



Dining for Women

## Program Fact Sheet

### Program: Growth Through Learning

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**Web Site:** [www.growththroughlearning.org](http://www.growththroughlearning.org)

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**Mission: Growth Through Learning (GTL)** seeks to provide and enhance educational opportunities by offering scholarship aid to deserving East African girls and young women. In addition, the organization encourages a cross-cultural exchange of information and ideas between countries.

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**History:** A two-week safari to the Serengeti in the summer of 1996 turned into more than a pleasure trip for Roger L. Whiting, life insurance representative and financial planner. He was captivated by the African people. The turning point for him came when he met Alice Manaku, a Tanzanian waitress serving him dinner. He was shocked to discover that she was working to support her many younger siblings and that she had never even had the opportunity to go to secondary school. Upon returning home to the U.S., he was in a virtual state of "culture shock," and began studying all aspects of Eastern African life, focusing on the problem of education.

"It was during my research one day; I just stopped and said, 'I can afford to send this girl to school,' " Mr. Whiting said.

His research also showed that many deserving and talented women and girls of East Africa were denied basic educational opportunities because of insufficient family income. Even primary school can be prohibitively expensive in a land where most people live on \$1 per day. This is a region where private boarding schools provide virtually the only means of quality education beyond the elementary level. Poverty forces many students, particularly girls, to drop out of school, as the student's family must provide school fees, uniforms and supplies.

In July, 1997 Mr. Whiting founded **Growth Through Learning, Inc.** and received non-profit status as a 501 (c) 3 organization in May of 1998. The organization funds secondary and post-secondary education for girls and young women in East Africa, predominantly in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. **GTL's** philosophy is founded on the premise that it is education, more than anything else that will help to create a better society and more meaningful way of life. The sponsored girls learn that **GTL** is concerned with their welfare and that the potential for their empowerment and self-sufficiency is something that only education can provide.

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**One reason why we selected GTL:** **GTL's** history resembles **DFW**. What started as a tiny organization that Mr. Whiting ran out of his home has grown into an established charity, with an all-volunteer board of directors, an endowment to help cover overhead costs and scholarship coordinators in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. It has since moved from Mr. Whiting's living room to an office in Worcester and now has a paid staff.

**Another reason GTL touches our heart:** All Mr. Whiting has asked of the scholarship recipients in return is that they write a letter, letting him know how they are progressing. He was surprised at how many of them began to call themselves his daughter. In fact, in a news article printed on Telegram.com last year, the reporter asked Mr. Whiting about his "daughters".

*The letter was one of more than 1,000 he has received over the last 10 years, but leaning back in his small chair and looking at the ceiling, Roger L. Whiting quoted it from memory:*

*"Dear Mr. Rodgers:*

*Thank you so much for everything you've done. Signed, your loving "daughter"*

*"This year," he said "I have 249 daughters."*

Last August, at GTL's ten-year anniversary, Mr. Whiting retired as President and Chairman of **Growth Through Learning** and now serves as Director of Development.

**One last reason we chose GTL:** We agree with their reason to give internationally. This quote is from their website.

*With the rapid expansion of our transportation and communication systems, the World is rapidly becoming a global village ... a community of diverse societies, religions, and cultures. It is no longer possible, practical, or moral to ignore the plight of those less fortunate than ourselves.*

*The balance of knowledge, wealth, and opportunity is not equal. There are those who enjoy an unbelievably lavish lifestyle, while others lack sufficient food, medical care, opportunity, and education. The gifts of food, clothing, and medicines, are worthwhile, to be sure. But what greater gift exists than knowledge, and the consequent ability to become truly self-sufficient?*

*Many social scientists and economists, who take a global view of contemporary human society, hold the opinion that extensive changes in the relations between the undeveloped and developed regions of our world will have to be brought about, soon, if we genuinely desire to forestall world-wide social and political unrest in the decades ahead. We should not let that happen.*

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## **Where They Serve: East Africa - Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda** (Research focused on **Uganda**)



- Population - 31,367,972 (estimates for this country take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS)
- Geographics – slightly smaller than Oregon
- Tropical – rainy with two dry seasons
- Environmental issues - draining of wetlands for agricultural use; deforestation; overgrazing; soil erosion; widespread poaching
- Life expectancy at birth – 52.34 years
- Literacy – 66.8%; male 76.8%, female 57.7%
- Government type – republic. Yoweri Museveni, Uganda's leader since 1986, was declared the winner of elections in February 2006, the first multi-party poll in 25 years.
- Capital city is Kampala
- Natural resources include fertile soils, rainfall, mineral deposits of copper, cobalt and gold.
- Agriculture, the most important sector of the economy, employs over 80% of the work force. Coffee accounts for the bulk of export revenue and is vulnerable to world price fluctuations.

Uganda is subject to armed fighting among hostile ethnic groups, rebels, armed gangs, militias and various government forces. Uganda hosts 209,860 Sudanese, 27,560 Congolese, and 19,710 Rwandan refugees, while Ugandan refugees as well as members of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) seek shelter in southern Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Garamba National Park.

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**How They Work: Growth Through Learning** provides educational scholarships for the girls and young women of East Africa, many of whom are orphans. The average cost to provide a scholarship is \$600/year and this amount keeps a young girl in school by funding school fees, uniforms, food, books and supplies. It teaches her how to read and write in both English and her native language and gives her the skills necessary to be able to teach her own children how to add and subtract, understand ideas and strive for a better future.

**GTL** has neither a religious or political affiliation. Their goal is to encourage thoughtful progress and growth which only education can provide.

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**How they measure program success: Growth Through Learning** measures its success by the number of scholarships provided. In 1998, its first year of operation, **GTL** provided 12 scholarships to female students. During the 2007 school year, **GTL** provided 249 scholarships. The number of scholarships has risen each year, with a total of 1,161 scholarships awarded since **GTL's** inception. Following strategic planning this year, it was determined beneficial to annually survey **GTL** graduates to track their post-graduate education, work, and life activities. They also have plans to develop online chat rooms and encourage alumnae gatherings.

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**Management and fiscal efficiency:** In 2007, **GTL** total expenses were \$226,905, with \$164,904 directed to programs and \$62,001 spent on management. **GTL** directed 73% to scholarships and 27% was spent on operations. In the last two years, they began operating with paid part-time staff.

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**DFW's support of Growth Through Learning:**

2004 - \$ 730  
2005 - \$ 1,000  
2006 - \$ 5,530  
2007 - \$ 8,274

From 2004 through 2006, DFW sponsored the secondary education of Maria Garetti, who lives in Uganda. She graduated in the fall of 2007 with a nursing degree. Last year our donations sponsored five young students whose profiles are available on DFW's website Program Schedule.

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**Sources:**

Growth Through Learning website and accompanying materials: [www.growththroughlearning.org](http://www.growththroughlearning.org)

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tz.html>

The World Bank, <http://www.worldbank.org/>

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country\\_profiles/1069166.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1069166.stm)

<http://www.telegram.com/static/reprints/gtl.html> "Philanthropist counts 239 daughters" Thursday, August 23, 2007, [2008 Worcester Telegram & Gazette Corp.](http://www.telegram.com)