poverty are common. “Education is the key to life,” says Anna. “Without it, I will have a poor life.”

Anna borrowed a laptop so she could send this message to the kind-hearted teens who have invested so generously in her future: “I would like the students of Oakville to know that I want to study hard and become a great lawyer so I can earn money to support needy children and my community just as the Rafiki community and Global Friends is helping me now.”

We all share this great big world. It is encouraging and heart-warming to know that the youth who are our future are helping each other survive, thrive and make it an even more beautiful place that is filled with compassionate and lovely people. To see more photos and to follow Anna’s story, please visit www.GlobalFriends.ca

UPDATE: Anna has completed two years of vocational training through our education partner, Foundation for Empowerment and Advocacy (FEA) and is gainfully employed in the hotel industry with the hopes of being independent and able to sustain herself. She is stunning! In every way. Above are photos of her and Zack from when they first met and again in 2018.

sharing one world

COMPASSION

EMPOWERMENT

IMPACT