

Campolindo Grad Gives Hope and More to Kenya Youth in Unique Program

By Uma Unni



Morgan DeLuce

Photo provided

Fresh out of college, Morgan DeLuce is already working to make the world a better place.

The 2011 Campolindo graduate recently partnered with San Francisco-based nonprofit Mama Hope as a Global Advocate Fellow. DeLuce will be spending the next nine months working to develop new programs for students at Flying Kites, a small boarding school for orphans and impoverished students in Njabini, Kenya.

One of DeLuce's two central projects is to implement a sexual education curriculum for the school. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) have long been a problem in Africa, and in recent years, prospects have been increasingly grim. According to a 2010 study by the World Health Organization, 70 percent of the annual HIV infections across the world were in sub-Saharan Africa. Because STDs tend to spread at an exponential rate, sexual education programs like DeLuce's — even if administered to a relatively small number of students — can create a ripple effect that prevents the spread of STDs far beyond the original recipients of sexual education.

DeLuce's second major project with the school is to build a new student dorm. Flying Kites has over 1,500 students engaged in their outreach programs, but they can only

offer a home to as many orphaned students as their housing facilities allow for. By building a new dorm for the school, DeLuce hopes to create a home — and a future — for even more children.

To grow these programs and measure their progress, DeLuce will be spending three months in the fall in Njabini, working directly with the school.

"Another goal of mine," DeLuce said, "is to change the conversation around poverty, and flip the script to empower individuals who are typically disempowered in traditional aid models." To empower students at Flying Kites, DeLuce hopes to implement the LaunchPad program, which prepares secondary school students for professional careers by connecting them with internships in Nairobi.

"The kids at Flying Kites are future leaders and have so much potential to generate positive change," she says.

DeLuce's ambitions began early, when she started volunteering for Mama Hope in high school. After attending a leadership conference, where she heard about the nonprofit, DeLuce learned that they were working on a project to install a sustainable drip irrigation system at a farm in Kenya.

"I wanted to get involved, so I started selling tee-shirts and flowers. I even turned Campo's Mr. GQ

contest into a fundraiser, which was so fun and very successful. The farm has now used the irrigation system for the past 5 years."

DeLuce's passion for social impact still shines through. After attending Boston College, where she earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and management & leadership, DeLuce has returned to Mama Hope so that she can continue to work toward social change.

Over the next three months, DeLuce will be raising \$20,000 to fund her projects for Flying Kites. "I've raised money from my personal network, from a foundation, and through events. Social media has been a huge factor in generating awareness for the project, and my friends and family have been hugely supportive, sharing the work of Mama Hope and Flying Kites with others." One hundred percent of the money DeLuce raises will go toward the projects on the ground in Njabini.

DeLuce has set up a crowdfunding page at www.classy.org/morganflyingkites for anyone interested in supporting her project. "I am also looking for product donations for upcoming events in Lafayette, including food and silent auction items.

"Most importantly," DeLuce added, "I would love for people to share this story with their friends and family and reach out if they have any questions."

When asked what she would tell teenagers interested in volunteering, DeLuce said, "Begin volunteering in your local community and understand the needs of those closest to you, and what solutions are already being put into place. Build your understanding of how to work in accompaniment with others. Live compassionately in your day-to-day life and assume the best in people," she said.

She adds, "When we enter into humanitarian work from a place of love and respect, we can change the way that we do service for the better."

The Roving Rabbis Take to the Streets to Help Jews Learn About Their Faith

By Pippa Fisher



Rabbi Mendel Weinfeld and Rabbi Mendel Erlenwein.

Photo provided

Local residents might have noticed a couple of friendly young men, dressed in wide brimmed black hats and serious black suits, on the streets of Lamorinda over the past week or so.

Rabbi Mendel Weinfeld and Rabbi Mendel Erlenwein are two 19-year old rabbinical students from Brooklyn, N.Y. "People do stop and look at us", said Weinfeld with a smile. But he says that the response of people in this area has been very welcoming and friendly.

As much as their appearance stands out in California, they come across as approachable and open. They are striking up conversations around the community with the intent to ignite a spark among non-affiliated Jewish people in the area. Weinfeld says they have been introducing themselves in restaurants, banks and other businesses. They spend time talking to commuters outside the BART station and also approach people on the street to ask simply "Are you Jewish?" and then follow up if people are interested

in learning more. They are visiting homes too and talking, listening and teaching in a one-on-one, informal situation as they bring their message of goodness and kindness to all.

"We're very relaxed. We're not intimidating at all," said Erlenwein. "People are searching," said Weinfeld. These two young men hope to reach culturally Jewish people in the area and help them rediscover their heritage. They carry with them and hand out Shabbat candles, kosher foods and mezuzahs — a religious scroll which is placed on the doorway of a Jewish home. For many who have lost touch with their Judaism or who have never been taught about their heritage, this is a welcome opportunity to learn.

When asked how this area compares with other areas that he has taken his message to, Weinfeld notes that Californians are very laid back and ready to talk.

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1:00 - 2:30 PM	GRADES K-5, 6-8 AND 9-12 GROUPS
3:15 - 4:30 PM	GRADES 6-8 SOLOISTS
5:00 - 6:15 PM	GRADES 9-12 SOLOISTS
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