

# MAKE A DIFFERENCE NOW

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## The Founding and Development of Make A Difference (MAD) Timeline from 2005 to Present

*“If you can give just one child a hug, you can make a difference ...”*

Many people often ask us about the background and development of Make A Difference. Below is a timeline that outlines our history from our Founder and Executive Director, Theresa M. Grant.

### ***Silicon Valley*** ***2000 - 2005***

After five few years of helping launching high tech companies in the Silicon Valley during the dot com boom and managing the marketing department of an audio company, I found myself going through a life changing event. I began to have dreams, or as I called them, “nightmares” of helping children in Africa. Africa was a place I never desired to travel to nor had I ever wanted to work with children. The “nightmares” kept on reoccurring and after awhile I began to wonder if going to Africa to help children was a “calling”. I was financially secure and had everything that I could want. I was on a good career path. However, I felt comfortably numb. I knew I was missing something in my life.

### ***Zambia*** ***2005***

Within a month after having the nightmares, I found myself making a drastic change in my life. I decided to quit my job in Palo Alto, sell everything I had and move to Zambia, Africa. I had no idea what I was suppose to do there, but knew from the nightmares that it was where I should go.

While selling furniture, I had a couple come to my house to look at chairs I was selling. The woman asked me where I was moving to and when I replied, “Zambia,” the woman enthusiastically said that the man she was with was from Zambia. Over the previous few days I had become fearful that I might be making the wrong decision to go. I decided to ask the man if someone like myself could truly make a difference there. The man replied, “East Africa is full of orphans. If you can give just one child a hug, you can make a difference in their life.” I felt that this was a confirmation. I had

been wondering if I really could have an impact and make a difference. Having a man from Zambia, Africa (a place I intended to go to) stand in the middle of my living room and state, yes, "YOU can make a difference" was all I needed. Soon after, I moved.

In Zambia I went from helping one small orphanage outside of Lusaka to helping up to 2,000 children in various ways; paying school tuitions, buying uniforms and hiring professionals to educate the children about HIV/AIDS. I was amazed by how many children, despite their circumstances, had so much joy in their lives and how appreciative they were just for the chance to go to school.

### ***C2BU***

#### ***2006 - 2007***

Since school in most of East Africa isn't free, I decided I wanted to start a 501c3 non-profit organization to raise more funds for school tuitions of vulnerable children. The founder of Courage To Be You (C2BU), Jenny Williamson encouraged me to go under the umbrella of C2BU to speed up the process. I soon started the international side of the organization in Ndola, Zambia near the border of the Congo. C2BU was faith based and wanted all of its leaders to be Christians. However, I had developed a team of people from various religious backgrounds as well as non-believers. Although a Christian, I felt it was important to bring together people from different backgrounds who didn't profess a religious motive for their service. I just loved working with people who wanted to serve the children. Although admiring C2BU and loving their work, (which has now moved into reducing illegal sex trade), I decided to break away from the organization and began to create an organization that was open to all religious backgrounds and non called, Make A Difference (MAD). The mission of MAD would be to help orphaned children from poor villages rise out of poverty through education. The organization would bring people from various backgrounds from all over the world together to make a difference at orphanages and schools. It would also include a vacation aspect to it. If people wanted to help out before going out to safari and see the many incredible sites such as Victoria Falls, they could. Giving and receiving going hand and hand.

At the end of December 2008 MAD was registered as a 501c3 in the USA and in December of 2009 as a registered local non-governmental organization in Tanzania.

### ***India***

#### ***2008***

Two of the people who were helping me in Zambia, were my next store neighbors Rama and Nidhi Srinidhi. They were a highly educated and respected Indian couple living in Zambia. Rama would often go to the orphanages and schools I helped and later invite

volunteers over to have a cup of tea and biscuits in order to recharge from their long days working at the orphanages. Her husband Nidhi gave me advice on micro loans, income generation and organizational development. Nidhi was the CEO of a business headquartered in Ndola, Zambia.

One day, the couple approached me regarding having MAD work in India. The couple was planning to return to their home in Bangalore, India. Rama had a school in Mysore that was started by my grandmother, which she wanted to help. I couldn't think of a better couple to manage MAD in India and agreed. The school helps make sure children from poverty stricken backgrounds get quality education. It currently educates 60 children, but has the potential of helping up to 200. MAD India began to offer opportunities for volunteers to come to India throughout the year to work on literacy, environmental projects, business development, marketing, and fundraising as well as team teaching.

### ***Tanzania***

After receiving many invitations from a local Tanzanian woman, Irene Minja to help develop and support an orphanage in the Kilimanjaro Region of Tanzania, I decided to go to Tanzania. I was introduced to some of the children she wanted to help in a village called Himo (just outside of Marangu near the gates of Kilimanjaro). I fell in love with the children and decided to expand our support to the Kilimanjaro Region. MAD agreed to work in partnership with Minja's local organization called Kilimanjaro Kids Care (KKC). MAD's primary role would be to make sure the children's school fees were paid and to work on projects to help the orphanage through the help of volunteers.

Since 2007 MAD has been sending 22 children to school from the orphanage. KKC encourages me to send the children to private school instead of government. I didn't like the idea of the kids going to private school since the cost of going to government is so low. I felt I would be able to help so many more children by sending them to the government/public schools. However, after doing research, I discovered that the government schools tend to have a shortage of teachers, books, and resources to provide quality education to the children they serve. If MAD sent them to government school they wouldn't be making as much of a difference in their lives in comparison to if MAD was to invest in the small local private schools. Thus, MAD ended up sending the children in Tanzania to a small private local school called, The Royal Junior School. The focus would be on the quality of education, not on the quantity of children being educated.

### ***MAD Today***

MAD has an office in the downtown part of Moshi, Tanzania. It employs five full-time employees to make sure children's school fees are paid and our volunteers in Tanzania are cared for. We also have two part-time employees in India. All employees are paid local salaries which, ensures more money for educational school fees.

MAD believes in operating a fiscally responsible organization and encourages donors and volunteers to meet the children it helps and the schools that they attend.

### ***Our Goals***

- MAD intends on sending all 22 children at the orphanage in Tanzania through college (if they wish to go).
- MAD intends to provide 1 to 5 school scholarships a year to those who work hard and come from impoverished backgrounds on an as-needed basis outside of the 22 children at the orphanage. These are our Exceptional Scholar Awards.
- MAD intends to give the children at the orphanage opportunities to work for MAD once they graduate from secondary school.
- MAD intends to expand the school in Mysore, India, so that it can provide the chance for more disadvantaged children to get a quality education.
- MAD intends to eventually expand its services to other counties in order to help out more children.
- MAD intends to offer MAD Expeditions to raise money for children in their home countries on an annual basis.
- MAD intends to offer internship opportunities to college students who have a desire to help us achieve our mission while receiving college credit.
- MAD intends to raise leaders who serve their home countries without disrupting the many positive aspects of their culture.