



passion project Deidre Anderson

Deputy vice-chancellor (students and registrar), Macquarie University

As president of the Rotary Club of Macquarie Park, Deidre Anderson volunteers her time to help build educational resources in a poor town in Namibia.

"I've been given incredible opportunities because I was [able to] learn and I think education is a basic human right. But in some countries, it's not.

"With my background as a coach and as an educator, it struck me that one day I'd find a way to assist in that space. It all came about as a result of a dinner party. Guests were talking about their trip to Africa. In their travels, they had met two people who volunteered to assist in the welfare of these young African children who live in what they call the projects, which is a very dangerous and unsafe area.

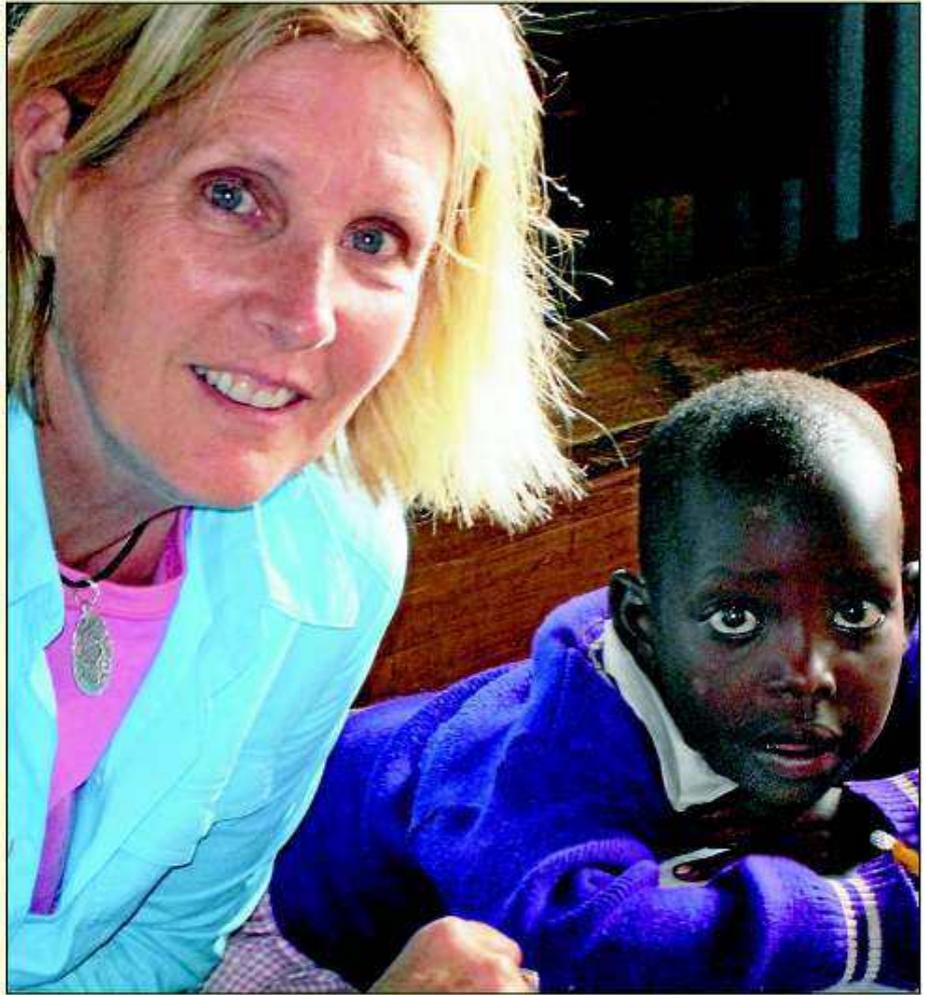
"Over a number of years, the couple ended up getting sponsorship for the kids' education and [provided] a safe house for the children. My Rotary club thought this could be something we could really get our teeth into, so over the next five years we're going to build a library and a community centre with toilets and showers. It gives them a chance of survival.

"It's important that local people own this; that's why we have clear engagement on the ground. I'm heading [to Namibia] in June to meet officials and engage all the technical people to do the work.

"To raise money, we're holding an auction and high-profile dinner. We're working very hard to fill 20 tables with the greatest minds you would want to have a conversation with.

"The rewarding part is finding something I can do to help. One conversation is all it takes, it's amazing."

Interview by Megan Johnston



Building a future ... Rotary Club president Deidre Anderson helps children in Africa.