

Thursday, February 28, 2008

AROUND TOWN: A gem of a cause

By CHERYL PERRIN

For the Orange County Register

PLACENTIA - With this ring, I thee wed. This saying has been said by thousands of brides and grooms at thousands of weddings. For **Ali Eastburn**, executive director of With This Ring, this saying has a much more powerful meaning.

At a bible study retreat, Ali said she was asked to ponder the question. "How can we make a difference in the world?" She spoke up in the group and said, "Maybe we should think about selling some of our possessions and actually do what we are commanded to do."

It was then, she said, that she looked down at the ring on her finger and said, "This ring was appraised at \$20,000. If I sold it, I could probably feed an African village for three years".

After learning that children in Africa were becoming sick and dying because they had no clean water, Ali decided to sell her 1.5 carat diamond solitaire wedding ring with the help of Ken at Jeweler's Touch in Placentia.

After making the decision to sell her ring, she founded With This Ring, a nonprofit organization seeking to provide the poor of Africa with clean drinking water while introducing Western Christians to this transformational form of sacrificial giving. She seeks to challenge others to join her to fund wells across Africa.

With This Ring doesn't just focus on married couples, but soon-to-be-married couples, widows, divorcees and singles, encouraging them to experience the joy of giving and positively impacting impoverished lives. They ask people to take stock of what they own and be creative about using what they have that will in turn bless others.

Since With This Ring's creation, 20 women have donated their rings to the cause of building wells in Africa. They will invest the monetary value of these rings into drilling wells to supply clean water. Partnerships are already formed and identified sites for the first wells funded by With This Ring.

The group's main cause is not just to dig wells in Africa, but to transform people's lives through radical giving. Ali says, "Through radical giving and changing our hearts, we can change the world. Without it we cannot!"

With This Ring is hosting a spring banquet fundraiser at 6:30 p.m. on April 17 at the Doubletree Hotel in Anaheim. Anyone can sponsor a table of 10 for \$420.

For more information about With This Ring, visit www.withthisring.org or email Ali at ali@withthisring.org. You can also read Ali's blog at <http://withthisring.wordpress.com>.
