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Share your love with shoes

By Cynthia Brian



Photo provided

Many people are unaware that 85% of consumer textiles end up in landfills, a practice that is extremely harmful to the environment. For the past 24 years, the nonprofit Be the Star You Are has been increasing literacy and saving trees by collecting thousands of new and used books and donating them to disaster relief efforts around the country. With the Russian war against Ukraine and the unprecedented natural disasters around the world, millions of people are currently experiencing difficult living conditions, and, although books are always an enlightening resource, this year Be the Star You Are pivoted to share the love and assist with a basic need: shoes.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, over 70% of the global population needs shoes. In collaboration with Moraga's 5 A Rent-a-Space and Mark Hoogs State Farm Insurance, Be the Star You Are volunteers are launching a shoe drive to collect and ship shoes to several countries including Haiti, Pakistan, Ghana, Ukraine, and more to help lift women and

families out of extreme poverty by providing a means for them to create a micro-business. These micro-entrepreneurs will be able to sell footwear at an inexpensive price from their home, a street stall, or even a tent to enhance their income and support their families.

"We are excited to launch this new micro-enterprise project. Everyone has a few pairs of wearable shoes that no longer serve us. What a wonderful opportunity to give them to those who need them and will repurpose them to benefit themselves and their communities," says Executive Director Cynthia Brian. All clean, new, or gently used shoes of all sizes, boots, and work boots are wanted. No ski or snowboard boots, rollerblades, or ice skates can be accepted. "If possible, please keep pairs together by tying laces or putting a rubber band around the shoes," Brian adds.

Be the Star You Are teen chairperson, Ella Kalpakjian is spearheading the shoe collection at Campolindo High School. Shoes may be dropped in the designated Campo bin beginning on April 17. If you will be attending the April 29 Moraga Community Faire, shoes may be delivered to the Be the Star You Are booth.

Drop shoes at these two locations (May 1- June 30): Mark Hoogs State Farm Insurance (629 Moraga Road, Moraga) (925) 254-3344, www.TeamHoogs.com; and 5 A Rent-A-Space (455 Moraga Rd. #F, Moraga) 925-631-7000, <https://5aspace.com/>

If your business would like to host a drop-off box, email info@BethStarYouAre.org

For more information, visit www.bethstaryouare.org/shoedrive

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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