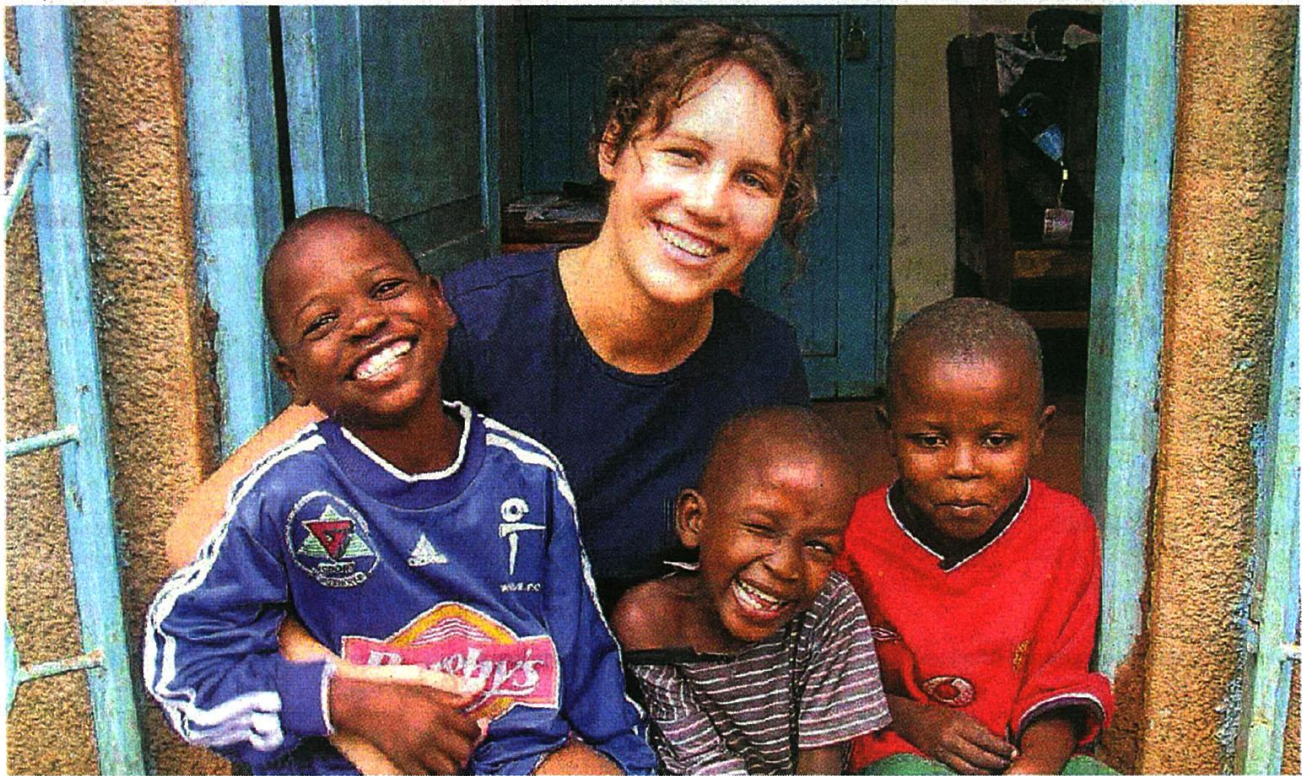


GIVING BACK » BY PAUL WALDIE



Valerie Todd with some of her kids at the Amani Children's Home, which she founded in 2001 in Tanzania.

Climbing mountains for kids

The Donor Alison Wiley

THE GIFT \$310,000 and climbing - literally

THE CAUSE Amani Children's Home in Tanzania

THE REASON To rescue street children

About five years ago, Alison Wiley was on a trek up Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania when she started chatting with her guide about the challenges facing people in the area. He told her that AIDS had devastated many families and left a growing number of children, mainly boys, living on the streets. Then he offered to take her to a youth shelter in his hometown of Moshi called Amani Children's Home.

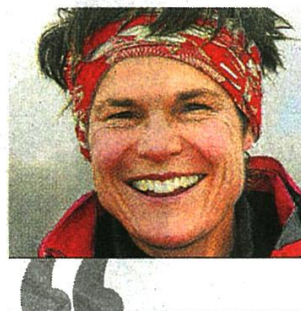
"I wasn't sure if I wanted to go," recalled Ms. Wiley, a former world-class distance runner who co-owns a tour

business in Toronto called Live Out Loud Adventures. "But kids are kids and when we went through the door, there they were, playing soccer, washing their clothes and at the centre of it all was this wonderful woman called Valerie Todd."

Ms. Todd, an American, founded the home in 2001 after graduating from university. She had fallen in love with the area during a mission trip in high school and felt a calling to return.

Ms. Wiley was captivated by Ms. Todd and her work at Amani, which provides food, education and health care for 90 children. "She restores hope and transforms lives," Ms. Wiley said.

When she returned to Toronto, she began raising money for Amani with the help of the Universal Youth Foundation, a



Watching these climbers go through this journey ... and realizing that, yes, this is a physical challenge ... but I also have touched the lives of some homeless children and I've made their lives better.

Alison Wiley

Canadian charity that funds educational projects around the world. They raised \$150,000, which went toward construction of a new building for Amani.

Last year, Ms. Wiley founded Friends of Amani Canada, joining similar groups in the United States and Britain, and began organizing fundraising climbs up Mt. Kilimanjaro. There have been two excursions so far, which have raised close to \$160,000 in total, and a third is planned for January.

Ms. Wiley said the best part of the climb for her is "watching these climbers go through this journey of giving back and realizing that, yes this is a physical challenge, this is something wonderful, but I also have touched the lives of some homeless children and I've made their lives better."

» pwaldie@globeandmail.com