

# W Forsyth Woman

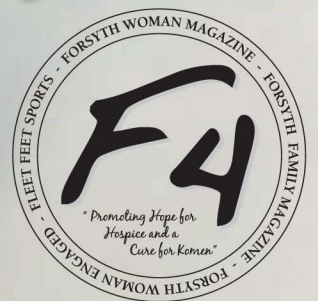
Celebrating the...!

*Robin*

*Parker*

How Do You  
Save the World?  
*One Child at a Time!*

Join us...



*Medge*

*“A small group of thoughtful people could change the world.  
Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”*

*~Margaret Mead*

## How Do You Save the World?

# One Child at a Time!

**Three mothers.**

**Three diverse careers.**

**One massive project for orphans, half a world away.**

How do you save the world? For three local women who've joined forces, the answer is: One child at a time.

Medge Owen, Robin Sizemore and Parker Lovell are all powerful, successful women in their own rights. But as a triumvirate, their energy and passion is palpable – and contagious.

Working together, this local doctor, executive director of an international adoption agency, and business owner of a horseback riding academy, are planning to adopt – but not just one child. They're adopting at least 35 children, living 5,100 miles away, in Teshe, a poor suburb of Accra, Ghana.

The children are fostered with a pastor and his family in a small, rented, cement structure. Ranging in age from 3 to 14, they're boys and girls, each with the same hungry, eager eyes. They share tattered clothing, shoes and mattresses. They often are without running water and electricity. There are no toys. But at least they're safe.

Owen recently met these children through Percy Gogoe, a Ghanaian child



advocate, during one of her frequent humanitarian trips to Ghana. Owen is founder of the international humanitarian/education organization, Kybele, Inc. Through Kybele, Owen takes teams of doctors and nurses into developing countries, such as Ghana, where they teach safe child-birthing practices to local care givers.

“I was deeply moved by what this preacher and his family are doing for these orphaned children,” Owen said. “When children are sent to traditional orphanages in Ghana, it’s frightening. There is overcrowding, little supervision and poor medical care. Children sleep outside on the ground in places where there is no sanitation. So this one remarkable Ghanaian family said ‘No more.’ And they started opening their home to children who don’t have a home. These kids are so beautiful, and they have so much promise -- so much that they can give to the world. And this one poor family is trying to save them alone.”

Ghana in 2008. Through that visit, a successful adoption program was launched in Ghana. Since then, nearly 30 Ghanaian children have since been adopted by American families.

Lovell and her family operate Cash Lovell Stables & Riding Academy in Winston-Salem, NC. The barn’s youth club, Lovell’s Little Bits, is well-known for its philanthropic work with and for children. Owen’s daughter, Jozy, is an active member of Lovell’s Little Bits, and Owen and Lovell have worked together often on humanitarian projects. Two years ago, Lovell’s youth club adopted a school in Afghanistan, supplying the entire school with educational supplies and children’s backpacks.

“I am always looking for ways to teach our children how to give back, how to instill in them the desire and passion for helping others and changing the world,” Lovell said. “I knew



PHOTOS BY LARRY HATTEBERG, AZIZ CELEBI, YESIM UNAL, MIKKI GARRIS AND NANCY JENNER

When Owen returned to Winston-Salem, where she is Director of Maternal and Infant Global Health Programs and Professor of Obstetric Anesthesiology at Wake Forest Baptist, the Ghanaian children remained in her thoughts. Over breakfast with her friends, Robin Sizemore and Parker Lovell, the idea to join efforts to help the Ghanaian children began to take shape.

“Of course, we can’t literally adopt all these children,” Owen said at the breakfast. “But we can adopt them in spirit, and help make their lives better by providing funds for school, supplies, and clothing. We have the power to do that.”

The weight – and challenge – of her words titillated the air at The Dessertery on Stratford Road. Sizemore and Lovell immediately wanted to help.

Sizemore, a former account executive for WFMY, and now Executive Director of Hopscotch Adoptions, Inc, founded the agency in 2006 in High Point, NC. Since then, she’s helped hundreds of children from Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Ghana and Morocco find permanent families. She specializes in the placement of children with special needs. Sizemore is also the adoptive mother of two children from Georgia. In 2004, while in labor with an unlikely and surprise pregnancy, Sizemore met Owen while Owen provided pain relief for Sizemore’s labor via an epidural.

The two women quickly became friends and close colleagues in the world of child advocacy. Sizemore is a member of Kybele’s Board of Directors, and she accompanied Kybele to

my children could relate to these children in Ghana, which is English speaking. They can imagine living in a rickety shack with a dirt floor. They can imagine what it would feel like to have no parents, no food or clothing, and no toys. They will be able to help these children, and communicate directly with them. I’m hoping that life-changing friendships on both sides will develop.”

Lovell said that when Owen and Sizemore first spoke of the Ghanaian children and their needs, she immediately felt a calling to help.

“In this country, so many of us can’t comprehend the kind of poverty that much of the world endures daily,” she said. “I want our children to see the world through broader eyes. I want them not to be afraid to push the boundaries and reach outside their comfort zones. I want this generation to believe that they can change the world. Because if they believe they can, then they will.”

The women’s work formally begins on Friday, April 8th, when Percy Gogoe, the child advocate from Ghana, will be in Winston-Salem. He, along with families who’ve adopted Ghanaian children through Hopscotch Adoptions, will gather at Cash Lovell Stables in Winston-Salem. Members of the barn’s youth club, Lovell’s Little Bits, will brainstorm the project and set short and long term goals.

Also at the meeting will be a team of local women, all brought together by the triumvirate of Lovell, Owen and Sizemore, who will act as the project’s board of directors. (See sidebar.)

"We each are connected with brilliant, wonderfully-compassionate women from all walks of life who want to help," Sizemore said. These women will be instrumental in the project's success.

One of those women is Nancy Hawley, Vice President of Manufacturing for RJ Reynolds Tobacco Co.

"When I learned of these children, and learned about Medge's first-hand, on-the-ground ability to see that the children are helped by our work, I knew immediately that I wanted to be involved," Hawley said.

One of the reasons that many people are often leery of international philanthropy, Owen explained, is that often there is no way to track the donations of goods and money. But with Owen's and Sizemore's frequent trips to Ghana, and their network of partners on the ground, the project's work should be easy to track and document.

In addition, there are tentative plans to organize an advocacy trip from Winston-Salem to Ghana in the next year to 18 months which will be open to those who are working on the project.



"We're in this to make a difference for these children, and to teach our children how to make that difference," Lovell said. "That is the kind of exponential change that fires me up. If children, on both sides of the ocean, grow and learn through this project, we will have truly changed the world."

The project's kickoff is open to the community, and those who are interested in learning more are invited to attend. Date: Friday, April 8, 2011 Time: 6 pm. Place: Cash Lovell Stables is located at 2210 Darwick Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27127.

"Our plan initially is to explore the needs of this group of children," Sizemore said. "Then we will work together, in our professional and civic communities, to fill those targeted needs. We will raise funds, collect needed goods and items, and coordinate their delivery – all the while conducting an awareness campaign to broaden our support base."

And if along the way, some of these children find adoptive families . . .

"The best place for a child is in a permanent, stable and loving family," Sizemore said. "But when that is not an option, we have the privilege and obligation to assist these children within their own communities. Having our own community reach out to vulnerable children abroad is particularly gratifying, and made even stronger by involving and connecting children to children." **FW**

#### **Advisory/Work Committee:**

Nancy Hawley, Lewisville, NC  
Kim Stewart, Pfafftown, NC  
Ellen Bassett, Winston Salem, NC  
Tiffany Dodson, Winston Salem, NC  
Emily Semans, Winston-Salem, NC  
Jessica Wallace, Winston Salem NC  
Sonya Marion, Rock Hill, SC  
Mikki Garris, Lexington, N C

#### **Robin Sizemore**

<http://www.hopscotchadoptions.org/>  
[info@hopscotchadoptions.org](mailto:info@hopscotchadoptions.org)

Robin was a recipient of the "Angel in Adoption" award in 2008, by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, in recognition of her service to children since 1995. She is an adoptive mother and has been an adoption professional since 1995. In addition to placing children in forever families, Robin has been politically involved in issues of child welfare: she has brought educational opportunities to a variety of officials in Georgia and Armenia, spearheaded cooperative humanitarian efforts, and hosted numerous international delegations through the U.S. State Department and Ministries in other countries which are associated with institutionalized children. Robin has a warm rapport with the wide range of individuals involved with children in need, including government officials, orphanage directors and staff, hospital and humanitarian aid administrators, and adoptive families and children alike.

#### **Medge Owen**

<http://www.kybeleworldwide.com>  
[kybele@wfubmc.edu](mailto:kybele@wfubmc.edu)

Medge Owen, M.D., is Director of Maternal and Infant Global Health Programs, Professor of Obstetric Anesthesiology at Wake Forest University and the founder of Kybele, Inc. She has long been interested in international women's health care issues. She received a Fulbright scholarship in 1997-99 to Turkey to improve childbirth conditions, and she coauthored the first Turkish textbook of obstetric anesthesia. She has worked and lectured in countries around the world and has received numerous teaching awards. She is married with one daughter who has joined her during Kybele related travel.

#### **Parker Lovell**

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[parker@cashlovellstables.com](mailto:parker@cashlovellstables.com)

Parker Nash Lovell, and her husband, Cash Lovell, operate Cash Lovell Stables & Riding Academy in Winston-Salem – a third-generation equestrian business. Parker is a former investigative newspaper reporter who worked with Pulitzer Prize-winning papers such as The Orlando Sentinel and The Charlotte Observer. She earned her Master's Degree in Journalism from Columbia University in the City of New York. Parker's passion for inspiring and teaching children through their love of horses is well-known. The barn's motto is: Horses Raise Great Kids. Cash Lovell Stables & Riding Academy is one of the largest, most successful riding academies in the country – one that is routinely singled-out for excellence by the American Saddlebred Horse Association (ASHA). In recent years, Lovell's Little Bits Youth Club, has raised more than \$50,000 for local charities. Their philanthropic work is well known throughout the local and national equestrian communities.