

[Stacy Lewis](#) spent part of her off season traveling with fellow Tour member Betsy King's Golf Fore Africa and donating her time to improve living conditions in several areas of Africa. Lewis is heavily involved in charity efforts and will be playing in this week's [RR Donnelley LPGA Founders Cup](#) for the Scoliosis Research Society (SRS.org).

By Stacy Lewis

My trip with Golf Fore Africa was amazing! I would definitely do it again.

I will admit that I was a little nervous in the days leading up to leaving. I really had no idea what to expect. I had seen pictures and had been told what it would be like, but it was hard to not be nervous.

Since the LPGA Tour Championship was moved back a couple weeks, I missed the first part of Golf Fore Africa's trip to Kenya, but my mom and I met up with the rest of the group in Rwanda. The highlight of the time in Rwanda for me was visiting my sponsor child, Aline, and her family.



In Rwanda, there is one main road that is paved, but everything else is a rough dirt road, so we had to drive pretty far to reach my sponsor child's family. Aline is the middle child of five children. The family quickly invited us into their home to meet and talk with them. Almost immediately, Aline's mother gave me her baby to hold. For them, that is like a welcome to the family.

When Aline's mother found out that my mom was with me, she went and sat arm in arm with my mom the entire time. They asked questions about me and my family, and I was able to give Aline a backpack with school supplies. Before we left, we said a prayer as a group. My mom looked up as we were praying just to see what the kids and everyone was doing. The whole time we were praying, Aline's mom had tears running down her face because she was so thankful and happy for us to be there. The worst part was leaving



them. It was so hard to say goodbye, but I know that Aline has great parents and they are going to be okay.

From there, we had a couple free days, so we went on a safari in South Africa. We saw all the animals you would expect to see, such as elephants, zebras, giraffes and hippos. The highlight was when a pack of lions walked right by the car!

The last part of the trip was spent in Lesotho, a small country within South Africa. Lesotho was definitely more developed than Rwanda, but still has a long way to go. Golf Fore Africa has raised money to build houses for orphaned children due to AIDS/HIV in Lesotho. So, our main purpose was to visit a few of these houses. We also were able to help build a little, too.

What I realized on this part of the trip was that the people didn't really want us there to help build. They wanted us to just be there and visit their communities so we could go tell everyone what we experienced. I spent most of the afternoon one day playing soccer and teaching the kids how to throw a football. Also, every community we visited always wanted to welcome us with song and dance. A couple of people in the group joined in the dancing, but dancing is not really my thing!

One of the hardest parts of the trip was returning back to the United States. It took me about a week to adjust back to the lifestyle here. Simple things, like turning on the water to brush your teeth, or hopping in your car to go buy food at the store were almost hard to do. I could not imagine living the life that most people live in Africa. It is so different than anywhere else in the world.

One of the best parts of the trip was getting to experience the whole thing with my mom. It definitely strengthened our relationship and I'm also very proud of her for stepping outside her comfort zone. She did a lot of things that I never thought she would do, so thank you Mom!



Looking back, there are a couple things that I learned on this trip that will stay with me for a long time. First, I learned how important family and community are in our lives. Our lives get really busy sometimes, but I realized how much of an impact you can have on someone by saying hello and smiling, or how having a five-minute conversation with someone can make their day.



Before I left on the trip in my small group Bible study, we were talking about the difference between happiness and joy. I kind of understood the difference, but I wasn't really sure. I saw true joy in the hearts of the people in Africa. The people are so thankful and so joyful, to have so little compared to the rest of the world. So, the second thing I learned is that I need to be more thankful for everyday blessings. I want people to see true joy in me like I saw in the people in Africa.

The final piece I will take with me relates to golf. I have always played because I just love to play and compete. I found it hard when I turned pro to suddenly be playing for money, and I was never really sure how to react to winning money. I always thought it was very selfish, which you need to be, to be successful, but I felt like I didn't deserve it. What I learned is that God has a plan for me, and that plan involves me playing golf, so I have to be a little selfish in my preparation and playing. This trip has completely changed the way I think about playing. The better I play, the more I will be able to help other people, and that is God's plan for me.

As I prepare for the upcoming year, I have a more clear purpose to my practice and playing. I look to have a great 2011 on the course and I'm excited to see where God takes me next!