

Protect. Educate. Empower.

2019 – 2020



Students are excelling at Ugandan boarding school because of our supporters. Thank you!

ASAH provides for more than our students' basic needs. They've lost their parents and many have no relatives nearby, so our staff stands in as family. Our girls think of their sponsors as family, too. Your donations enable us to provide education, food, clothing, medical and dental care, transportation, field trips, and access to the Sudanese church community.

Most of our students improved their grades in 2018, their 2nd year at St. Noa Boarding School. The education quality is higher here than it was at their day schools, and since English is the national language, it's the language they share with their Ugandan schoolmates. Our girls are now confident speaking English with friends, teachers, doctors, nurses, and others in the community. This stable environment and the support of our staff has enabled them to make friends, enjoy extracurricular activities, and succeed in school.



ASAH currently supports forty-three girls in primary and secondary boarding school, allowing them the opportunity to gain an education and life skills, while being housed and provided for. We now have five students in college or vocational school. Three others have completed higher level schooling and returned to South Sudan.



Why South Sudanese Women and Children Need Help

At least 2.2 million children in South Sudan are not receiving an education, representing one of the highest rates of out-of-school children in the world, according to a new report produced through the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children. Years of conflict, displacement and economic collapse continues to deprive most children of education, putting the country's future in jeopardy.



The situation facing girls at all ages is particularly alarming. About 60% of 7-year-old girls are not in school. The gender gap widens with age: while 10.6% of boys were in secondary school at age 16, this was the case for only 1.3% of 16-year-old girls. — Unesco.org

“African Sojourn:” Documenting ASAH’s Journey

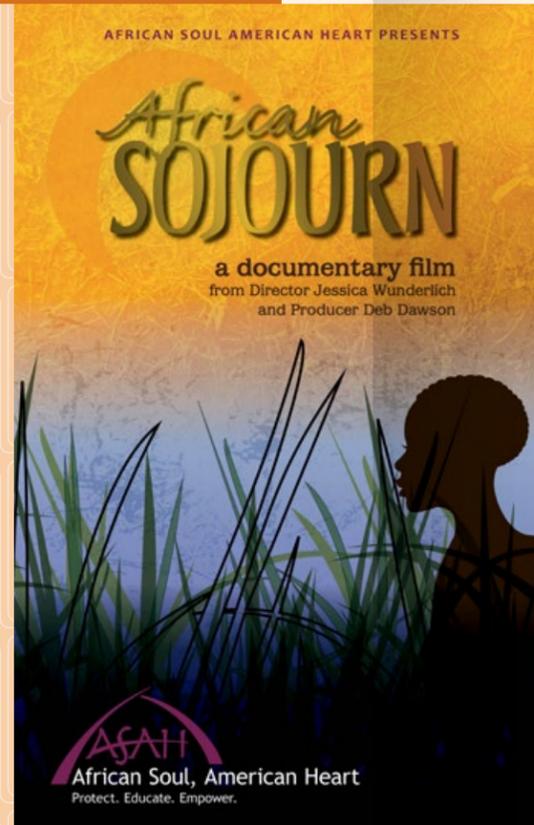
ASAH released a new documentary in 2019, “African Sojourn.” It premiered at the Fargo Theatre in April. In May, we screened it at the Dakota Stage in Bismarck, followed by a reception at the Capital Gallery.

The film chronicles the moving story of our students—already orphaned and now separated from their extended families, against a background of the history of South Sudan (our world’s newest nation), its independence from Sudan, the eruption of an ongoing civil war, the fleeing of our students, and our move to safety in Uganda. Despite their losses, the ASAH girls shoulder

the responsibility of working toward better futures for themselves and their families.

It was our good fortune that Director Jessica Wunderlich, a talented photographer and filmmaker, traveled with ASAH to South Sudan and Uganda many times over six years to document our girls’ stories and the changes imposed on us all by the war.

If you’re a member of a church or a group that is interested hosting a screening of “African Sojourn,” please contact ASAH.



Deb Dawson,
Producer

Deb Dawson is a writer, photographer, filmmaker,

businesswoman, teacher, humanitarian, and philanthropist. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Education and English and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing.

Deb is the co-founder and executive director of African Soul, American Heart (ASAH), where she leads the organization’s mission to Protect, Educate, and Empower orphaned girls from the Republic of South Sudan who would otherwise face a life of illiteracy and poverty, forced marriage at puberty, and early childbirth.



Jessica Wunderlich,
Director

Jessica Wunderlich is an up-and-coming visual artist whose evolution from still photography to film-making has resulted in

a richness of storytelling that reaches far beyond the confines of the camera. Her work meanders through conflict and adventure, beauty and harsh realities, from the diverse continent of Africa to the moonscapes of high-altitude Peru to the ancient cities of Israel.

In 2012, Jessica signed on with Serac Adventure Films, where she earned the opportunity to work on award-winning documentaries such as “High Ground” and “Out Living It.” Jessica traveled with Deb to South Sudan and Uganda six times in as many years filming and editing short videos that enabled us to introduce our students to our donors and sponsors and culminating in the production of “African Sojourn.”

Teaching Tailoring and Skills for Success

My-Thanh Thi Doan accompanied Deb to ChildVoice International, a nonprofit that teaches vocational skills to vulnerable Ugandans and South Sudanese girls, in January 2019. My-Thanh is a seamstress with a shop, Mai’s Alterations, in Fargo. As a refugee from Vietnam, herself, she wanted to teach our girls how they can support themselves with a skill. She bought two treadle sewing machines and introduced the ASAH Girls to sewing and tailoring. Education and skills are essential for a better life once out of school and can be passed on to others, enriching their families, communities, and country.



Giving Hearts Day 2019: ASAH on the Rise

ASAH participated in Giving Hearts Day for the second year. This community fundraiser is sponsored by Dakota Medical Foundation, the Alex Stern Family Foundation, and the Impact Foundation. This year

we had four generous MATCH gifts. Gremada Industries, Bell Bank, and two anonymous matches provided a total of \$18,000 in match dollars!

In 2019, ASAH received the Rising Star Award! This is awarded to nonprofits who raised \$20,000 and increased the previous year’s Giving Hearts Day fundraising total by 30% or more.



We’re looking forward to February 13, 2020 and our third year participating in Giving Hearts Day! We hope you will consider a gift to ASAH on this special day, helping to make our region the most generous on the planet.



Empowerment In Action: Avoiding Marriage and Attaining a Degree

Imagine trekking through a refugee camp in sweltering heat, dust collecting on your feet and sandals, desperately searching for a satellite phone to contact your mentors to save you from a marriage you don't want.

We ask the guardians of our students to agree not to accept a marriage proposal or dowry for their ASAH girls until the student completes her education. No guardian had ever challenged us on this because they understand that their world has changed, and there is value in educating girls.

One of the older girls who has been with ASAH since the beginning in Duk Payuel, South Sudan is also a top student. She's an intelligent young woman with a passion for learning and helping others and has been featured in several of our videos and documentaries.

In December of 2017, she graduated near the top of her class at St. Noa in Kampala,

Uganda. Each December, the ASAH girls visit relatives or friends at refugee camps in Uganda to connect with their community and foster those relationships. When Deborah arrived there, she learned that relatives had arranged for her to marry a Lost Boy of Sudan who was living in Alaska.

Through her Education and with ASAH's mission in mind, Deborah was Empowered to Protect herself from being forced to marry before she had completed her education. She contacted the ASAH staff by phone, and they sent her bus money to return to Kampala where she stayed with their families.

Today, Deborah is starting her second year of nursing college, pursuing the occupation of her dreams. Her first year, she was 3rd of 153 students in the program! We're proud of her, and she's a model of achievement for all our students.



Contact Us

Contact us with questions about ASAH or sponsorships, to schedule a presentation or photo exhibit, or to learn ways you can help.

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