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summer break 2009

relate

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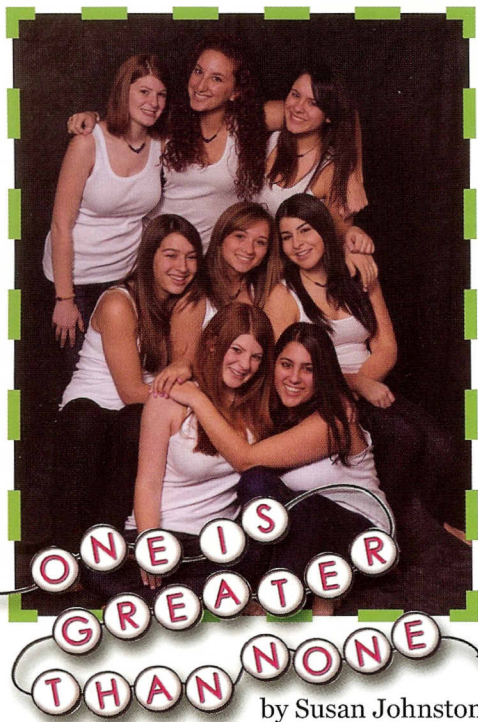
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by Susan Johnston

Every day newspapers and TV programs broadcast bad news. Life-long employees are losing their jobs. Children are being abused and sold into slavery. There are so many stories of poverty and desperation that it's hard to know where to begin. Many people just shrug their shoulders and give up.

But, a group of teen girls in Long Island, New York took a different approach. After seeing an episode of *The Oprah Winfrey Show* about children in Ghana who were being sold into servitude and an organization that was working to free them, they decided to take action.

Rather than trying saving the world, they agreed to focus on saving one person at a time. After all, even if they only saved one person, "one is greater than none." That saying, 1 > 0, became the name and mantra for their non-profit organization.

BRACELETS AND BEGINNINGS

Beginning in 2007, when the girls were in eighth grade, they made bracelets and sold them to raise money for the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The organization rescues children from Ghana and provides them with shelter, food, and education for two and a half years at a cost of \$4,300 per child. With help from their parents and members of the community, the eight girls incorporated their own non-profit and put together a website, which they got donated. "We wanted to take things one step at a time," explains Kayla Barnofsky, 15. "Start with one thing and it'll eventually build. We started out by making bracelets, but as time progressed, different people started to hear about us and wanted to help us."

FUNDRAISING AND FASHION

Fast forward to 2009, and now 1 > 0 has a clothing line at Bloomingdale's and a benefit concert in New York City. "My Mom was at a meeting and mentioned that she is the mother of one of the girls in the charity," says Kayla. "[The woman] was interested in working in the teen apparel business and wanted a line to adopt. She thought we'd be really marketable. It was really cool that she just happened to be there!"

According to Sammy Walnick, 15, "At first it was happening so fast [while we were at summer camp] that they decided to do basic stuff that they thought would be appealing. Now we have a lot more say in the designing. It's aiming for teens our age, but parents can also wear it."

LESSONS LEARNED

Running a non-profit while going to school is definitely a challenge, but the founders of One is Greater Than None agree that it has taught them how to manage their time. As Kayla says, "Time management is really key. In certain cases, we have a venue where we need to show up and speak, so we sometimes need to make sacrifices. We make the jewelry in between doing our homework, but we try to have a meeting every Sunday."

The experience has also showed them how to be diplomatic. "We definitely had some problems we had to work out," says Sammy, "but majority rules." Kayla adds that, "All the decisions end up going to a place that we're all OK with. We all work together. We're all going in the same general direction."

MEETING MENTORS

Though members of the charity have met big-time celebrities like Martha Stewart and Amanda Bynes, their most exciting encounter was meeting Eric Peasah, the social worker who actually rescues children in Ghana through IOM. "He just emanates positive energy wherever he walks," says Sammy. "He dedicates his life to making sure that the kids get where they need to go. He unites them with their families."

Another highlight was meeting the band Push Play at the Green Living Expo. "They donated \$4,300 on the spot," says Kayla. The band also agreed to play a charity concert for free to raise additional funds.

INSPIRING OTHERS

1>0 gets emails from people (many of them other teen girls) around the world who are inspired by their story and want to start their own charity. Sammy tells people, "If someone wants to start a charity, they should try to find something that they really feel moved by. When we watched that episode of *Oprah*, we were extremely touched, we felt we *needed* to save them."

According to Kayla, girls starting a company or charity should "recognize that taking one step at a time is the most important thing. The whole point is that it doesn't start big. Start by asking for help. We're proud to say that we got help."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON 1>0
AND TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN HELP,
GO TO WWW.ONEISGREATERTHANNONE.ORG