

## *Sportsbridge: Partnerships, Pallets & Promise*

*"In your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy." Ps. 68:10*

Sportsbridge is the link which connects donated items from churches and individuals with the needy people who receive them. This past June, Sportsbridge lost a faithful advocate, when Mr. Les Forney of Portland, Oregon was called home to heaven. Les devoted his life to serving others. One of his dearest ministries was to work with Don Brenneman and Sports Outreach's Sportsbridge. My favorite quote from Les is, "When God is in it, a little is a lot!" I can still hear him answer the often asked question of, "What do you ship?" Les's answer summarizes the far-reaching scope of Sportsbridge: "In humility, for the love that prompted the donation of the gift, Sportsbridge ships things that can be used to build relationships, share the Gospel and provide hope!"

The last time I was in Nairobi, Kenya, I participated in a Bible study with the 15 dedicated teachers and staff of the SOM Academy. Their school educates over 350 young children from the Makuru slum. As we studied, I noticed that every member of the staff had a small Bible with a bright rubber cover. The Bibles showed signs of wear and were dirty from the dust and mud of the Makuru slums. I knew that each of these Bibles had been donated by Mark Schoepke and his Tree of Life bookstores in Oregon. For the past six years, each shipment from Sportsbridge has included pallets of Bibles. One new teacher testified that her faith had grown so much and she so appreciated the gift of her Bible. "What do we ship?" We ship the promise of faith through the distribution of Bibles.



Les Forney (third from left) with SOI staff in April 2008



In Kampala, Uganda, Frank, an SOI staff member, oversees the distribution of donated shoes and clothes. These items are given to the poorest of the poor in the four slums where Sports Outreach ministers. Travel teams from Lynchburg, Virginia, and Santa Barbara and Santa Ynez, California, have seen this need and spearheaded collections of these items. Quite often, their distribution has opened doors for the gospel, as well as led to relationships with needy families and individuals. The staff feels that each item distributed does more than meet a desperate need, it reflects the love of Christ. "What do we ship?" We ship clothing for "the least of these" (Matthew 25:40).

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### CONTACT UPDATE

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Please remove me from the Newsletter mailing list.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Do you have a prayer request or praise?*

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Learn more about Gift Planning to support Sports Outreach Institute.  
Email Dave Biehl at [DBiehl@SportsOutreach.net](mailto:DBiehl@SportsOutreach.net).

In Ometepec, Mexico, Ben Johnson and his wife Katie are helping Tim Wood, a Sports Outreach staff leader. Both Ben and Katie are skilled soccer players and sports ministers. They use balls, uniforms, cleats and other sports equipment that were donated through Sportsbridge. These items were carried to Mexico by SOI travel teams and interns. Ben coaches a Maranatha soccer team consisting of young Christian men. In turn, this team uses the donated equipment to outfit a youth league, as well as to train new sports ministers to share the gospel. Ben would say that the gift of a ball or uniform not only provides an opportunity for people to play a game they love, but also builds relationships. "What do we ship?" We ship sports equipment to build relationships, to teach sportsmanship, and to give opportunities to make friends, all the while teaching them about Jesus.



In July, a container arrived in Kampala. It contained 100 brand new wheelchairs collected and shipped by SOI partner, Joni and Friends! A team of therapists and technicians, from Joni and Friends International Disability Ministry, travelled to Uganda to meet the container. They fit the chairs to qualified disabled individuals that had been identified by Sports Outreach. The faces of each recipient reflected their profound gratitude. They received more than a wheelchair – they were being given a chance to pursue their own dreams! "What do we ship?" We ship the prospect of hope and of a future.

In our offices, the names Les Forney and Sportsbridge go hand and hand. We thank God for Les's life and his service to this cause. In his honor, we are taking this opportunity to highlight Sportsbridge, an important and worthy ministry. We have a container ready to be shipped from Lynchburg. Our heart's desire is to ship this container out as soon as possible. Along with most areas of the economy, shipping costs continue to rise. Now would be a perfect time to help us meet this expense. What a truly wonderful way to remember our friend, Les Forney!

*Grace & Peace,*  
**Rodney**







Very soon, a shipment from SOI will arrive in Uganda. The container has 300,000 prepackaged meals provided by Stop Hunger Now! Each meal has been packed by SOI partner churches in Virginia, North Carolina and California. These meals will be used to nourish and strengthen children, widows and HIV positive families. Clearly, each meal meets an immediate need, while further nurturing the promise of another day. "What do we ship?" We ship life-sustaining food, all the time pointing out that Jesus is the Bread of Life.



**✂ Yes! I Want To Support SOI ...**

- Please accept my gift for SOI's Sportsbridge ministry.
  - Please use my gift "Where Needed Most".
  - Please use my gift as staff support for \_\_\_\_\_
  - OR, please use my gift for \_\_\_\_\_
- Please make checks payable to Sports Outreach Institute.

**PAYMENT OPTIONS** [accepted online as well @ [www.sportsoutreach.net](http://www.sportsoutreach.net)]

Donate via credit card (circle card type):    

Card#: \_\_\_\_\_  One Time  Monthly

Amt \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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