

Kits for Africa

Interview with Vere Reynolds-Hale



Kits for Africa is one of those unique organizations you just instantly feel compelled to contribute to. Even though many of us have made homes for ourselves in other countries, we still feel the need to help the people in the country we all still love. The challenge however is finding the right organization where you know your contributions are in fact going to the right place! Vere Reynolds-Hale is one of those people who wanted to help and wasn't quite sure how to go about it. Well, in true South African style, he came up with his own worthy cause and Kits for Africa was born. Supplying kids with the right sports equipment isn't just about sports. It's an opportunity to enrich the lives of kids across the country and to give them the opportunity to make the right decisions in life through sports.

Q What made you want to do a charity for Africa after such a long period of time in the US?

A I still have strong ties to South Africa as my family and many friends still live there. I wanted to find a way where I could give back to a country so close to my heart but at the same time incorporate my adoptive homeland the USA. The long-term goal is to expand beyond South Africa and to provide assistance to other countries in Africa.

Q How did you come up with the concept?

A I thought about what I could do and one morning the lightbulb switched on. I am passionate about sports and especially Rugby. With crime, drugs and unemployment so high in South Africa I came up with the concept of providing Kits to youth development sport programs that are established in under privileged areas of South Africa. The objective to work with organizations that aim at keeping children off the streets by providing a sense of structure and achievement and ideally reduce illiteracy by having children attend school in order to be a part of the sports programs. Our long-term goal is to provide assistance to other countries in Africa.

Q How often do you send packages back?

A We have been in existence for 10 months and have already provided two rounds of kits and sporting equipment to 10 different organizations in South Africa.

Q How do you pick the schools or organizations to receive the kits?

A We work with a sports distribution company in Cape Town, Sports Brands, Inc, who we purchase the kits and equipment at wholesale cost and they are responsible for managing the distribution process for us in South Africa. Sports Brands is familiar with many organizations that provide coaching programs but lack any kits or proper equipment. We have them fill out a request form detailing the items they need and an explanation of their organization and objectives. Sports Brands also provides due diligence on each group. The board then meets to decide which organizations to support and how much assistance we can provide. Once the decision has been made, the order is then placed with Sport Brands and the kits and equipment can be in the hands of the selected groups within less than one week.

Word has spread as we have been receiving more and more unsolicited requests from organizations that have started to hear about Kits For Africa and the assistance we provide.

Q What is the best way for people to get involved?

A To visit our website at www.kitsforafrica.org. But I would say the best way for people to get involved is to, attend one of our fundraising events, make a donation, purchase one of our t-shirts or become a corporate sponsor. And of course as we grow we will always need volunteers to help at our fundraising events.

Q What has been the best experience to date since starting this amazing charity?

A I have just returned from South Africa with two other board members and I would definitely say the experience of meeting the children and seeing the wonderful job the folks that started the various sport programs and schools are providing was eye opening. The welcome from the children and the thanks we received was unlike anything I have experienced before.

I would like to say a big thank you for all those that have supported Kits For Africa. We appreciate your continued support and hope others will support too.