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Beads to Build: Raising Funds to Raise Hope

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Running head: BEADS TO BUILD

BEADS TO BUILD: RAISING FUNDS TO RAISE HOPE

By

Elisabeth M. Abfall

Honors Capstone Project

Submitted to the Faculty of

Olivet Nazarene University

for partial fulfillment of the requirements for

GRADUATION WITH UNIVERSITY HONORS

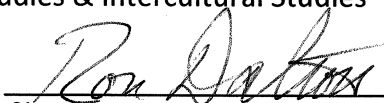
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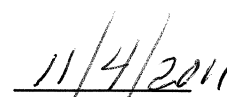
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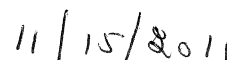

Capstone Project Advisor (printed)


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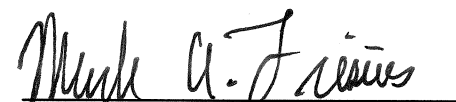

Date



Honors Council Chair (printed)


Signature


Date


Honors Council Member (printed)


Signature


Date

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this entire project to the children at the Mountains of Hope Orphanage in Mpigi, Uganda. In 2009, I was blessed with the opportunity to live with these children, see their work ethic, drive, and most of all, their faith. The children believe that their future can be better, and it is my hope and prayer that Beads to Build will give them the opportunity to see their dreams fulfilled.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Honors Program at Olivet Nazarene University for making this project possible. The Honors Program provided a grant, which was used to further the publicity of this project.

In addition, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Ron Dalton, for all of his encouragement, support, and advice. Without his guidance, many of the technical aspects of this project would fail to be what they are.

I would like to thank my family for their continual support during the past three years in which this project has developed. My father, Tony Abfall, and my mother, Valerie Abfall, have tirelessly stood by my side and encouraged me. They have also been an invaluable tool in spreading the word about Beads to Build and increasing my donor pool.

Lastly, I would like to thank James Maligna, the founder and director of the Mountains of Hope Orphanage who will be the recipient of the funds. Without his heart and desire to rescue orphans in Uganda, none of this would be possible.

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ABSTRACT

Beads to Build is a fundraising initiative that uses both print material and online resources to share the story of the Mountains of Hope Orphanage in Mpigi, Uganda and make items available for sale to support the orphanage. The children at the orphanage live in a rented building, which is very costly. By selling jewelry made by the orphans, t-shirts, and photographs, Beads to Build was able to generate enough funds to purchase two acre of land in October 2011. In the spring of 2012, an orphanage will be built on the two acres of land. Building an orphanage will ensure that all funds generated from that point forward will go directly to the orphans rather than the rent-costs of a building.

Keywords: Orphanage, Fund-raising, Uganda

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2009, I traveled to Mpigi, Uganda to serve in the Mountains of Hope Orphanage run by James Maligna. The orphanage is home to twelve children who were rescued from adverse conditions. The children now have a safe place to live and learn. The orphanage owned a building, but the government forced them to move. They were unable to purchase a new building, as they received no compensation for the old one. They currently rent a building, and all incoming funds go toward the rent. I was heartbroken by this and experienced firsthand how little food they were given. I also experienced how a small amount of money goes a long way. The goal of this performance based capstone project is to raise over \$1,000 via a fundraising initiative named Beads to Build. This is an attainable amount that would greatly impact the lives of the children at Mountains of Hope.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Fundraising techniques have been studied thoroughly to determine what is most effective. One thing that is clear is that fundraising should not be done mindlessly. Oftentimes, when individuals take on a large task alone they lose direction. Research has shown that it is best to utilize a team in large fundraising ventures. I have learned utilizing people's strengths is very important (Holpp 4). This creates a more efficient and well-rounded team.

Leading teams of individuals is difficult, and it takes willingness and cooperation by both the leader and the team members to make things work. Team leaders have many roles and they must be directly involved in the venture they are leading. Leaders should do the following: coordinate activities, advise on problems, provide resources, solve problems, assist in implementation, and give recognition (Holpp 27). In leading a fundraising team, it is important to empower team members and encourage them to use their gifts.

Through research, it becomes clear that there is a high emphasis on having a mission statement for a team. Anthony Cobb's book *Leading Project Teams* expands on the concept of a mission statement. It gives both direction for the team and plays a 'political' role for those who are not on the team. For the fundraising team, a mission statement helps to show how all the pieces fit together and orients them towards one goal. On a political level, mission statements help those non-team members understand what the team is working on (Cobb 126).

Equally as important, for team and non-team members, are objectives and deliverables. These help define the path towards the vision and establish

expectations among team members. Objectives and deliverables ensure that everyone knows what needs to be done and when it needs to be done by (Cobb 132).

Once there is a clear direction of the project, fundraising techniques should be implemented. Illona Bray's book *Effective Fundraising for Nonprofits* gave instruction on how to build a good foundation for fundraising. Some of the most important tools for effective fundraising include having effective writing abilities and utilizing technology (Bray 54).

Bray stated that written information for fundraising purposes should be conversational in style. Doing so will make sure that people understand what is being said. It is also important to make an organization look support-worthy. People will be more willing to donate to an organization they find to be honest and straightforward (Bray 59).

Once people begin to donate, it is important to keep good contact so that they will feel compelled to continue donating. This can be done through emails, thank you letters, updates, appeal letters, and offering incentives (Bray 63). Thank you letters show a donor that their gift is both acknowledged and appreciated. Appeal letters show donors that there is still work to be done. Incentives, such as photographs or letters from the orphanage, give donors a more personal hand in what is happening in Africa. I believe that all of these have a very important role in effective fundraising and donor relations.

An effective way to connect the actual fundraising to the cause is to use resources from the cause to generate funds. This can be done through the selling of

jewelry made at the Mountains of Hope Orphanage. These items would be similar to those sold under the banner of 'fair trade.' Fair trade is defined as 'a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency, and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade.' (Decarlo 12) Through researching fair trade principles and practice, I have learned that I am not ready to work on that big of a scale. I will, however, use fair trade principles as a guide line for the selling of African items.

My main tool for generating funds was print material, through which different items were sold. Mal Warwick's book *How to Write Successful Fundraising Letters* gives practical and simple tools for being effective in writing. It is vital to motivate the audience to give. People will respond to a fundraising letter when they feel it is a worthwhile and important cause (Warwick 73). Most people usually ignore pleas for money, so an effective letter must be personal. The next essential aspect of an effective letter is laying out a clear plan of action. Donors want to know exactly what they are supporting. It is important to clearly lay out the cause and how the money will be used (Warwick 77). Warwick lays out cardinal rules of fundraising, which include: using 'I' and 'you,' but mostly 'you,' appealing to donors on the basis of benefits, not needs; asking for money, not for 'support;' writing in simple, straightforward English; formatting the letter for easy reading; giving the donor reason to send money now, and not later; and writing a packing, not a letter (Warwick 93). These rules will help as a guide to writing an effective brochure.

There are many effective ways to raise money, but the larger question lies in what to do with the money once it is raised. The Mountains of Hope Orphanage is in desperate need of funds for immediate things such as rent, school fees, and food.

Studies have shown, however, that it is more effective in the long term to allow funds to accumulate in order to solve the problem rather than continually scoop water out of a leaking boat. One such organization that follows a model of self-sufficiency is the Microcredit Summit. In 2005, the Microcredit Summit launched a campaign that focused on reaching the poorest people in the world and empowering them by giving them the knowledge and tools to be self-sufficient. Their goal was to render themselves useless to their target (Harris 3-6). Striving for self-sustainability for the poor of the world is the ultimate goal in many fundraising operations.

Beads to Build has similar goals to those of the Microcredit Summit. Beads to Build is only a means to an end. By using effective fundraising techniques and establishing good relations with donors, the intentions of this project is to be non-existent in the future. The money raised by this initiative will go to create a self-sustaining orphanage for the children in Mpigi, Uganda.

METHODS

Mission Statement

Fundraising initiatives take much planning prior to the actual raising of funds. The first step in launching Beads to Build was establishing a mission statement. Specifically, the goal of Beads to Build was to “strive to provide a permanent home for the children at the Mountains of Hope Orphanage in Mpigi, Uganda.” This gave clear direction for the rest of the project. In addition to providing direction, the mission statement let potential donors know exactly what the purpose of Beads to Build was and where their funds would go.

Fundraising Team

The next step was to establish a team who would support and propagate Beads to Build. This was necessary to ensure a high quality of work and creativity in all written materials. James Malinga is the founder of the Mountains of Hope Orphanage in Uganda. His role as a member of the Beads to Build team was to be an over-seas contact. He provided information and updates about the children in the orphanage, as well as logistical information about the needs of the orphanage. In particular, he emphasized the need of an owned building to house the children. It was his guidance and direction that led to the creation of the mission statement. Katie Kulchar was another team member. Katie’s job was to proof-read all out-going information and help with the creativity and appeal of brochures and t-shirts. My personal role on the team was to communicate with James and Katie in order to best execute fundraising efforts. As I learned through research, it was important to allow the members of my team to

exercise their strengths, but I made all final decisions. My team members supported me as I communicated with donors and built relationships with them.

Finances

Fundraising on such a large scale required great financial organization. All money that was received was recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet along with the donor's name, address, and order. In May 2011, a savings account specifically for Beads to Build was created in my name at PNC Bank. This ensured that all funds were kept separate from my personal finances. All item costs were paid for by money in this account, and all revenue created was placed in this account. Donations were collected with the understanding that Beads to Build is a fundraising effort, not a non-profit organization. Donors were aware that they would not receive tax deductions on their financial donations.

Fundraising

The Beads to Build team determined that the most effective way to raise funds for the orphanage was to sell items that directly linked donors to the orphanage. Jewelry, photographs, and T-shirts were sold via a printed brochure and the internet.

Jewelry

Bracelets, necklaces, and earrings that were made by the orphans at Mountains of Hope out of old calendars were sold (Appendix A). These items were obtained when I was at the orphanage in 2009. Additional jewelry was not obtained after the products I had were sold due to high international shipping prices. All over-all revenue went to the

orphanage. Bracelets were sold for \$7 each, necklaces were sold for \$10 each, and earrings were sold for \$5 a pair.

Photographs

Photographs that were taken on my 2009 trip to Uganda were also sold (Appendix A).

These included photographs of the children and the town. Photographs were sold as 5x7 and 8x10, matted or unmated. 5x7 unmated photographs cost \$10, 5x7 matted photographs cost \$15, 8x10 unmated photographs cost \$20, and 8x10 matted photographs cost \$25. When an order for a photograph was received, the money was used to print the photograph and purchase the matting (if necessary), and all revenue was put into the Beads to Build bank account.

T-shirts

In addition to jewelry and photographs, t-shirts were sold. The t-shirt design says "Mountains of Hope" and was drawn by Katie Kulchar and edited in Adobe Illustrator by myself (Appendix A). The t-shirt was printed by www.customink.com. Two different orders were placed to CustomInk. The first order was placed on May 16, 2011 for 37 shirts. This order cost \$240.87, or \$6.51/shirt. The second order was placed on June 6, 2011 for 12 shirts. This order cost \$132.60, or \$11.05/shirt. I opted to place the CustomInk logo on the back of the t-shirts to save \$0.50/shirt. The t-shirts were paid for in advance by previous donations. This ensured that t-shirts were available to fill orders immediately. T-shirts were sold for \$20 each, and the entire \$20 was placed in the Beads to Build bank account.

Brochure

All of the aforementioned items were sold via a brochure or a website. The brochure was designed by myself in Microsoft Publisher (Appendix B). The brochure featured the mission statement, pictures of the children, a short story about my journey to the orphanage, the problem the orphanage faced, two potential solutions, items for sale, and an order form. If people decided to donate money or purchase items, an order form was on the final page of the brochure. This allowed people to tear off the form and send in their order, while keeping the information about the cause they were donating to. The order form had places for people to order specific items in addition to providing their address and email address. I requested their email addresses for future communication with donors. Lastly, my contact information was listed in numerous places on the brochure to allow donors to contact me about questions. Once the brochure design was finalized, it was published in a PDF and uploaded to www.UPrinting.com where it was printed. On March 29, 2011, 150 brochures were ordered for \$126.57. The printing costs were paid for by the Olivet Nazarene University Honors Program. The printed brochures were professional-looking documents that provided donors with both an order form and a story of a worthy cause.

Website

A website was created to supplement the distributed brochure and provide a way to order items without a brochure. The website, <http://beadstobuild.tumblr.com>, was listed on the brochure as a way to view larger pictures of the items for sale. The website

also provided a brief story about the Mountains of Hope Orphanage and ordering options. While the website was not the primary mode of sales, it was a supplement to the brochures and was something that donors could pass along to friends and relatives who were interested in Beads to Build.

Orders

Orders that were received by mail or e-mail were recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Orders that were placed using the brochure were photocopied and mailed with the ordered items as a receipt of purchase. All items (except photographs) were held in-stock to ensure that orders could be filled quickly. A flat shipping rate of \$5 was charged to all donors. All items were shipped to donors within one week via the United States Postal Service. In the case that an item was out of stock, a thank-you card was sent to the donor to acknowledge their order and inform them that there would be a delay in the shipment of their items.

Donations

On multiple occasions, donations were received without orders. Donations, like orders, were recorded in the same Microsoft Excel spreadsheet along with the donor's name, address, and the amount donated. Donors were sent a thank-you card in the mail to acknowledge their gift. As milestones were reached, such as the purchase of the land, all donors were sent an update letter including a picture. This continued the relationship and investment of donors with the work going on in Uganda.

Continuation

This process of receiving and filling orders continued on through the summer of 2011 and into the fall of 2011. Donations will continue to be accepted after the presentation and conclusion of this capstone project to support the Mountains of Hope Orphanage. I will be graduating in January 2012, so this project will be continued on independently. All print material contains my current, Olivet, address; mail will be forwarded to my home address upon graduation. All subsequent fundraising will be done strictly via the Internet. This will ensure that there will not be any confusion about where to send money and/or order forms.

RESULTS

The distribution of printed brochures and the selling of items linked to the orphanage was the most effective way to raise funds. This gave donors something to hold and examine as they decided whether or not to support Beads to Build. Many people utilized the order forms on the brochure to purchase items and donate money.

The initial financial goal of Beads to Build was \$1,000. Through the generous donations of many people, over \$6,000 was raised. In October, 2011, two acres of land was purchased in Mpigi, Uganda by James Malinga (Appendix C). Three-thousand dollars was wired to James Malinga to pay for this land. Donations will be collected as the building project begins and will continue until its completion.

REFLECTION

This project has been one of the most difficult and fulfilling experiences of my life. I believe that God had put the desire to build an orphanage on my heart in 2009; however, the hardest part of this journey was staying motivated. It was often a daunting task to face a large financial goal. The opportunity given to me through the Honors Program gave me the motivation to continue on in this endeavor.

I began this project knowing that it would be difficult, but not realizing how many hours would be spent carrying it out. Designing the brochure, website, and t-shirt required many drafts. I printed off many versions of the brochure, only to ask a friend to look over it and find one small typographical error. I desired to create a product that would entice people to join in the effort. Oftentimes, sad images are used to evoke sympathetic feelings in hopes of convincing someone to donate money to support orphans. I did not want to take this approach. The problem is indeed a sad one; however, there is great hope in it. Hours were spent recalling the joy that the orphans brought to my life in 2009. It was my desire that I would be able to convey this joy to others. For this reason, the brochure features pictures of all the children smiling, not crying. I wanted to invite people to join with me in this attainable endeavor to bring joy and hope into the lives of these children by providing funds to build a permanent home for them. On one occasion, a student I work with told me that she liked my brochure because it was “happy.” It was for this very reason that she donated a substantial sum of money.

The difficulties faced in carrying out this project gave great insight into my future. God put the idea for this project on my heart, and at times I was extremely passionate about it. There were other times, however, in which I was tired and did not feel the desire to continue on in this endeavor. I doubted the work that I was doing and whether or not people would donate money. Writing thank you letters and taking trips to the post office became tedious. I learned that these small things are necessary to achieve the final goal. Like many things in life, there are times when you are excited about something and times when it becomes tiring. I learned that I may not always feel passionate about the cause I am working toward. It takes constant reminders and support to stay motivated during the tedious times.

Overall, I am extremely thankful for the support and donations of many friends and relatives. Without their belief in this cause, I may have lost sight of what is ultimately important. This project was not about printing the perfect brochure or designing a cool t-shirt; it was about creating a means to an end. The day that land was purchased made the end seem near. It was a day of celebration for what God has done thus far, and also a renewal of hope for what is to come. The hours of seemingly pointless work will culminate into something magnificent: a future home for children that will bring hope to lives for years to come.

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Ahern, Tom. *How to Write Fundraising Materials that Raise More Money*. Medfield: Emerson and Church Publishers, 2007.

Tom Ahern is an acclaimed teacher on fundraising techniques. This book gives tips on how to make effective writing even more effective. Everything contained in this book has a practical application, whether it is a tip for formatting or which tense to write in.

Cobb, Anthony T.. *Leading Project Teams: An Introduction to the Basics of Project Management and Project Team Leadership*. 1 ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc, 2005.

This book is useful primarily for its information on mission statements. Knowing the importance and use of a mission statement will be vital in developing one myself. Also, this book speaks about how objectives and deliverables are key to leading a team successfully.

Decarlo, Jacqueline. *Fair Trade: A Beginner's Guide (Beginner's Guides)*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2007.

This book was helpful in learning principles for selling items in a globally helpful way. I learned the difficulties in selling labeled fair trade, and I have opted out of doing so. However, I wish to use many of the methods that the fair trade business does in order to support the orphanage.

Guest, Emma. *Children of AIDS: Africa's Orphan Crisis*. Sterling: Pluto Press, 2001.

Emma Guest examines the AIDS endemic and how it is leaving thousands of children orphaned. The bulk of this book examines the stories of a few of the victims of AIDS. This book helped affirm my reasoning for building an orphanage: there are thousands of children in need of a home.

Holpp, Lawrence. *Managing Teams*. 1 ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998.

This book was extremely helpful in learning the ins and outs of managing a team. I learned how teams develop and the difficulties that come with the growth of a team. I also learned key aspects to being a good team leader. This book will be a resource that I will continue to refer to during the building process.

Lederleitner, Mary. *Cross-Cultural Partnership: Navigating the Complexities of Money and Mission*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010.

Mary Lederleitner shares multiple case studies about positive and negative experiences with cross-cultural support. She notes that sending money to those in need is important, but ensuring the money is used effectively is vital. This book made many important points on establishing healthy relationships across cultures, but it spoke mainly about large-scale projects.

Pitman, Marc. *Ask Without Fear! A Simple Guide to Connecting Donors with What Matters to Them Most*. Mechanicsburg: Executive Books, 2007.

Marc Pitman emphasizes the relationship between the cause and donor in *Ask Without Fear*. He believes that the most important thing in fundraising is to create a cause that people can connect with. This book affirmed what I was doing in Beads to Build: giving people an opportunity to play a role in something important.

Sand, Michael. *How to Manage an Effective Nonprofit Organization*. Franklin Lakes: The Career Press, 2005.

This book is a guide to managing a nonprofit organization through effective writing, fundraising, and planning. Michael Sand discussed many of the legal aspects of establishing a nonprofit organization. This book made it clear to me that I was not interested in starting a nonprofit, but would rather just launch a fundraising effort.

Schwartz, Glenn. *When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement*. Bloomington: AuthorHouse Publishers, 2007.

Glenn Schwartz examines the negative side of Christian service to global poverty. He believes that oftentimes, impoverished people or organizations can become dependent on aid. The best way to combat this is to train and equip leaders in that area. This book challenges readers to not simply write a check, but solve problems.

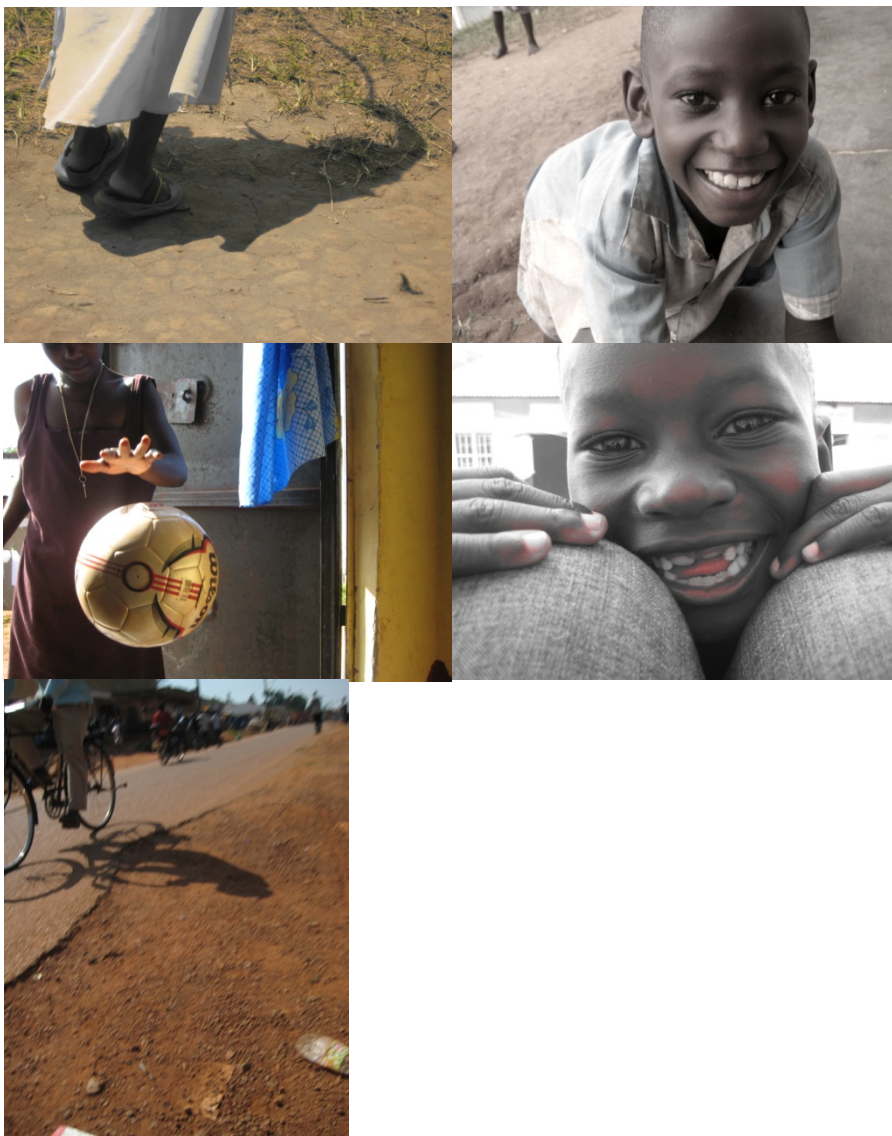
Subbarao, K.. *Reaching Out to Africa's Orphans: A Framework for Public Action*. New York: World Bank Publications, 2004.

This book was very eye-opening and made me understand how deep the need truly is for a good home for orphans in Africa and what is at risk if they do not receive this. I learned what works and what doesn't in regards to orphanage set-ups, and I will strive to pursue the path that is most beneficial to the children.

Appendix A
Jewelry



Photograph Options

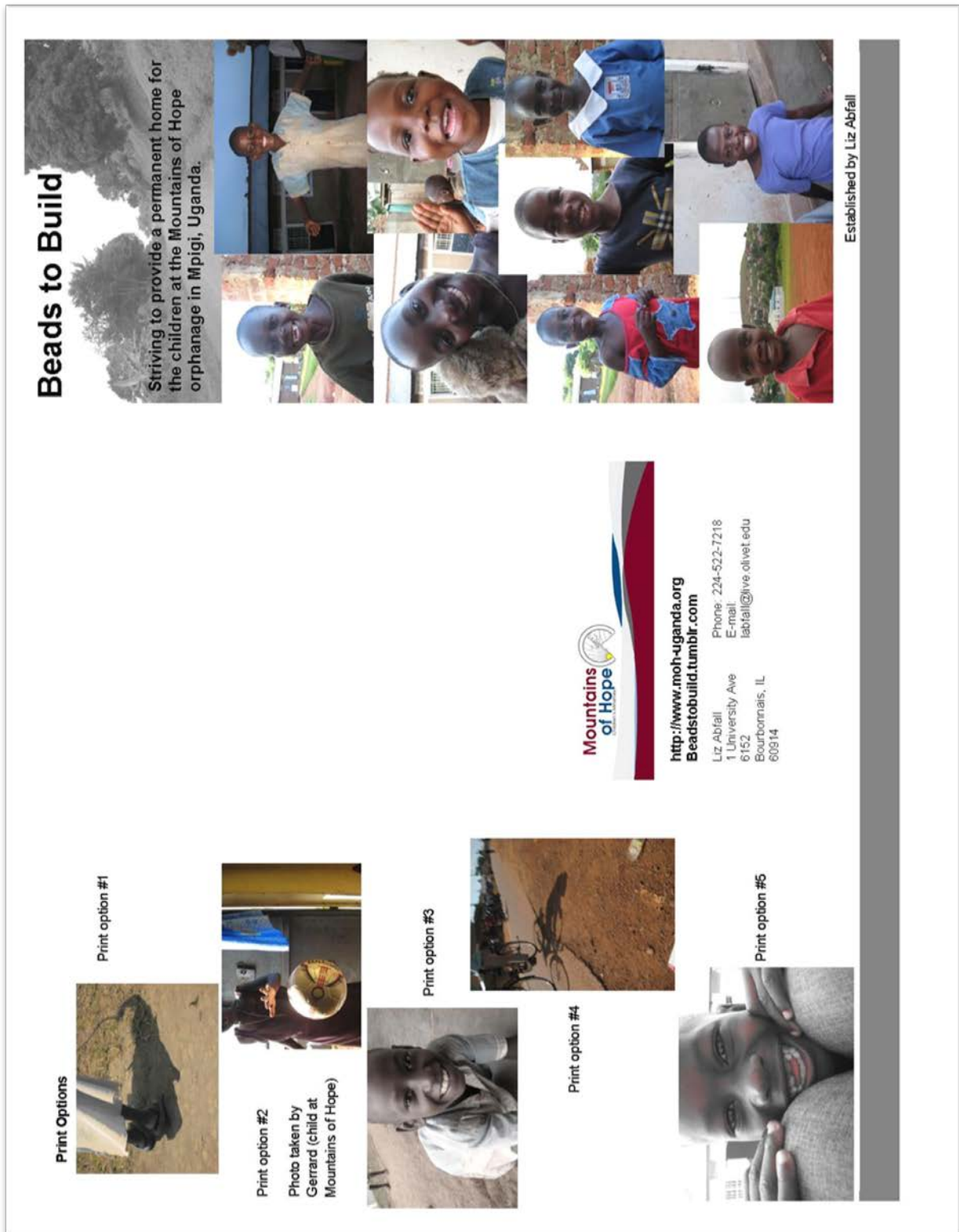


T-shirt



Appendix B

Brochure – Front cover, back cover, and inside page



Inside pages of brochure

[illegible]

Appendix C

Image of the land purchased in Mpigi, Uganda

