

IV artist has 'Vision for Africa'

She's collecting eyeglasses for Sudanese who need them

By Stacy Nadelman
of the Daily Courier

CAVE JUNCTION — Not so long ago in a land far away, Christina Henning, an artist and writer from the Illinois Valley, had a vision.

Last month, while visiting her family in France, Henning took a side trip to Morocco. There, she met a young man named Oumar, a refugee from Sudan, who was staying in the same motel.

Oumar also is an artist. He paints during the day and sells his finished paintings to tourists at night, says Henning.

"As artists, Oumar and I have a lot in common," said Henning. "We both try to make a living selling our art."

One day while Henning passed by Oumar's room she noticed the door open. She saw him working on his craft. And as Henning moved closer to his room it was not his artwork that caught her eye — it was his eyeglasses.

"He was sitting there with only one lens and the frame was split in half," said Henning.

The sight of an artist painting while wearing broken glasses gave her an idea similar to one she had a few years ago.

In 2001, Henning organized the book drive "Books without Borders," a project

that collected and sent books and educational materials to Sudan. After routing the books through what she'd thought were the proper channels, Henning discovered the half-ton of educational materials were stuck in customs for more than four months.

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Christina Henning

'Vision for Africa' coordinator

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So, through the help of donations, she went to Africa to finish the 850-mile journey herself.

In spite of that ordeal, she remains determined to help those in need. Her latest project "Vision for Africa" involves collecting eyeglasses to send to the people of Sudan.

Henning is asking for donations of both

prescription and reading eyeglasses, as long as they are in good shape. Reading glasses are what is needed most.

"Everyone I know has an extra pair," said Henning.

"I just want to get a couple of boxes together and send them off."

This time, however, instead of sending the glasses over through African customs, she will send them to a trusted friend in Washington, D.C.

The glasses will then be delivered to the people who really need them in Sudan, she said.

"I'm going to make sure that (the glasses) get there," said Henning.

Donations can be made in Cave Junction at Junction Realty, 111 Redwood Highway; or Bear Images, 123 N. Redwood Highway.

In Grants Pass, donations can be made in the lobby of the Daily Courier located at 409 S.E. Seventh St.

The eyeglasses drive will continue through the end of July.

For more information, contact Christina Henning through the Web site www.martinagardens.com

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