

Out From The Shadows: Women of Zimbabwe

A huge factor in the success of emerging countries is the triumph of their women in moving their cultures forward.



Mary is an over 100 year old resident at a home for destitute seniors. The nuns that operate this site will be featured in Paul's images. Mary's mental acuity defy her age and partial blindness, as she can recount her life leading back to the early 1900's in tandem with events on the international stage. Paul visited her in 2010 to present her pictures from the 2009 visit.

Right now, women's' opportunity for education and basic survival are threatened in the hobbled, politicized economy in Zimbabwe. Professional photographer and Tualatin resident Paul Sivley has sat next to the 13 year old girls in Zimbabwe not going to school because their mothers have to spend their very limited funds on HIV meds and food. There is no room for school fees and the daughter lacks any hopeful role models. On a more positive note, Paul has talked with women in Zimbabwe who have led lives of amazing inspiration, working for the benefit of others without expectation of personal material gain - yet they toil silently in the shadows of Zimbabwe because of geographic isolation or the lack of media to bring resources to their efforts.



The mixture of hope and pride of this senior at a home for the poor is evident. She survives amidst meals and programs offered by the nuns who lead the home and retains her strength despite the challenges of living in Zimbabwe.

Paul Sivley, a photographer based in the Portland Oregon area, is passionate about bringing inspirational Zimbabwean women

with unique and motivational endeavors to light with the hope that such exposure will encourage them to continue their efforts, despite frequent lack of acknowledgement, to motivate others to help them, as well as motivate younger persons throughout Zimbabwe.



These three women live in a very isolated rural area, but have enjoyed exponentially improved agricultural output through assistance in developing a system for storing water and watering via drip irrigation.

During Paul's trips to Zimbabwe in 2009 and 2010, he met with dozens of nongovernmental organizations and their field clients. He quickly encountered a number of highly inspirational women in both rural and urban settings. He photographed and interviewed these women, with the intent of creating an art show of the images and portions of the interview text. Through these 2 trips, he found some initial "heroines" to form the start of his project to bring light to their efforts.

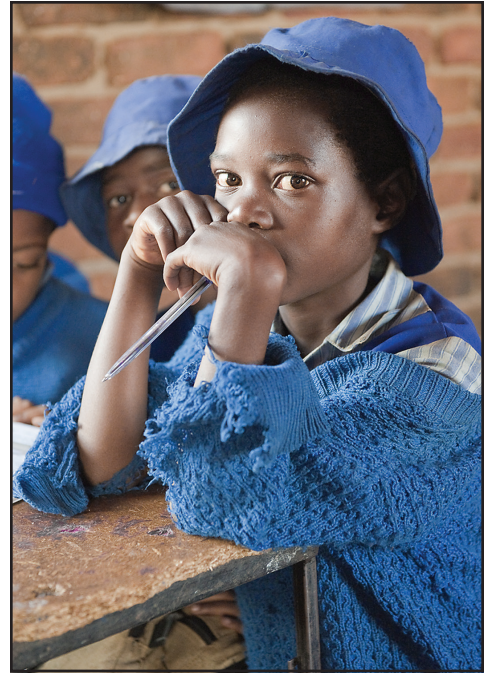
In August 2012, Paul will meet with newly discovered female "heroines" in

Zimbabwe, as well as spending more time with previous women to learn more about their stories. The women are to be interviewed via a grant from the Oregon Regional Arts and Cultural Council (RACC), through assistance from Pro Photo Supply in Portland, OR, and www.pixelegacy.com, as well as potential funds to be raised from <http://www.usaprojects.org/projects>. These women are expected to be from all levels of education and/or be involved in art, music, agriculture, economics, human rights, legal services, microfinance development and management, health care, HIV prevention, politics, energy and other businesses, etc. Candidates for interviews include women who are, at some personal sacrifice, advancing the lives of others in a manner that merits recognition and promotes inspiration.

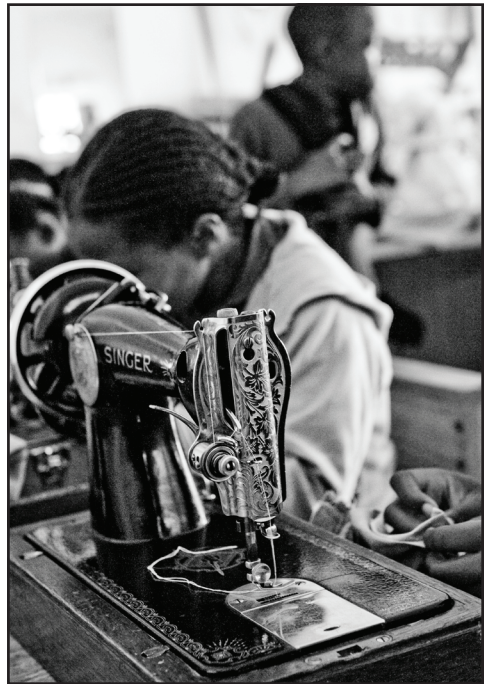


Women participate in a role play learning exercise on how to stand up to a husband who wants to take the family salary and spend it on non necessities. Women are coached by counselors on how to negotiate in safety.

The art work created by Paul will be posted online, and each interviewed candidate will receive a printed copy of one of their portraits. Participants will know that their challenges, accomplishments and initiatives could gain support through publicity, and they will know that they will be serving as role models for younger Zimbabweans. The work will be shown at numerous Portland, Oregon locations, such as churches, museums, coffee shops, Rotary meetings, on social media, the web, at the offices of the National Urban League in Portland, The African Women's Group in Portland, the Junior League and other women oriented networking groups - so as to raise awareness among Americans about Zimbabwean culture and women. In addition, the work will be available online for viewing by Zimbabweans. Funding donated through this website will go toward the prints for Zimbabweans, in country costs of translation services, rental equipment for portions of required video equipment, fuel and automobile rental costs that are higher than in the U.S., and assistance with processing the still and video imagery. With sufficient future support, Paul hopes to put the material into a book and share the imagery and interviews in greater depth throughout Zimbabwe. With greater support, Paul would like to return to Zimbabwe with the work to put it on display in country.



This girl attends a rural school in Eastern Zimbabwe. Only 1 book per 8 students exists, and those are dated and tattered. Desks and chairs are insufficient and in poor condition. The hope for this girl is a role model who can support her rising above these conditions toward greater achievements.



This image comes from Nzewe, a school for the deaf that Paul has visited twice. Students of all ages are given an education and vocational training to assure that they have a future.



Sports programs are increasingly used to provide positive outlets for women - ones that were previously only available to men.



Paul can be contacted at www.facebook.com/paulsivleyphotography, p.sivley@comcast.net, and 503-502-3385. People wishing to support the project can go to <http://www.usaprojects.org/projects>.