

sparkventures

FOUNDERS REPORT

Summer 2023



RENEWED APPRECIATION

A Note from Jennifer Kim, Spark Ventures Board Member

It was 2017 when my family last visited our partners in Zambia. It's astounding what has unfolded in the intervening six years. While the pandemic years certainly brought unprecedented hardships, compounded by poverty and existing structural inequity, our partners have managed to continue to make incredible strides in their program offerings - including a comprehensive suite of technology improvements that is having a dramatic impact on the educational outcomes at Hope Community School. And some things haven't changed at all, like the incredible, warm welcome my family received upon arriving at Hope this July on our first impact trip since the pandemic.

I am so grateful my family was able to spend time with our partners in Zambia once again. The work we are supporting there is truly transforming lives. I was also excited to share words of thanks on behalf of our partners at the August Appreciation event at our home where our family was honored to host some of Spark's dedicated supporters. Whether you have seen our work on an impact trip, are considering traveling with Spark in the future, or are a supporter from afar, I am so grateful for your involvement with Spark Ventures.

INSIDE THIS EDITION...

Zambia Trip Recap

Highlights from our first trip to Hope Community School since 2020

Mexico Preview

Peek into what our upcoming Mexico Impact Travel will include

Supporting Bright Futures

Learn about the impact of your contributions to educational programming

AND MORE...



ZAMBIA TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

Successful Trip to Zambia Marks First Impact Travel to Hope Community School Since January 2020

EXPANDED EDUCATOR EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE BUILDS DEEP CONNECTIONS

This trip marked the third Educator Empowerment Initiative (EEI) trip - the most well attended (with 13 travelers) and impactful one yet! The EEI was crafted with educators in mind, but is also a great option for returning travelers or anyone interested in spending significant time in the classrooms of our partner, Hope Community School - collaborating with their dedicated teaching staff and inspiring and eager learners.

The 2023 EEI theme was Feeling Good - Inside and Out. Lessons were focused on holistic wellness, from mental health to nutrition, using a combination of traditional classroom methods and technology-driven activities that took advantage of the suite of technology we have been able to equip Hope with in the past years. Thanks to your steadfast support, the school's technology landscape has undergone a revolution. The teachers, now increasingly adept at using Chromebooks and projectors have been able to incorporate technology into their daily lessons, and were given even more inspiration for the possibilities these tools hold by the well crafted lessons and activities our travelers presented during the EEI.



With guidance from Head Teacher Ngoma and Hope Secondary School Science Teacher Fallon, our traveling educators developed lessons about nutrition and the diseases that result from poor nutrition. In the classrooms, we talked about mental health and the importance of self-care with a focus on emotions and the natural world. These topics were covered with a variety of presentations, books, poetry, creative activities, videos, songs and games. Thanks to generous sponsorships provided by the Spark community, three middle school teachers from Chicago and Kansas City were able to join us. Their energy, creativity, dedication, expertise and countless hours of preparation has brought the fledgling EEI program to a new level, allowing us to provide tailored, educational programming planned for each of Hope's grades, from the youngest preschool learners all the way up to Grade 10.

The deep bonds forged between educators, travelers, and learners deepen over the course of the trip were inspiring. We're exploring ways to continue fostering cross-cultural learning and enriching experiences for both US and Zambian educators.



SIGNATURE IMPACT TRAVEL REAFFIRMS THE POWER OF SHARED EXPERIENCES

Since 2008 Spark Ventures has brought over 700 travelers to see our work in action and the Zambia Signature Impact Travel experience is our cornerstone offering. We were thrilled to bring travelers back to Zambia after our pandemic hiatus. They took part in meaningful engagement with community leaders, staff and students while experiencing the sights, sounds, and flavors of Zambia (plus an afternoon in neighboring Botswana).

In addition to lots of time spent at Hope School, our travelers were able to gain a deeper understanding of how our impact extends beyond the classroom. Our partnership with Hope stretches into diverse programs that uplift the entire community. Women of Worth (WOW) provides fellowship and entrepreneurial activities for elderly women, while the Hope Community School Farm sustains livelihoods, nutrition, and agricultural training. The Tailoring Initiative empowers women with marketable skills, and the onsite shop fosters local commerce. The Hope Clinic, expanded during the pandemic, delivers essential healthcare to students and their families. Together, we're creating a network of positive change that reaches far beyond the school walls.

The impact of this summer's Zambia travel has been profound, and we invite you to consider joining us next summer for an eye-opening and life-changing journey.

PREVIEW OF OUR MEXICO IMPACT TRIP

Join us for an unforgettable, packed, 4-day journey

What can you expect in Mexico? Shared connections with our partners at Entreamigos, outdoor excursions that highlight the natural beauty of Mexico, fabulous local food, comfortable boutique accommodations... and more.

MEXICO IMPACT TRAVEL

February 8-11, 2024

Registration opens in September. More info at:
sparkventures.org/mexico-impact-travel



SAVE THE DATE & JOIN US FOR OUR FALL GALA

sparkventures

BUILDING STRONG
FOUNDATIONS &



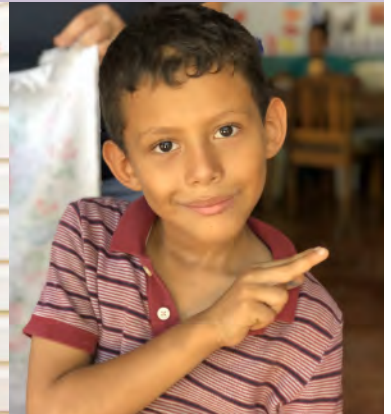
**BRIGHT
FUTURES**

Thursday, October 19th, 2023

Join us for our Hybrid Fall Gala
at Café Brauer (Chicago) or on Zoom



Learn more, purchase tickets, or
register for free today by visiting:
sparkventures.org/fallgala



DID YOU KNOW?

**A single year of primary
school can increase wages
earned later in life by
15%; an additional year of
high school can add 25%.**

BRIGHT FUTURES - EDUCATION SUPPORT

Spark-provided scholarships for students at our partner sites have dramatic results. Hope Community School in Zambia, for example (where just \$250 funds each student for an entire year), has had a 100% primary school graduation rate since 2010. With your help, we can provide Bright Futures through the power of education. A \$250 scholarship can keep a child in school for year - with academic and vocational training, teachers and counselors, supplies and meals. A \$250 contribution helps parents with micro loans, vocational programs and entrepreneurial training. Contribute at sparkventures.org/brightfutures

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