

Rancho Santa Fe Women's Fund features work of John Rowe

Diana Macek, Susan Danton, Diane Pennock , Barbara Pace



The Rancho Santa Fe Women's Fund presented the work of Rancho Santa Fe resident John Rowe at its Feb. 6 General Meeting at the Rancho Santa Fe Inn.

The special works and deeds of Rowe blew away the women of the Rancho Santa Fe Women's Fund. Rowe, an award-winning, world-renowned photographer and philanthropist, presented the powerful photographs he has taken as he has traveled throughout the world to the most primitive places, capturing its people and culture with his warm and engaging personality. The stories he shared with several of the photos were the most powerful. Rowe spoke of bringing reading glasses, bought in bulk from Costco, to the women in need that he meets through his travels so they can continue to make their local crafts and earn money for their family. He also shared a story of providing water, food and shelter to a group of elderly tribeswomen who could no longer make the trek to higher ground. They had been left to perish by their tribe. With Rowe's help, the same women were alive and well when he returned a year later.

Not only has Rowe changed lives, they have changed his. He is now dedicated to saving the culture, tribes and "Mingi" children in the Omo Valley in Ethiopia. Due to the damming of the Omo River further upstream and the government taking tribal lands for sugar beet farming, the tribes urgently need to manage their water supply and figure out a way to filter it. Rowe has generously donated five water pumps to pump the water to the fields. They now urgently need \$7,000 to build two clay storage facilities to hold water. At the present time, all the girls in the village walk down to the crocodile-infested river to bring water to their families. The girls are unable to go to school because of the time and labor involved in this. If these water storage facilities are built, the girls in the village will be able to go to school.

John and fellow local tribesman, Lale Labuko, are also responsible for saving and caring for the "Mingi" children. "Mingi" children are those who are considered cursed or imperfect and are killed by the tribal elders. Rowe and Labuko created the Omo Child Foundation to provide the option of allowing these children to be removed from tribal lands and be placed in a care facility where they are nourished, clothed, educated and loved. At the moment, 35 children are under the care of Omo Child foundation.

Additional funds are needed to continue operating the facility. For more information on John Rowe's efforts in the Omo Valley, please visit www.omochild.org

For more information on the RSF Women's fund, please visit: www.rsfwomensfund.org or
Please contact: womensfund@rsffoundation.org or 858-756-0249.