

FALL
2018

Memory Books For Children



what good is A MEMORY BOOK to AN ORPHAN?

by Tamara Faris

Teaching children the truth that God has a loving plan and purpose for their lives

Several years ago, a gentleman attending a Memory Book presentation at a community service club in Oregon asked me, "What good is a Memory Book to an orphan? Surely they have other needs far more important." "Good question," I responded. Silently, I recalled sitting with a child in Africa, turning the pages of their own Memory Book as they shared their photos, drawings and handwritten stories. In joy mingled with tears, I framed my answer to the man's question. "Everybody wants and needs to discover that they are somebody."

So, how could I convince skeptics, the intellectuals, the medically trained people, that something so simple as a platform for telling one's story in a Memory Book can promote healing and growth in the presence of traumatic events? And then I had the opportunity to travel overseas with a group of nursing students and non-profit Apple of His Eye Charity volunteers to continue to train and distribute Memory Books around the globe. During that trip, Dr. Kaye Anderson, Associate Professor at the School of Nursing, University of Portland, asked me, "Have you wondered about the outcome of a child using a Memory Book?" Her question and expertise in research began a journey to discover the long term impact of an orphaned or vulnerable child using a Memory Book.

Summer 2014. The first research paper, Evaluation of a Memory Book Intervention with Orphaned Children in South Africa, co-authored by Dr. Kaye Anderson, Dr. Barb Braband and myself (Tamara Faris) was published in the *Journal of Pediatric Nursing*. The research, including individual interviews with recipients of Memory Books, beginning in 2010 in South African children's villages, suggests that orphaned and vulnerable children highly valued a Memory Book as a means to preserve their stories of identity, relationships, coping and hope.

Summer 2018. Our second research paper, Building Resiliency in Orphaned and Vulnerable Children through the Memory Book Intervention, was accepted and published in the *Journal of Christian Nursing* (July/September 2018). This qualitative phenomenological approach explored and compared the lived experiences of orphaned children, adolescents, and caregivers who had used the Memory Book intervention at six children's homes in India, Kenya, and South Africa. The study found similar themes between countries about identity, relationships, emotions, coping and hope—all suggesting that the Memory Book intervention encourages the preservation of a child's story, aids in grief recovery, and can be used for any child facing recovery from difficult life events.

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...gifting vulnerable children worldwide through Memory Books...

Hope & Encouragement

by Hannah Ssali, Good Samaritan Ministries

Uganda, Africa

A LETTER FROM HANNAH: The Memory Book program in Uganda has managed to break through the barriers of cultures. We introduced the Memory Book in different districts like Kampala, Mukono, Lwengo, Rakai, Kiruhura Luwero and Wakiso—of which all have a different lifestyle due to their different cultures. For example, in Kiruhura district, a child can open up and talk about any issue but they don't want to put it into writing because someone else may come across that writing and get to know private information, which is a taboo in that culture. Only a close relative is supposed to know certain details; therefore, teaching children to open up using a talking stick has led them to share more freely. The people in Wakiso district don't want to talk freely with a talking stick but can preserve something in their Memory Book.

So far we thank God! It has not been easy, but we are trying to train caretakers to work as coworkers alongside each other. We have involved pastors, Sunday school teachers, parents and relatives of the Memory Book clubbers. We share new approaches such as use of the talking stick, reflective art and also creativity in relating the stories with the child. Many of our children in Uganda are grieved but are taught not to show their grief. They are wearing a mask. It is a cultural expectation

to respond to "how are you" with "I am fine, okay" even if they slept on an empty stomach.

Apart from the Memory Book being a book to preserve their story and release pain, loss and grief, we are teaching its use as a tool to reach out to the inside person through listening and learning to use their inner ears. In our culture as Ugandans, teachers are taught to teach, instruct and advise, so we are working on a different approach for better results.

The Memory Book groups are divided according to age group to meet their interest using different pages. Children (8-14) love pages like *I Wish, What is Most Important to Me and The Dream*. Youth (15-18) love the pages titled *Memories, Follow Your Dreams, My family*. They visualize the possibilities of someday becoming somebody special. We are seeing progress as more teens and youth love to use the book.

Children (4-7) love creativity, stories and art. They receive the Memory Books with excitement and in the process learn the real meaning of the Memory Book and understand how to use it.

We continue to learn how to use the Memory Book according to our culture.

We now train parents, teachers, caretakers and Sunday school teachers to first discover that child inside them who wants to become somebody so that they can help reach out to children with the Memory

Book. This way they will become better counselors, caretakers, Sunday school teachers and relatives of the clubbers. The role of GSM (Good Samaritan Ministries) in Memory Book is facilitating the program as well as coaching and mentoring counselors and caretakers. GSM also shares with the pastors about the program and the importance of Memory Books. Mending and gradual healing are taking place with children, as well as with facilitators and leaders.

Examples of Memory Book Impact:

Dorcus, 17, had closed up her life by not telling her story. You wouldn't know what she loves. After hearing others sharing their stories using a talking stick, she broke into tears for 30 minutes, received her deliverance, and was prayed for by the group. Now she has a beautiful smile and is training to be a Sunday school teacher. She grew up in a family with a stepfather who she thought didn't like her. But now she loves and believes in herself, loves others, and opens up to share about herself.

Julius has a father and mother who do casual work from home to home. He had an educational sponsor who died. His mother couldn't afford more education for him. Julius asked himself, "How will I ever be somebody without going to school?" When the subject of being somebody came up in Memory Book Club, he realized that one day he could become somebody despite all the challenges around him. He started to believe in himself and began singing and leading in the worship team. Soon someone noticed him and inquired about his history and education. This person made Julius' dream of school come true.

A Memory Book is a gift, a tangible tool which every child needs to hold in his or her hands. We are grateful to all Kingdom builders! Always our prayers cover Tamara Faris and all people involved in this program.—Hannah Ssali, GSM Uganda



Hannah Ssali (far left) with Tamara & GSM in Uganda

...helping children preserve and tell their stories...

Building Two Completed

Second Center for Refugee Children Opens

Tanzania, Africa



MORE BOOKS ARRIVE

In 2016, Tamara traveled with Oregon-based Good Samaritan Ministries (GSM) to Uganda to distribute Memory Books among churches and schools. Hannah Ssali, GSM Uganda, traveled with them to help train adult volunteers to facilitate Memory Book Clubs at eight sites. Hannah, daughter of a pastor of a large Kampala church, is an amazing preacher herself. When asked to speak during a training Hannah told the children, "This Memory Book is a gift to you, a special gift. I don't want to see anyone treating it badly, tearing it up, or throwing it away." Clearly, Hannah saw the value in a Memory Book for every child. Soon after, a request for additional Memory Books was made.

Recently 3,000 Memory Books arrived in Kampala, Uganda, for distribution to children in 23 sites. Memory Books funding provided for customs, truck rental, and gasoline to distribute Memory Books across Uganda. Training manuals, certificates of completion, Memory Book Club facilitator vests, lesson planners, and colored pencils with boxes were also supplied to support the 23 Memory Book Clubs. Tamara will return to Uganda in 2019 to hear more from children using Memory Books that preserve memories and reinforce that *I Am Somebody*.

Logistics can be challenging for hosting Memory Book Clubs with over 1,000 participants! To assist participants in identifying small group leaders, Memory Books donated 100 vests for facilitators. The vests are "very wonderful and loved by holders," according to Pastor Innocent, the Memory Book representative in Tanzania. Name books were donated so leaders can share the meaning of each person's name—a helpful piece of each person learning that *I Am Somebody*. Pastor Innocent created support material for the Memory Book Club in Tanzania including a Timetable for Implementation of Memory Book Club Year Six as well as Memory Book Club Planner for Year Six translated into Swahili and French. The Burundi translation is in progress.

Group Misa services 1,200 Congolese children living in a refugee camp in Tanzania. The Tanzania Support Center

Building Two for Memory Book Club was completed in August. After screeding (leveling ground for concrete or a floor), paving, painting and putting furniture in place (benches, plastic chairs and tables) this site was declared open and ready for use.

Support Center Building Three for the Burundian sector of the refugee camp will progress this fall as authorities give approval for the project. Workers are mobilized and ready to clear land and start construction of the Support Center.

"Our God will never leave us until we touch the lives of many children in desperate situations and bring them to Him," Pastor Innocent continued. "Our prayers are conveyed to ask God for His presence in all we do for the spiritual growth of children all over the world. Thank you very much indeed for all of your assistance in this mission."



...leading children to know grace through Jesus Christ...

MEMORY BOOKS GOES TO CAMP

Over 120 middle school aged girls at Eagle Fern Camp in Estacada, Oregon, received a Memory Book, donated on behalf of Memory Books for Children International. For the second year, Camp Director, Andrea Stellato Rose invited campers to focus on the truth that "You are Chosen by God."

The daily camp schedule of the week-long camp included chapel, cabin time, and quiet time. Memory Books were used as a journal for the campers and counselors to preserve chapel notes, camp memories, and a place to tell her own unique and personal stories over time. Each girl was invited to write a Letter to God that she placed in her Memory Book.



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The researchers/authors would like to express gratitude to the University of Portland for internal institutional funding and support. We also thank the children and caregiver participants at the children's homes in South Africa, Kenya and India who shared their stories. We wish them continued healing in their life journeys.

Annual Celebration

CELEBRATE MEMORY BOOKS ACROSS THE GLOBE

Sunday, December 2, 2-4 p.m. at the home of Ron & Tamara Faris • e-mail tamarafaris@msn.com for directions

Guest Speaker Andrea Stellato Rose with Special Music by Dustin Rose

dessert will be served



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100% of all donations to Love Joy Peace/Memory Books are used to ship and gift a child with a Memory Book. No monies contributed to Memory Books for Children (Love Joy Peace 501c3) are used for purposes other than to place a Memory Book in the hands of a child. No donation monies contribute to the stories mentioned in this newsletter or for any other gift beyond a Memory Book. All administrative costs, newsletters, website, fundraising, travel, and training are fully funded separately through donations of Ron & Tamara Faris and volunteers.

...teaching children the truth that "I am somebody!"...