

## Why We Give to HealthWell Foundation – and Why You Should Too

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By David Sheon | December 30, 2013

As the head of a communications strategy shop that helps clients in science, technology, and health care, I encounter a seemingly endless number of organizations that want to do good for society and the planet. Why then have the WHITECOAT Strategies employees – who serve as editors of Real World Health Care (RWHC) Blog – decided that the HealthWell Foundation should be one of our two charter charities, as our firm becomes a social enterprise in 2014?

Before I answer that, just what is a social enterprise?

A social enterprise is an organization that applies business strategies to maximize improvements in human and environmental well-being, rather than maximizing profits for shareholders.

Social enterprises can be structured as for-profit or non-profit organizations, but their focus is using their proceeds to do good.

We decided that organizations seeking communications firms would like to know that revenue from their work is going to help society. And our employees like to know that too.

When we made the decision to become a social enterprise, we thought about the impact of our work globally and locally. And that's how we arrived at helping CA Bikes, as well as the HealthWell Foundation.

CA Bikes is a nonprofit organization founded by Chris Ategeka, a native of Uganda. The oldest of five children, Chris became an orphan and head of his household at an early age after losing both his parents to HIV/AIDS. After years of poverty and laboring in the fields, a miracle happened, as Chris says, when a



woman from the United States started an organization called Y.E.S. Uganda near his village, took him in, and supported him through school. Now, Chris holds a BS and an MS in Mechanical Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley.

Many people living in rural Africa have no access to emergency medical services, and given that the nearest health clinic or hospital is often miles away, this results in needless suffering and deaths. CA Bikes builds and distributes bicycle and motorcycle ambulances to rural African villages and trains partners in their maintenance and use to provide access to life-saving care during medical emergencies. For more information about CA Bikes and to help support their work, click [here](#).

The WHITECOAT team is honored to help Chris fulfill the mission of CA Bikes.

WHITECOAT's history with the HealthWell Foundation dates to a discussion one of my staff members and I had over three years ago. She told me that her best friend from college had been diagnosed with a brain tumor. He had insurance through his job, which stuck with him through the medical emergency. His wife had been laid off of her job a month before the diagnosis. The emotional toll of the diagnosis was awful. I knew the couple and their children would find their own way to deal with that and there was nothing we could do. But I felt that perhaps we could do something more to find them financial support.

One call to the HealthWell Foundation was all that was needed. After reviewing financial records and evaluating the situation, the Foundation tapped a fund reserved for medical emergencies that reimbursed not only for the co-pays associated with medication, but also for the cost of the monthly health insurance premium and related medical expenses. This program has now transformed into the [Emergency Cancer Relief Fund](#), which WHITECOAT is proud to help launch for HealthWell.

HealthWell has awarded more than 265,000 grants to patients in over 40 disease categories, making a profound difference to over 165,000 people faced with difficult medical circumstances in the U.S.

I hope that at this time of giving, you'll join me and the WHITECOAT staff by [donating to the HealthWell Foundation](#).

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