

STHS grad washes away poverty with soap

By Kathryn Reed

Changing the world one bar of soap at a time.

That is the goal of four Chapman University students, including 2013 South Tahoe High School graduate John Cefalu. The four (Max Wysong, Ajay Dhameja and Daniel Cruz) have formed the nonprofit Health 2 Humanity to help orphans in Africa.

They have created their own line of soap. Through trial and error working out of their dorm rooms and a garage they came up with a 5-ounce bar made of natural ingredients. They now have a manufacturer producing the soap.



John Cefalu with children he met in Kenya in 2013.
Photos/Provided

To start with, an orphanage in Kenya with more than 300 kids is the beneficiary. Each child is getting a bar of soap every

month. Eventually the four friends want to reach as many orphanages as possible.

“We could just give soap and call it a day, but when the bar is gone where are they left?” Cefalu told *Lake Tahoe News*. “Our thought process is we teach them how to make it themselves. It helps them have economic opportunities.”

For every 250 bars of soap that are sold, Health 2 Humanity is able to sponsor another orphanage. Bars cost \$7.99. (They are available at Gaia-Licious in South Lake Tahoe.)

Cefalu came up with the idea last summer when he went on an excursion to Kenya and saw people were living without the basic needs that he took for granted.

“It really changed my life and shaped what I wanted to do in the future,” the business major said.

Health 2 Humanity is partnering with Think Kindness so it can operate as a nonprofit as well as benefit from that group’s experience.

Money raised from soap purchases are divided in half.

“Fifty percent is put into a fund to bring resources and training to a developing country, while at the same time we teach someone how to make soap and also how to run a business,” Cefalu said. “Then, after the person we train makes the soap, a bar is given to each child in the orphanage that is being sponsored. Whatever soap is left over is then sold by the person that we train and hire and 100 percent of the profits from their soap goes back to the sponsored orphanage.”



Soap is available at Gaia-Licious in South Tahoe for \$7.99.

The other half goes back into Health 2 Humanity to make more soap, for marketing and other overhead expenses, including what will likely be at least two trips to Africa a year.

Besides the hygiene benefits, the goal is people will be taught how to make the soap and be able to sell it for a profit – thus there is ideally a huge economic benefit to the area by providing jobs. The end goal is each orphanage becomes self-sufficient and the men of Health 2 Humanity move on to the next location that is in need of their help.

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Notes:

- More info is available at Health 2 Humanity's website or contact John Cefalu at 530.307.2314 or cefalu@health2humanity.org.
- The group takes donations in addition to selling bars of soap.