

Letter: Businesses give back to help less fortunate



Julie Lowe works with the children of Kenya.
Photo/Provided

To the community,

On behalf of the Zawadisha Fund, we would like to give a heartfelt thank you to all the local community members who shopped or purchased services at the following businesses during May's She Is Beautiful Lake Tahoe:

BioSpirit Day Spa, Bliss Skincare Studio Elevate Wellness Center, Gaia-Licious Global Gifts, Mountain Yoga and Zen Birth Services.

These businesses gave a portion of their sales to the Zawadisha Fund, whose mission is to empower, entrust and expand opportunities for women. Zawadisha is Swahili for "to give a gift" and we believe the best approach to development is a "hand up", not a "hand out." The Zawadisha Fund provides small business loans to female entrepreneurs in Kenya.

Our model allows us to build strong relationships with our members who have informed our innovative program which now includes (in addition to loans): financial literacy workshops, a matching savings program, self-defense education, and

preventative health measures such as locally-sourced ceramic water filters and mosquito nets.

“Living in a small town makes it easy to stay isolated from the global environment. This annual program brings our attention to the fact that our small donations create a ripple effect in the lives of people thousands of miles away,” said Melinda Choy of Elevate Wellness Center.

The proceeds from She Is Beautiful Lake Tahoe will fund loans for approximately 20 women. Our members will now be able pay their school fees, start to build savings to escape a cycle of poverty, and be leaders in their households and communities.

If you would like to learn more about our work and how to get involved, please email jen@zawadisha.org or visit our website.

Thank you again to all of our generous businesses for making social change in our world.

Sincerely,

Julie Lowe, founding board member the Zawadisha Fund