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### **Filling a global need**

Woman tackling world's nursing shortage in honor of her mother Imagine an HIV baby, alone in a pediatric ward, crying out for water, medicine or love. No nurse answers. In developing countries, where the need is most dire, there are almost no nurses to care for patients.

Danville resident Meg Styles became passionate about tackling the global nursing shortage after her mother, Margretta Madden Styles, passed away. Styles, known as "Gretta," to her fellow nurses, was the former dean of nursing at UCSF and past president of the International Council of Nurses in Geneva. Her daughter called her "the embodiment of unconditional love."

One of the last things her mother said was, "You will have an opportunity to make your career meaningful."

Meg Styles took that advice to heart, left commercial real estate and spent two years with the Global Aids Interfaith Alliance (GAIA) sharing her business skills in the nonprofit world.

Her experiences with GAIA offered an unexpected perk. They inspired her to find the passion her mother was talking about.

Styles is now pouring her enthusiasm and devotion into the Gretta Foundation, a nonprofit organization named after her mother. It will fund nursing scholarships for impoverished people in disease-burdened nations.

Alamo resident Tanya Hanson-DeYoung, who is on the Gretta Foundation's board of directors, met Styles through GAIA.

"There are a lot of wonderful organizations you can volunteer with in this community. Meg's organization, the Gretta Foundation, was like 'the big duh,'" Hanson-DeYoung, said, meaning that it fills a gaping hole in the world.

Other global health and HIV professionals agree. Whether Styles is explaining her foundation to a national health care agency headquartered in Washington, D.C., or talking with an international organization in England, her brainchild receives enthusiastic support.

Nursing scholarships will empower women who otherwise might become victims of AIDS themselves.

"The quickest way for a woman in Africa to get AIDS is to get married," said GAIA's founder the Very Rev. William Rankin, according to Hanson-DeYoung.

This is startling news until you consider the limited options and resources available. African women marry for economic security, and their husbands often leave home for months or years to find work. Nursing scholarships could eliminate the need to marry for economic reasons.

The Gretta Foundation scholarships allow students to remain in country while they train. They cover necessities such as tuition, books, school uniforms, shoes and clinical supplies. Scholarships also offer a living allowance, helping the students honor the cultural tradition of contributing to their family.

After the students become registered nurses, they will pay back their scholarships by working in the country where they trained, lessening the "brain drain," which often takes qualified nurses to highly developed nations.

Hanson-De Young is an enthusiastic advocate for Styles.

"When I first met Meg she was juggling her full-time job, going to school for her masters degree, driving her son to ice hockey practice in San Jose, taking her daughter to surfing and sailing lessons, and starting this nonprofit. She is truly an amazing woman," Hanson-De Young said.

Styles' energetic devotion confirms this.

"Everyone's life has been touched by a nurse in one way or another," Styles said, using body language as well as her voice to emphasize her conviction.

Her mother would agree.

"Imagine a world without persons who know what nurses know," Gretta once said, "who have the effect that nurses have upon the health of individuals, families and nations; who enjoy the trust that nurses enjoy ... Imagine a world without nurses."

### **The Gretta Foundation**

The Gretta Foundation's nursing scholarship strategy is based on four principles:

- \* Nursing scholarships are granted to persons most vulnerable and disadvantaged;
- \* Nursing education empowers persons by providing the tools to enter into an indispensable and remunerative profession;
- \* A nurse's contribution to humanity through a career of care and cure is incalculable; and
- \* By increasing the nursing workforce globally, there is a greater hope to stem the relentless advance of diseases like HIV and to improve patient care worldwide.

To learn more about the Gretta Foundation and how to support its mission, contact Meg Styles at (415) 391-3139 or [meg@grettafoundation.org](mailto:meg@grettafoundation.org). Find additional information at [www.grettafoundation.org](http://www.grettafoundation.org)