

Building on Success: Firelight Becomes a Public Charity



SANTA CRUZ, July 1, 2010-As we celebrate our tenth year of grantmaking, Firelight Foundation is taking the exciting step of incorporating as a public charity, building on the momentum of public support and recognition we have gained over the last decade.

"This is a move we've been considering for several years now," said Kerry Olson, founder and president of Firelight. "Thanks to all of the public support we've received since 2001, we believe that transitioning from a private foundation to a public charity brings us into better alignment with our growth to date and enables us to build on our strengths moving forward."

Our Path

Firelight was launched as a nonprofit private foundation in 1999 using a grassroots funding model to support community organizations working to improve the lives of children and families affected by HIV/AIDS and poverty in Africa.

Initially endowed by founders Kerry Olson and David Katz, the Foundation quickly became known for its innovative and effective approach to grantmaking. Over the years, diversified its resource base from a primary reliance on its endowment to a much greater reliance on external funding, including from private foundations, public charities, and individuals.

Becoming a public charity brings our legal status into alignment with the organization we have become today. Now that we have built broad public support, we are in an optimal position to make the transition to public charity in a way that is responsible, sustainable, and reflective of our robust funding base.

Building on Our Strengths

Firelight Foundation is widely recognized as a leader for its effective model for getting resources to community organizations supporting vulnerable children in Africa. Over the past 10 years, we have worked with hundreds of grassroots groups responding to the needs of children and families in their communities. We have seen the value of well-targeted, small grants given at the local level. We have also seen that too often, these organizations are overlooked and underfunded.

Firelight's new public charity status will open doors to new partnerships, outreach, and funding opportunities, enabling us to increase our support to the grassroots groups making such a big difference in the lives of children and families in need.

What Stays the Same

"The mission, vision, and values for which Firelight is known and respected remain the same," said Peter Laugharn, executive director of the Firelight Foundation. "Our [grantmaking](#) and other [programs](#), our close partnerships with hundreds of [grantees](#), our dedicated [staff](#), and our highly-respected [Advisory Council](#) and public [Board of Directors](#)-all of our these bring [our mission](#) to life and allow us to continue to build on a decade of success."

We are grateful to all of our dedicated donors who have supported us over the years and made our transition to public charity possible.

Together with our supporters and our grantees, we continue to invest in and be an active part of "communities changing children's lives."

About Firelight

The mission of the Firelight Foundation is to improve the well-being of children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS and poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. We support grassroots organizations that help families and communities meet the needs of their children.

Our grantmaking and other programs are run by the public charity, the "Firelight Foundation". The nonprofit private entity, the "Firelight Endowment", is responsible for the good stewardship of the endowment for the purpose of supporting vulnerable children and families in Africa through the "Firelight Foundation".

COMMUNITIES CHANGING CHILDREN'S LIVES

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