

# AMY BIEHL FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2005

Dear Friends

It is our hope that this newsletter finds you all doing well. Life at the Amy Biehl Foundation, the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust and the Biehl family continues to be very busy. The programs in South Africa continue to be a great success. The number of people directly affected by our programs grows by the day, as does our need of financial assistance. We are so thankful for our generous friends and are hopeful you will continue to help us spread "Amy's magic".

We do have some sad news to report; Marie Biehl (Peter's mother and Amy's grandmother) past away on January 30, 2004 at the age of 86. Grandma had been living in Half Moon Bay,

California for the past 2 1/2 years to be near her son Larry Biehl. Grandma's strength, intelligence and grace provided tremendous influence on our entire family and will continue to do so. As we mourn her passing we are comforted in the knowledge that she is in a better place, with her adoring husband, son, granddaughter and other lost loved ones. Personally, I would like to thank Uncle Larry for bringing grandma to my wedding in July. It was the last time I saw her and I will forever treasure those moments.

Sincerely,  
Zach Biehl



## A Note from Mr. Solomon Makosana, Chief of Party

Dear Friends,

As the new head of the Foundation Trust, I am greatly honored by the trust and confidence which Linda and Zach Biehl show me. My 32 years of experience in education will be used to enrich and sustain the vision and mission of the Foundation in South Africa. However, hopeful as we are, there are critical challenges that are staring us in the face, for example, the termination of funding by USAID. These challenges have an adverse effect when it comes to the morale of our staff of 52 people. Unfortunately, the drying up of funds comes at a time when our programs are scaling the heights of excellence and assume the status of being flag-ship programs.

We are greatly appreciative of the role that Linda and Zach Biehl are playing to sustain the wonderful work that has already been done. It might sound subjective to talk about "wonderful work" but many visitors who are taken to our programs are overawed

by what we have achieved so far. I wish to reassure you, that every dollar donated to the Foundation will be directly used on our programs unless specifically designated.

We are still working on the mindset of the South African government, as they need to be on board because the type of development we are doing in the townships is their responsibility. We shall constantly knock at the government's door until someone opens that door for us. Whilst we chart the course ahead, we have realized that sometimes it's going to be necessary to sponsor highly skilled interns who can research the impact of our programs, material production and PR/Marketing strategies.

We believe, with the support we have received from you, we can overcome many obstacles on our way to development.

May God bless you all,  
Solomon Makosana  
Chief of Party



**The following letter was sent to Mr. Makosana on April 16, 2005**

Dear Solomon,

Greetings from Knysna. We have not forgotten our time in Cape Town nor all of you! We so enjoyed meeting all of you at the Foundation and especially the children, teachers, and Principal at John Pama (Primary School). We wanted to find out what the teachers decided would be most helpful for another donation. We would like to adopt the school and set aside money each year to send through you and will get the people in Colorado and at home involved also. You have enriched our lives and knowledge with all your good work.

Warm regards,  
Kimberly and Michael Fairbank



*The Amy Biehl Foundation is in the process of restructuring our Foundation Board. We are thrilled to introduce Larry Kendall as Secretary/ Treasurer and Lori Markowitz as board member. Most of you are well aware of these two wonderful people through past newsletters and we are so thrilled to have their active support.*

### **A Message from Larry Kendall**

Having been raised on a farm in Central Kansas among fields of wheat, corn, alfalfa, and cattle, South Africa was certainly not in the center of my radar screen. Worrying about insects, droughts, hail storms, floods, and other threats to our crops and well-being generally occupied most of my "major concerns capacity". Graduation from Kansas State University with an Agriculture Education degree in 1965 lead me into the emotionally rewarding but under funded teaching profession for four years. From 1969 through 2000 I wore the Checkerboard of Ralston Purina and Purina Mills in various sales and marketing positions serving American livestock producers from coast to coast.

I formed Get To It, LLC in late 2000 to function as a base for my consulting and community service activities. More information about this can be found at [www.larrykendall.com](http://www.larrykendall.com).

If you have ever had personal contact with the Peter Biehl family, you can understand how my life and that of my family became enhanced in 1995 with our first direct encounter with this visionary, insightful family. It all began with my wife, Judy's, taping of "Inside the Struggle-the Amy Biehl Story" aired on ABC's Turning Point with Barbara Walters. My daughter, Tracy, shared this program with her sixth and seventh grade students and asked them for written reflections about how Amy Biehl's compassion and commitment could be reflected in their own lives. Their thought-provoking responses were shared with the Biehls and soon Tracy and I found ourselves in San Francisco attending the second annual Amy Biehl Memorial Celebration. Today, while Tracy is raising her family, the "Amy Biehl Story" remains the major impetus behind Judy's and our youngest daughter, Debbie's, teaching curriculum. Since 1995, hundreds of St. Louis middle school students have been introduced to "the power of one" as the late Peter and Linda have personally shared this crucial message.

With the spirit of Amy and the dedication of her family injected into our being, our family set about learning more of the Foundation's programs addressing the needs of the people of South Africa. Impressive, effective, functional, practical, efficient, imaginative, are all accurate descriptors of these wonderfully caring programs ranging from literacy, music, art, HIV/AIDS prevention, emergency medical training, to restorative justice and many more. We have been privileged to have participated in a major "Hands Across the Ocean" teacher education program near Cape Town. This was yet another confirmation of the spirit and potential of township residents being cultivated by the Foundation.

It is an honor to serve as an Amy Biehl Foundation board member. I look forward to hearing from anyone with suggestions for improving the Foundation's work as we press forward toward "the development of non-violent, functional people" capable of helping to lift or global community to higher standard of respect and dignity. Your financial support is increasingly critical. All financial gifts are welcomed, appreciated, and tax deductible.

Thank you,  
Larry W. Kendall  
Sec./Tres. Amy Biehl Foundation  
Board of Directors

## Introducing Lori Markowitz

Lori Markowitz is a committed grassroots activist who demonstrates her passion for social justice by supporting numerous causes throughout her local community and beyond. She earned her B.A. in International Business Administration from the American University of Paris and is currently a graduate student at the University Of Washington Evans School Of Public Affairs.

Lori is a founding member of the Middle East Peace Camp, an organization committed to building bridges between Jewish and Arab communities in Seattle. She is also a founding member of Find Common Ground, an interfaith coalition whose mission is to educate the public on peaceful solutions to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict through events, presentations and discussion.

Lori serves on two public school Board of Directors, Montlake Elementary and Washington Middle Scholl, and co-chairs the task force for diversity. She is married to Dr. Stephen Markowitz who was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa. They have two children, Joshua twelve years old and Jessica ten years old.

## A Note from Lori Markowitz

The Amy Biehl Foundation has been an inspiration and a guiding force in my life since the day I was introduced to Linda and Peter Biehl. I've always been a believer in reconciliation and forgiveness and now I've been blessed to witness the power of transformation. The Amy Biehl Foundation is all about transforming the lives of so many children in need. I was so moved by Amy's story and her parent's strength of character. ABFT has restored my hope and faith in humanity during these difficult times.

In August, 2003 I was privileged to spend time in the townships with Linda. I felt such a connection to the Foundation I knew I had to travel to South Africa. It was the tenth anniversary of Amy's death and I met many people who knew her. I unfortunately never had the opportunity but realized we share the same vision to make the world a better place. Amy's legacy is felt all over Guguletu. She's a role model for all human kind. A magnanimous person who understood the responsibility to actively foster social change.

During my stay in Cape Town I visited all the ABFT programs and was introduced to the staff. I was so inspired by the commitment level and desire to enhance the organization's mission. The ABFT is a shining example of the "new" South Africa.

I would like to thank Linda for providing me the opportunity to serve as a board member of the Foundation. It is my honor to work for an organization that emboldens hope and truly is making an impact on the lives of many.



## Amy Biehl Foundation and Amy Biehl High School ~ A Partnership!

Respectfully Submitted By Lisa McCulloch

As the Director of Advancement for Amy Biehl High School, I came on Board two years ago with an assignment to raise almost \$4 million to renovate the old Post Office in downtown Albuquerque to become our new school site. Feeling daunted but determined, my first inclination was to establish a program whereby individuals or corporations could sponsor different rooms in the building for cash contribution to our Capital Campaign. Determined to be thoughtful about it, we titled our Naming Rights Campaign, "The House That Truth Built."

I thought it would be nice to establish a tribute to Amy in our new building, and considered the possibility of including that in the sponsorship opportunities. It has always been important to our founders that we not exploit Amy's story for fundraising purposes in any way and I completely agree. However, upon further reflection, I considered the fact that our school is facing sustainability issues (we need a new home) as is the Amy Biehl Foundation (USAID Funding expires this year), and if we developed a tribute that spoke to the values that Amy admired, and divided the funding with the Amy Biehl Foundation, then maybe it would be a positive way to honor our namesake, and provide sustainability for two organizations that invest energy every day in ensuring that the next generation of children receive the quality education that is their birthright.

So, along with two of my committee members, Wendy Forbes and Mara Holguin, I flew to California to meet Zach and Linda. After a wonderful lunch in Newport Beach, we agreed to establish a

partnership that would collaborate on a few projects a year involving Amy's story and the Biehl Family's story with restorative justice, in an effort to raise the funding necessary to continue our programs.

We have plans for many wonderful events that I'm sure you will hear more about in the coming months, but I think that currently the most important is the creation of The Legacy of Amy Biehl, a permanent artistic installation, housed in the lobby of our new school building downtown. The installation features a twenty-foot archway of twenty-six luminescent white petals, representing a continuum; a sequential representation of Amy's life and legacy for the next generation. The petals are symbolic of spirit, human in scale, feminine in nature and embody a light, translucent strength. The petals tumble, forming an archway, and students and visitors will pass under these petals everyday and be reminded of our namesake and the legacy she left behind. Tall glass columns, containing some of Amy's belongings ("on loan" from the Biehl Family) will be housed in these columns, serving to inspire all who experience them to make their dreams come true. Alongside Amy's items of accomplishment will be items of accomplishment from her legacy-students at Amy Biehl High School and the Amy Biehl Foundation Trust in Cape Town. The installation will also honor world leaders and changers that Amy admired or any espouse message of hope for a better tomorrow. Jill Annarino and Richard Deutsch of The Design Group designed the installation, plans for which graced the cover of the March issue of abqArts Magazine! Donors names will be permanently integrated into the installation, and the proceeds will be divided between the school's Capital Campaign and the Amy Biehl Foundation.

As a side note for me is that I have grown tremendously as a person in knowing the Biehl Family for the last year. The work they have accomplished in their efforts to honor Amy make them some of the most thoughtful activists I know, and they have influenced the way I live my life.



## Dear Friends of ABFT:

My name is Andy Meisler. I'm a veteran Los Angeles-based journalist who's written for the NY Times, L.A. Times and many other national publications. I've also collaborated on several autobiographies. One of them was with Norma McCorvey, Who was "Jane Roe" in the historic abortion decision Roe v. Wade.

I'm currently collaborating with Linda Biehl on the story of her life. It's still in the proposal stage and tentatively titled *Makhulu: Also Known as Mrs. Amy Biehl*.

Early last year Linda and I were introduced to each other by Alan Nevins, our Los Angeles based book agent. I'd heard of Amy Biehl, of course, and like most people I reacted with sadness when I first heard about her death in 1993. But although I distinctively remember shaking my head at the simplistic and stereotypical way the event was reported-words and phrases like "blond All- American-type"; "mob violence" and "senseless tragedy" were thrown around with abandon- -I can't say I stayed focused too long. I was quickly swept away by the next wave of shocking headlines to hit the newspapers and CNN- -and by the ever-unfolding crises of my own Starbucks-powered Southern California life.

I certainly didn't realize that the Biehl's story was still unfolding and that it had depth, complexity and universal importance almost beyond telling. I learned this very quickly after I began talking to and tape-recording Linda at her American base of operations in Newport Beach.

By the time I arrived in Cape Town for a 10-day tour of Linda's World last November- -she took me everywhere from Guglethu to Pollsmore Prison to the Royal Cape Yacht Club- -I was subjected to another mind blowing realization: that this would be the hardest, most challenging and potentially rewarding assignment of my long writing career.

South Africa today has a lot of what I imagine the United States had in its early stage. It's a young and fragile democracy, framed by shocking poverty and ethnic strife on one end and enormous potential, and almost unimaginable forgiveness, tolerance and good intentions on the other.

It's this environment that Linda thrives. She is an extraordinary person- -especially since she walks among us disguised as a normal person. She is not a

saint, or a bleeding heart liberal, as she's sometimes portrayed. I think instead she embodies the best of being an American: ambition, pragmatism, ethics, and open-mindedness. Her capacity for forgiveness would be extraordinary in any era, but I think she stands out even more these days because we live in a very intolerant and unforgiving time.

To say she's "making a difference" is (1) to underestimate both her contributions and the difficulties she and the ABFT constantly face; and (2) to demean her by hanging a worn-out cliché around her neck. Instead, I'd rather describe her as an exemplar and an inspiration. And, most importantly for a professional writer with a monthly MasterCard balance to motivate him: What an amazing life she's lived; what a fascinating story she has to tell!

With Linda and her friends' and family's help, I hope to do both the story and the assignment justice.

Best,  
Andy Meisler



*We all felt great sadness in hearing the news about Marla Ruzicka, the young woman killed in Iraq this April. Many people around the world made an immediate connection to her story and that of Amy. It turns out that Marla was inspired by the story of "the girl who died in South Africa", and today we all are inspired by the story of Marla Ruzicka. The article below appeared in the April 20th edition of the Daily News (New York) and was written by Dave Goldiner.*

When Marla Ruzicka heard the story of Amy Biehl, she learned a precious lesson- it only takes one woman to change the world for the better.

Then just a teenager, Ruzicka was inspired when her teacher told her about the 1993 mob killing of Biehl, who was working to break down racial divisions in apartheid South Africa.

"A fire was lit under Marla," recalled Lori McGuire, her high school English teacher.

Like Ruzicka, Biehl was blond and looked every bit the All-American girl. Biehl also had an unshakable determination to do the right thing, even if it meant putting herself at risk.

"I think Marla looked up to Amy because she wanted to help people and lessen the injustice," said Mark Ruzicka, Marla's twin brother. "That's just how Marla was - relentless in her effort."

Biehl, 26, made worldwide headlines when she was beaten and stabbed to death after she made a wrong turn in one of Cape Town's black townships, where she was working to help people ease racial injustice.

Remarkably, Biehl's friends and relatives used her death to spur an effort to help people in the same bleak townships.

"Amy would have thought Marla was one very bright, shining stars," said Linda Biehl, who runs a foundation in her daughter's name.

Linda Biehl called Ruzicka's family this week to offer the same condolences - and the hope that news of their tragedy might also inspire the next Amy Biehl or Marla Ruzicka.



PLEASE REMEMBER

TO CHECK OUR WEBSITE

[WWW.AMYBIEHL.ORG](http://WWW.AMYBIEHL.ORG)

FOR REGULAR UPDATES

ABOUT OUR WORK

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Correspondence and/or contributions may be forwarded to the following address:

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