



Celebrating 40 years

Opportunity International was founded in 1971 by two visionary leaders who were inspired to take action by their experiences with people living in extreme poverty.

American Al Whittaker, former president of Bristol Myers International, Inc., and Australian entrepreneur David Bussau sought a solution that would transform people's lives without creating dependency.

Since Opportunity had only a handful of financial supporters in the early days, Al and Marion Whittaker used over 90 percent of their net worth to fund the organization. "It's a wonderful legacy that has meant so much to our children and our grandchildren over the years," said their son, Don Whittaker, a Chicago-area attorney and longtime Opportunity supporter.

To honor their legacy, consider becoming a charter member of the Whittaker Legacy Partners (see page 4).

Join our celebration

Throughout the year, we'll provide you with a variety of ways to get involved in our 40th anniversary celebration. Here are a few to get you started:

- Launch a 40th anniversary fundraiser online
- Give a \$40 gift card this Mother's Day
- Invite 40 friends to sign up for our blog or 'Like' us on Facebook
- Pray for our work for 40 days



Client Ama Kobi (left) with Opportunity Ghana Loan Officer Sylvia Danso Abeam

Securing titles, improving homes

No matter where you live, security means having a roof over your head and a floor beneath your feet. If you own the land on which you live, your sense of security increases exponentially. But such peace of mind eludes the great majority of our clients. Most of the world's poor, in fact, hold title only informally to land that has been in their family for generations.

Renowned economist Dr. Hernando de Soto proposes in his book, *The Mystery of Capital*, that by moving land ownership from the informal to the formal sector, people can take an important step forward in wealth accumulation. When people are confident that they will not suddenly be dispossessed, they are more inclined to make long-term investments, such as extending the family home or buying a new plow.

It's not just the lack of formal title, however, that keeps security out of reach for clients, but the lack of capital to improve their homes. "Clients try to use their business loans for their homes, and then their business suffers," says Opportunity Ghana Loan Officer Sylvia Danso Abeam. "It stretches their finances too much. And if they don't have a good house to live in, they don't have the security they need in order to manage their businesses well. The two go hand in hand."

Now a \$1.2 million grant from USAID is enabling Opportunity International to promote property rights and pilot a home improvement loan program for clients in Ghana. Working with International Land Systems, Opportunity is putting together "property folios" so that clients can prove they have secure land tenure, and won't have it taken away. The property folios consist of land surveys, field data collection, and community confirmation of property rights. During the start-up phase, target clients are members of established Trust Groups or proven individual loan clients.

"Our hope is that, by working with the Ghanaian government, our clients will eventually be able to get formal title to their land," says Makonen Getu, Opportunity vice president, international business development, who oversees the program. "As the project ramps

(continued on page 4)



CEO Corner

with
Bill Morgenstern

Answer: About 120 mph.

Question: How fast do you travel while free falling from an aircraft at 18,000 feet?

In February, 29 young professionals and Opportunity supporters from across the country took their dedication to new heights (literally), by jumping from an airplane over Orlando, Fla. (see story on page 6). As one of the jumpers, I can tell you it was an exhilarating experience – one made all the more rewarding for its important purpose.

When people living in poverty fall, they fall hard. No parachute. No safety net. That's why Opportunity is committed to providing clients with access to savings, loans, insurance and training to help them face their daily risks. Without these tools, impoverished people have little assurance of a soft landing amidst an economic, weather-related or health crisis.

It takes not only courage to exit a plane soaring high above the earth, but the support and encouragement of the group you're flying with (and the instructor you're tethered to). This newsletter is filled with ways that you can support and encourage our hardworking clients, and in doing so, help mitigate their risks.

As you read this issue, look for the many opportunities to get involved. Order gift cards for your friends, family and colleagues. Take an Insight Trip. Contact Chuck Day to learn more about "smart giving." Register for the Opportunity International Conference, Oct. 14-15, in San Francisco.

You may have heard this Swahili proverb: "If you think you're too small to make a difference, you've never spent the night with a mosquito." No matter how you choose to support Opportunity, know that you are making a huge difference to people working their way out of poverty.

Supporting rural savings

Opportunity's Banking on Africa campaign received a boost with a \$40,000 grant from the S.L. Gimbel Foundation Fund through the Orange County Community Foundation of Newport Beach, Calif. The grant supports exceptional microenterprise programs that help individuals and families in Africa increase their income-earning capacity and improve their standard of living.

Our Banking on Africa campaign aims to reach five million clients by 2015 with access to savings, loans and other tailored financial services, especially in rural areas. They will be reached through a combination of new access points and technology, including mobile banks, ATMs, point-of-sale devices, cell phones and biometrics.



Loan Officer Robert Mayayo helps savings client Rose Chisawa at an ATM in Mponela, Malawi. Before Opportunity established this branch, families in this rural community faced a 55-kilometer journey to the nearest financial institution.

Rotarians partner in Colombia



The Rotary partnership will help us serve many more clients like Clevis Berrio who sells maternity and children's clothing in Cartagena.

Rotary Clubs in San Francisco District 5150 are working together to provide funding for Opportunity's microfinance work in Santa Marta, Colombia. This program is a joint project between the district's microcredit committee and the Rotary Club of Santa Marta near Cartagena.

Every dollar donated will be matched by District 5150 and/or by Rotary International. So far, 13 Rotary Clubs in District 5150 have made commitments to support Opportunity's work in Colombia.

In addition, the Modesto Sunrise and Oakdale Rotary Clubs have made significant contributions. With

Opportunity providing training and handling the loans, Rotarians in Santa Marta will help identify new clients and monitor results. If you belong to Rotary, consider making a presentation on Opportunity to your club.

Opportunity made its very first loan in Colombia in 1971, and currently serves 21,663 Colombian families. We are now launching a bank for people living in poverty in this country, which has one of the largest displaced populations in the world.

Making the climb easier

First there was e-mail, e-commerce and e-blasts. Now, e-bikes are the focus of a new Opportunity pilot project in six African countries. With these electric bicycles, Opportunity International loan officers are able to travel to rural client locations previously navigable only by car.

According to Daryl Skoog, Opportunity International's senior vice president of technology, "With our rural expansion, we were seeking a low-cost mode of transportation with a target of \$.05 cents per mile, versus the \$.50 per mile it costs us per officer today."

The rider can pedal the e-bike like a regular bicycle, or use a combination of pedal and electric motor to go even faster. Using the electric motor alone, the e-bike is capable of attaining speeds of up to 18 miles per hour, but with pedal-assist, it can go as fast as 20-25 miles per hour.



Opportunity's new e-bike



Joyce Opoku (standing on right) at Lucky Child Daycare Center

Joyce received 16 weeks of training in business management and accounting skills, and a six-month loan to make physical improvements to the school. Now that she has repaid the loan, she is requesting a second loan to buy a permanent piece of land. With support from the IDP Rising Schools program, Joyce is helping 150 children embark on the path to a better future.

Raising hope for the young

Joyce Opoku dreamed of starting an early childhood care and learning facility that would provide children living in poverty with a good foundation for first grade. In 2005, the Lucky Child Daycare Center opened with seven pupils in her father's concrete block house in a poor suburb of Kumasi, Ghana. Then in 2009, the center was invited to become part of the IDP Rising Schools Program, a unique partnership between Opportunity and the IDP Foundation, Inc.

The program's goal is to boost the development of existing, but very poor non-governmental schools for disadvantaged children throughout Ghana. With a focus on helping schools improve business management, administrative effectiveness and teacher development, the program also builds a sustainable, holistic, educational model that can be replicated throughout the developing world.

Celebrating women

"Heavenward" was the theme of the International Women's Day festival hosted by Opportunity International for thousands of women clients in Chennai, India. Women of all ages gathered to celebrate their progress toward greater financial independence through Opportunity's financial services. The highest-achieving Trust Groups received awards, and our clients sold goods from booths under a big tent.

Supporter Eric Schade witnessed the festivities while traveling on our International Women's Day Insight Trip to India. "As the women talked, sang, danced and laughed together, their sense of pride and belonging was evident," he said. "It was a powerful display of Opportunity's impact on the lives of so many women."

Another traveler, Opportunity board member Jill Dailey Smith, said, "While we began to feel the heat outside, our hearts were truly ignited by every woman we met and every story we heard. This day made us feel part of something bigger."



Opportunity clients were treated to motivational talks by a Bollywood star and a local radio newscaster.



Smart Giving

with Chuck Day

Using your \$5 million wisely

Last December, Congress provided the welcome news that for 2011 and 2012, each person can shelter up to \$5 million from estate taxes, and a married couple (using smart estate planning) can shelter up to \$10 million.

This new \$5 million exemption amount can create a false sense of tax security, as estate taxes are not the only tax concern that faces our estates. For example, Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) and other such tax-deferred retirement plan assets are treated differently from our other assets from a tax standpoint, as they are subject to both estate and income taxes when passed on to heirs.

The result? If your estate exceeds the estate tax limit, the combined estate/income tax rate on an inherited IRA can exceed 60 percent. Even if your estate is not subject to estate taxes, the income taxes (federal and state) on your IRA assets could exceed 35 percent.

The best strategy to minimize these taxes is to first distinguish between IRA and non-IRA assets in your estate. Then, as best you can, direct the non-IRA assets to heirs and the IRA assets to charity, as charities are tax-exempt and pay neither estate nor income taxes. Directing IRA assets to charity is easy. You simply change the beneficiary designation form on the IRA account to reflect the charities, and you don't need to amend your will each time you wish to update the charities.

Opportunity International tremendously appreciates such gifts. Any individual who remembers Opportunity with IRA assets or any other "planned gift" is recognized as a member of the Whittaker Legacy Partners, named in honor of our founder Al Whittaker, and his wife, Marion.

If you have questions on gifts of IRA assets or any other aspect of estate planning or charitable gift planning, please contact Chuck Day, director of gift planning services, at 630-242-4136 or cday@opportunity.org, or visit opportunity.org/planned giving.

Securing titles, improving homes (continued from cover)

up, we anticipate marketing the land titling and the housing products jointly."

Our clients will receive construction technical assistance from Habitat for Humanity, a sub-recipient on the USAID-funded project, who also helped Opportunity with market research and product development. More than 40 families have already received housing loans to improve their existing structures or to add rooms.

One of these clients is Ama Kobi (pictured on page 1), whose family was living in a one-room home with a collapsed wall. Ama has used small business loans from Opportunity to purchase and farm six acres of land. While the increased income from her produce sales means that she no longer struggles to make ends meet and she has money saved for emergencies, it is not enough to rebuild her home. "I really feel that God has blessed my family with this housing loan to give us a decent place to live and improve our daily life," Ama says.

Opportunity's goal is to roll out the housing loan program to 45 branches in Ghana. Sylvia is optimistic. "I have seen a definite improvement in clients' lives since they started the housing improvement loans. For the first time, they have peace of mind."

Highlighting global staff



Fleur de Vries *Director of Product Development*

Fleur de Vries joined Opportunity International in November 2009 to help develop, market and evaluate our savings products. She spends almost 75 percent of her time in Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda and Uganda, where we are launching our rural outreach and agricultural finance program.

"Savings give people the chance to become financially secure and to provide their children with a better future," Fleur says.

"I feel very blessed to be able to meet our rural clients and see the impact of our services on their lives."

Previously, Fleur was a marketing manager for CBS Outdoor in Amsterdam and a marketing consultant at Opportunity Malawi. She has an MS in communication from the University of Amsterdam.



Richard Owusu Afriyie *Housing Microfinance Manager*

Formerly the operations manager for Opportunity Ghana's northern sector, Richard Owusu Afriyie now works as our housing microfinance manager (see story on page 1). Prior to joining Opportunity in 1995 as a senior loan officer, Richard was employed by the Ghana Civil Service as senior administration officer for the Ashanti region. Born to a poor

family, Richard knows firsthand about the challenges our clients face every day, and feels called by Jesus Christ to help provide solutions.

He says, "Housing is a big problem in my country, with five people often living in a single room. It is very satisfying to champion a product that will help improve their dwellings."

Richard graduated with honors from the University of Ghana with a degree in public administration. He also earned a higher national diploma in accountancy from Kumasi Polytechnic and a postgraduate diploma in management from The Paris Graduate School of Management. He lives in Kumasi with his wife, Gladys, and their two children.

Banking on women

This spring, come together to create change by supporting our Banking on Women campaign. From now through Mother's Day, May 8, visit our resource page at opportunity.org/change. You'll find readings, videos and interactive features honoring the dignity, resourcefulness and perseverance of women, who make up an estimated 70 percent of those living on less than \$2 per day.

You can also access the *USA Today* special supplement, "Investing in Women and Girls: 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day," at opportunity.org/change. The report highlights Opportunity's "banking on women" initiatives that help women gain financial freedom and change their lives, their families' futures and their communities. Opportunity is featured on the economic empowerment spread, pages 18-19. Other thought leaders and development advocates such as Melinda Gates, Nicholas Kristof, Mary Robinson and Christy Turlington Burns are quoted in interviews and contributed articles in this special edition.



Opportunity Kenya client Judith Godiah and her children were featured in a special USA Today supplement.



Opportunity Uganda's Teddy Ajiku and Governors Doris and Les Loucks introduce Opportunity International to a United Church of Christ congregation in Pennsylvania.

in the York Association of the United Church of Christ to choose Opportunity as their designated charity. In addition to their own personal gifts, the couple has helped raise enough donations to support the equivalent of 15 Trust Groups. At least once annually, Les and Doris invite a visiting international staff member to their church to share our work in the field.

"It's our belief that providing financial services is a very significant way to help people living in poverty," Les said. "It is indeed a hand up, not a hand out."

Putting faith into action

Doris and Les Loucks are a testament to the power of putting one's faith into action. As Opportunity Governors living in York, Pa., they have made more than 60 presentations about our work to local churches and Rotary Clubs since 2003.

"We are followers of Jesus Christ," Les says, "and we take seriously His call to help the poor."

With the support of their pastor, the Loucks have rallied 20 of 28 churches

CALENDAR FOR 2011

Opportunity International Conference

"Innovating to End Poverty"

Oct. 14-15

Register at opportunity.org/events

Board of Governors Insight Trips

PHILIPPINES May 27-June 4

COLOMBIA FAMILY WEEK June 19-25

KENYA FAMILY WEEK July 9-17

COLOMBIA PRE-CONFERENCE Oct. 11-13

RWANDA Oct. 15-21

MALAWI Oct. 28-Nov. 5

GHANA EDUCATION FINANCE Oct. 21-28

Women's Opportunity Network Insight Trip

UGANDA June 18-25

Young Ambassadors for Opportunity Insight Trip

TANZANIA July 30-Aug. 6

Boston Breakfast hosted by YAO

May 4

7:30-9 a.m.

All are welcome

Tickets at opportunity.org/bosbreak

Global Updates for Governors

Conference calls with CEO Bill Morgenstern and special guests

12 noon-1 p.m. CST

Dial (866) 794-4960, passcode 326589, press 2

• April 12

2011 Strategy with David Simms, board chair, Network Services Organization

• May 12

Innovations in Technology with Daryl Skoog, senior vice president of technology

• Sept. 15

MicroEnsure: A Powerful Safety Net with Richard Leftley, MicroEnsure president

• Dec. 8

Focus on Savings with Dennis Ripley, senior vice president, international business development

For more information on the conference calls, contact Shelley Weiler at sweiler@opportunity.org or (630) 242-4131.

Jumping to raise awareness

Jumping out of a plane at 18,000 feet is scary, but not nearly as scary as living in chronic poverty. That's the motivation behind Jump for Opportunity.

Twenty-nine people jumped out of a plane the weekend of Feb. 18-20 in Orlando, Fla. to raise funds and awareness for Opportunity's poverty alleviation work. Among the jumpers were young, award-winning entrepreneurs such as Michael Simmons, Ryan P. Allis and Jason Duff. Local media in the jumpers' hometowns picked up the inspiring story and through online fundraisers and other sources, the group ultimately raised more than \$100,000 for Opportunity's microfinance initiatives.

Congratulations to all the brave jumpers who made an impact on global poverty. See all the photos, videos and updates at facebook.com/yao, or check out the Jump website at jumpforopportunity.com.



(From left) YAO Manager Sonya Perez-Lauterbach with the Jump for Opportunity executive leadership team: Michael Simmons, Sarah Green, Jason Duff, Ann Donnelly Hamilton and Doug Fath.



YAO member Rachel McClusky (center) performs at the Chicago chapter's Tunes for Tanzania event.

Jamming to end poverty

YAO's Chicago chapter hosted its first-ever Tunes for Tanzania benefit concert this past winter. Over 150 guests packed into Schubas for a benefit concert featuring three local bands, plus a raffle and live auction for 10 prizes, all to raise awareness and \$15,695 for Opportunity's microfinance initiatives in Tanzania.

"We're so excited about the success of Tunes for Tanzania and hope other chapters will replicate it with their own local bands," says YAO Manager Sonya Perez-Lauterbach.

Visit opportunity.org/yao to watch the Tunes for Tanzania video featuring music from YAO members Rachel McClusky and Richard Thies.

Building our fan base

Do you 'like' Opportunity?

When you click 'Like' on Opportunity International's Facebook page at facebook.com/opportunityintl, you're telling your friends and family that you support our work to alleviate poverty through microfinance.

You'll be in good company. Our fan base is growing fast. In 2010 alone, we went from 1,400 fans to 11,500, and by the end of the first quarter of 2011, we were up to 21,500 'Likes.'

Be part of our online community. 'Like' us, post a comment on our wall, and respond to others to join the conversation. When you do, your actions let your social network know that you care about Opportunity's work to end global poverty. Visit facebook.com/opportunityintl today.



Scottsdale Governors get involved

"I'd been praying to find a cause we could be passionate about," says Mary-Lynn Kaulius of Scottsdale, Ariz. "Then a friend told me about helping impoverished women and children through microfinance. It was a perfect combination of my interests and my husband's background as a businessman." She and her husband, Eugene, became actively engaged through the Opportunity Board of Governors.

"I was enthralled with Opportunity's high repayment rate," says Eugene, former CEO of Samoth Capital. "In my business, we were lending millions and constantly monitoring our administration costs. Opportunity's ability to set up an infrastructure to keep track of and collect on loans as small as \$100 and then relend the money impressed me." Opportunity, he adds, was operating from a sustainability model long before it became a trend.



Mary-Lynn and Eugene Kaulius

The couple says they will never forget a client they met on an Opportunity Insight Trip to Guadalajara, Mexico. On a stool in a corner of her one-room home, illuminated by a single light bulb, she made beautiful figurines out of old papers, glue and paint. With a loan from Opportunity, the doll-maker was able to buy her materials in quantity, and travel by bus with other Trust Group members to sell her products in a larger, more profitable market. "It impressed us how people living in utter poverty work their way out with dignity," says Mary-Lynn. "I really like the approach of helping people economically, socially and spiritually."

Mary-Lynn and Eugene have hosted many gatherings and dinner parties in their home, engaging friends and colleagues in discussions about global poverty and Opportunity's work. Over the last five years, they have helped grow Arizona's Governor group from a handful to 35 members. Including Opportunity in their estate planning is another way that the couple has chosen to support our work.

"Our children have seen how exciting it has been for us to make a meaningful difference in the world," reflects Mary-Lynn, "and it has piqued their interest in helping others. It's important to pass our values on to the next generation."

To learn more about joining the Board of Governors, visit opportunity.org/governors.

Honoring Dick Hoefs

Opportunity International is saddened to report the passing of Dick Hoefs on Nov. 26. Dick supported Opportunity clients for nearly 25 years and served on Opportunity boards for 15 years, including as chairman of Opportunity U.S. in 1992 and 1993. Dick was a partner with Arthur Anderson, specializing in international taxes from 1950 until his retirement in 1985.



Dick Hoefs at an Opportunity conference in 2005

Early last year, Opportunity established the Hoefs Honor Fund with a generous gift from one of Dick's mentees. As the inaugural fund within Opportunity's Hall of Servants, the honor fund pays tribute to the leadership, service and generosity that Dick provided to Opportunity over several decades.

The Hoefs Honor Fund accepts both current and deferred gifts from those persons seeking to honor Dick and to help carry on his passionate commitment to end world poverty. All such gifts are tax deductible. To learn more, please contact Chuck Day at cday@opportunity.org or at (630) 242-4136.



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Talekeleni Kagaso, Opportunity Malawi client

COME TOGETHER, CREATE CHANGE
OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
INNOVATING TO END POVERTY
OCTOBER 14-15, 2011 • SAN FRANCISCO

A community-building event hosted by the Board of Governors

- Meet thought leaders and innovators in microfinance and economic development
- Discover how cutting-edge technologies give impoverished communities a safe place to save
- Learn how Opportunity's agricultural finance initiatives are helping to reduce hunger

Register now at opportunity.org/events



Cabi fashion consultants received this \$10 gift card at their national conference.

Not just for Christmas, but all year long

Our supporters are using Opportunity gift cards as corporate gifts, employee/customer appreciation gifts and promotional tools. For example, Rick Volpe, president of Asset Planning Services, Ltd. in Harleyville, Pa., purchased \$25 gift cards for 325 clients and employees at Christmas. Over 100 of these people are now actively engaged on our website and have expressed appreciation for him introducing them to Opportunity.

In January, CAbi (Carol Anderson by invitation), a leading direct sales apparel company, distributed \$10 Opportunity gift cards to over 2,500 independent sales consultants at its national conference. Since then, over 400 consultants have redeemed their cards, and several have become regular donors to Opportunity through recurring monthly gifts.

Opportunity Governor Glenn Zimmerman is vice president of Kenneth Frenke & Co. in Atlanta, and a member of the Kingdom Advisors community of Christian financial professionals. When Glenn heard that Opportunity was hosting a webinar for Kingdom Advisors in February just prior to the group's annual conference, he offered to cover the cost of a \$10 Opportunity gift card for those attending the webinar and visiting our booth. Since then, several members have made substantial donations to our work.

To order quantities of 25 or more, or to learn more about selecting Opportunity gift cards as corporate gifts, contact Dana Lunberry at dlunberry@opportunity.org or (630) 242-4124.



Opportunity International

2122 York Road, Ste. 150, Oak Brook, Illinois 60523

OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL'S VISION

Our vision is a world in which all people have the opportunity to provide for their families and build a fulfilling life.

Our belief is that small-scale entrepreneurs can be big change agents in overcoming global poverty.

Our mission is to empower people to work their way out of chronic poverty, transforming their lives, their children's futures and their communities.

Our method is to provide microfinance services, including lending, savings, insurance, and transformational training, to people in need. To do this, we build and work through sustainable, local microfinance institutions.

Our motivation is to respond to Jesus Christ's call to love and serve the poor.

Get involved

Board of Governors • opportunity.org/board-of-governors

Women's Opportunity Network • opportunity.org/won

Young Ambassadors for Opportunity • opportunity.org/yao

Join the conversation

opportunity.org/blog • twitter.com/opportunityintl • facebook.com/opportunityintl

Fund a microloan at optinnow.org

Choose an entrepreneur to support • Host a fundraiser

If you prefer to receive *IMPACT* via email, please contact getinfo@opportunity.org.