

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: *Ben Boynton, 35*

# Rotarian galvanizes organization to help poor children in Kenya

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Ben Boynton's trip to Kenya last summer still affects his life — from the way he raises his children to the volunteer project he's leading.

Boynton, 35, took the two-week trip in June with his wife, Joanna. While in Kenya, the Wellington residents went to three national parks, participated in photo safaris and visited the compound of Street Children's Assistance Network of Nakuru.

"Our experience there has influenced a lot of our daily lives over time," said Boynton, who has two children, ages 2 and 4.

"There's hardly a week that goes by that we don't have a small discussion about some aspect of it."

The couple sponsors three children through SCANN, an organization that provides housing, education, health care and food to impoverished children.

"In Africa, kids the ages of 3 and 4 and 5 literally live on the streets," said Boynton, a financial adviser at Raymond, James Financial Services Inc. "This organization takes the kids off the street. The main emphasis is to get them educated."

During the trip, the Boyntons got to meet the three boys they help support.

"They had written us letters in the past, and so it was nice for all of us to put faces together with past correspondence," Boynton said. "We get their report cards every quarter, and we had noticed one of the boys, his grades had gone downhill a little bit and so it just gave us an opportunity to talk to him on a personal level, privately, and just encourage him to work on them."

All of the children at SCANN are boys, Boynton said, because young girls in Nakuru often have other opportunities to take care of themselves, including baby-sitting, and don't end up on the street as often as boys do.



CRIDNEY SCOTT/Staff Photographer

The trip spurred Boynton into action. He's a member of the Wellington Rotary Club, of which he was president for two years, and his wife works with the Boys & Girls Club of Wellington and Palms West Chamber of Commerce. Their presentations about their Kenya trip to local organizations inspired others to want to help. Boynton launched an effort through the Wellington Rotary Club to send money to SCANN.

SCANN leaders and Rotary

Club members in Nakuru decided what they needed most was a wall around SCANN'S small complex to keep out thieves who steal food that the children grow.

"They grow what we call corn — they call it maize — and bananas and other vegetables that we don't even grow here," Boynton said. "It's a 5-acre campus and I believe about two to three acres are in crops. They literally grow the food to consume themselves, not to sell or anything."

The wall will cost \$40,000 to \$50,000. Boynton and his fellow Rotarians are trying to raise money through Rotary International, the worldwide network of Rotary clubs.

"We're just in the process of applying for the (Rotary) grants and all," Boynton said. "We feel that once we get the matching grants, we will be fairly close to having completed it, but that may take an entire year."

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After a trip to Kenya last summer, Wellington Rotary Club member Ken Boynton launched an effort to get the club to raise money for an organization in Nakuru, Kenya, that helps impoverished children.