

Celebrating 100 Years!



Lasting impressions...

I was 20 years old years old when I decided to celebrate my nursing graduation by going on a short term mission trip to South Africa. My maternal grandfather, Don Bixby, had passed away abruptly, too soon for me to talk to him about the upcoming trip. Just after the burial, my grandmother, Beth Bixby, handed me a letter he had written just hours before he died. He had tucked in a check with a note reminding me of his mother (Anna May), who grew up in an orphanage from the age of 5. His whole childhood, he had watched her shelter people in their large brick home and feeding hungry on their back porch during the Great Depression. My maternal grandmother, Beth Bixby, described the home as cheerful and full of love. Anna May cared for her twin sisters until that passed in that home. Before preschool, my mother had stayed with Anna May, in that home and heard her stories of loving "black babies" in a time when that wasn't necessarily easy during the Great Depression. It was my Grandma Beth Bixby, who loved and cared for Anna May in her later years. She was able to use her nursing skills to keep her home and dearly cared for.

The family I didn't consider

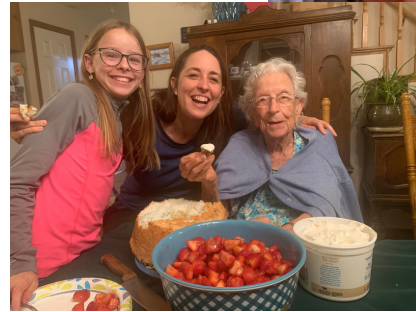
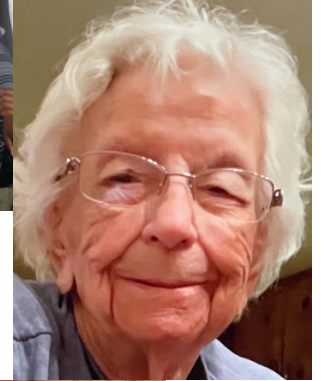
Little did I know, that my short mission trip would turn out to be a lifetime calling. Ten years ago, my cousin Amy Dayton and I founded 'Hope of Africa'... formalizing our unconventional family. The past 19 years, I have been able give vulnerable children and youth a chance to thrive and be all that they can be by giving them what was given to me. I have had one of the greatest advocates one could ever have, from the first group 5 to 11 year olds I was assigned to. My grandmother, Beth Bixby, has adopted these kiddos right along with me through video calls, gifts, and prayers. She has helped me raise them and shown what it feels like to have a committed grandmother. It has been a radical journey of His graces with a group of children I now call sons and daughters.

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Legacy Passed On

At the age of 88 years old, my Grandmother, made a brave decision to leave everything knew behind in New York and move to Montana to live with my immediate family. Throughout these years, she has made intentional decisions to invest in her family and practice her Rummy skills. (Those that have played with her know what I am talking about!) She also has been steadfast in her faith and prayer for all her loved ones. What fun we have had! And the legacy continues in some many of us because of her modeling to us the way with humor and grace! We have a lot to celebrate!

Little did I know, 19 years ago, what I thought would be a project would turn into an unconventional family. My Africa family has grown over the years from 72 children to hundreds raised and thousands impacted in some tangible way annually. God has really blessed us!



Birthday Gifts

PLEASE ASK IF YOU WISH TO HEAR MORE, PLEASE CONTACT KAY GOULD, PAT LYTLE, OR HEATHER LYTLE.

THANKS FOR ALL YOUR LOVE & WILLINGNESS TO CELEBRATE THIS LEGACY CELEBRATION WITH GRANDMA BETH BIXBY!

MAKE CHECKS OUT TO HOPE OF AFRICA PO BOX 81597 BILLINGS MT, 59108

IN MEMO WRITE: BETH'S BIRTHDAY PROJECT

ALL CARDS SENT WILL BE GIVEN TO BETH ON BIRTHDAY

YOU ALL ARE AMAZING!

Recently, I was speaking with Grandma about turning 100 years and the huge milestone that is! Beth Bixby style, she was clear she didn't want people to fuss and certainly didn't need gifts! She can't physically do much but rest assured, her mind is sharp and her communication clear! I was asking her what would be meaningful to her and what make her feel happy about turning triple digits? What she said to me was not a surprise. She wants to do something for family, the unconventional one less fortunate that need a home.

As you can imagine, as my African family expands, so also the needs. In 'Hope of Africa', we have 16 trained indigenous staff, 6 of which are second generation alumni, that attend to the daily needs. We are proud to say many of our graduates are choosing the road less traveled, choosing to move into difficult areas, and advocate for the less fortunate or abandoned. We are currently in the process of developing headquarters in both South Africa and Uganda. These bases will be training centers for our youth to learn skills and leadership, A home to belong and a hub to equip teams to serve in hard places. We are dedicated do our best to make these spaces emulate that brick home on the hill... a place of safety, that all who enter will experience joy, love, belonging, and family.

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