

D.C. Businesswoman Commits "Random Acts" in Africa

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Johannesburg, South Africa

Johannesburg, South Africa--Juanita Britton, a businesswoman from Washington, D.C. is riding through the streets of Soweto, South Africa when she notices several merchants sitting under umbrellas selling vegetables in the hot sun. The drawn expressions on their faces suggest that it has been a slow day.

Ms. Britton asks the driver to pull over so she can get out. She approaches one of the women and without making a purchase, presses \$50 into her hand. "I love you," she tells the woman who is gasping in disbelief over the unexpected gift. Before she leaves the vendor stand, Ms. Britton gives similar gifts to each of the merchants who shower her with hugs and expressions of gratitude.

That surprise visit to the vendor stand in Soweto is exactly what Ms. Britton traveled to Africa to do. She went to commit random acts of kindness-giving charitably to people who least expect it and need it most.

In South Africa she has rented a small bus and has been making random stops along the roadside, at schools and other places, giving people small gifts of money, food and other items to brighten their day.

"God told me to do this," says Ms. Britton, owner of Anacostia Gallery and Boutique in D.C. She calls her project Random Acts and has set aside two weeks of travel in South Africa and West Africa on a mission of giving. She left for Africa on Feb. 25 and will wrap up her trip on March 11.

A team of journalists and producers are on the road with Ms. Britton to document her movements. A documentary film is in the works.

Ms. Britton has also taken 12-year-old Telvin Walker, a youth that she mentors who lives in Woodland Terrace housing complex near her gallery.

Telvin has been giving gifts of school supplies to his young African peers.

Ms. Britton says that her work will not end with her Africa trip. She has established a Random Acts Foundation to encourage charitable giving in the U.S. and internationally.

Ms. Britton said that it was a dream that she had last summer that inspired her to create the Random Acts project. In her dream she spontaneously gave a small amount of money to a poor young mother in a rural part of West Africa to lift her spirits. The good feeling that Ms. Britton got from what she did in her dream made her want to make such random acts a reality.

Ms. Britton turns 50 on March 28 and instead of having a 50th birthday party as she had originally planned, she decided to use the money to start a charitable giving project.

To symbolically remind her of her birthday gift to herself she gave her first 'random gift' in the amount of \$50. "Ever since I had that dream I've been on a mission to make this happen," she said.

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