

What about BaBa Blankets?

Since we closed our store in February 2012, many of you have inquired about the status of BaBa Blankets™ and the possibility of purchasing products again in the future. Our exhibition at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival in May 2012 was our last. The birth of my daughter and many similar life events for the women in the collective introduced new challenges to the prospect of continuing the enterprise as we did for over 10 years.

We saw many positive changes in the lives of the women involved in BaBa Blankets™, including tangibles such as the start of their own small businesses, international trade relationships and travel abroad. We also saw the women earn more intangible benefits such as increased social status, self-esteem and credibility. The growth of the SISTA Scholar Program over the past six years enabled us all to see how we could achieve many of these same objectives by educating and empowering young African women at an even earlier age.



For all of these reasons, I have re-focused my efforts on the development of SISTAWorks while suspending all BaBa Blankets activities. This was a difficult decision to make, but one that I see creating much greater sustainability and services for the young women involved. I will always cherish the BaBa Blankets experience, for more reasons than I could ever name. Today, I ask you to join me in helping the legacy of BaBa Blankets continue by catalyzing the dreams of many more girls to come.

Congrats to our Graduates!

It is our honor to announce that 38 of our SISTA Scholars graduated this past May. If you sponsored one of these young women, you should have received a letter from us recently, informing you of your Scholar's graduation status and her plans for the future.

We are so proud of each one of these girls and immensely grateful for your support in helping them to reach this milestone. Becoming a high school graduate is a tremendous accomplishment for them and for their entire families. It has been our pleasure to work with each of these exceptionally determined students and with all of their Sponsors. We look forward to continuing these relationships for many years to come.

This fall, we plan to offer 25 incoming freshman girls sponsorship through our SISTA Scholar Program. They will join our existing 32 Scholars at Bolgatanga Girls' Secondary School (BOGISS) for a total of 56 students in the program during the 2013-2014 academic year.



SISTAWorks launches www.sistaworks.org

We are very pleased to announce the launch of our new website, which went live in July. Please check us out at

www.sistaworks.org! Also, . . .

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What's up next for our Graduates?

During the 2012 SISTAWorks annual in-person Board meeting, members enthusiastically explored how to support our graduating SISTA Scholars. Asking ourselves, "What's next?", we envisioned a comprehensive Girls' Empowerment Institute that would serve dually as an exit program for graduating scholars but also as a supplement to the girls' school curriculum in preparation for life after high school.



We implemented a pilot version of the Institute in the summer of 2013. Thirty-eight graduating SISTA Scholars participated in the six-week exit program which included a series of extra courses, mock exams, and workshops designed to prepare the girls for the year ahead, as well as their post-secondary school entrance exams. Our Ghana team put measures in place to provide the graduates assistance throughout the post-secondary school application process and setup systems to maintain contact with each graduate beyond the school. This will enable us to facilitate sponsor updates, as they are requested.

The SISTA Scholar exit program concluded with a lovely dinner and graduation ceremony, during which each Scholar was presented a certificate of program completion and a diary as a small graduation gift.

While we do not have a formal post-secondary school program yet, we do plan to work with each Sponsor and Graduate individually to help each of these young women take this important next step. Congratulations to our 2013 SISTA Scholar Graduates and to their Sponsors!

Will you be *Feelin' Good* . . . as in Nina Simone?

We are busy planning SISTAWorks' 1st Annual Benefit Concert, "*Feelin' Good - A Tribute to Nina Simone*" to be held at the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music in the Musicians' Village on **Saturday, November 9th from 5:00-8:30pm**. With performances by some of New Orleans most talented female artists, the event will pay homage to legendary jazz vocalist Nina Simone.

The evening will be a celebration of the collective talents of women and girls. Performers include Michaela Harrison, Monica McIntyre, Tonya & Dorise, Erica Falls, Tonya Boyd-Canon, Betty Shirley, Sharon Martin, Asia Rainey, Silhouette Dance Ensemble and many more! The purpose of the event is to raise funds for our SISTA Scholar Program.

The evening will include a full jazz concert and a reception sponsored by La Boucherie. Stay tuned for ticket sales and more information!



Is anyone keeping track?

In 2012, we began the design and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation program for our Scholars. Through questionnaires and personal interviews, we have gathered information about all of our students including personal and family data, school records, contact #'s, career goals, and other relevant data that will enable us to track their progress and monitor any needs. This program is being implemented by a Ghanaian monitoring and evaluation specialist, Evans Amegashie. Feedback from this database will be useful for our sponsors, as well as, for the design of new programs. It will also help us understand what works best and what needs to be changed, validating the results of our work for current and potential funders/supporters.

Who's in there?

There are many more to SISTAWorks than meets the eye! Meet our Board and Staff members on our [website](#) under [Who We Are](#).

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"SISTAWorks invests in girls' education and women's entrepreneurship to transform marginalized communities."