

Local News



Author Makr Zelinski is donating copies of his photography books - including this photo he took in Africa - to help children and charities around the world. Zelinski will be at Chapters today at 1.

Picturing a better world

By ROSE MARCOTTE, FOR THE SUDBURY STAR

Photographer Mark Zelinski has donated thousands of photography books to children's charities.

"At first, the idea was simply that I would bring my photography to children and families in remote parts of the world, who cannot turn on a TV or Google any topic," Zelinski says.

"For a long time, I've been aware of importance of charities working in developing countries and disaster relief."

Zelinski has donated 7,000 copies of his three photography books to poor children and charities around the world. He has won a Governor General's Medal and has already given 3,500 books to 50 charities. He says the books don't have many words, but contain images from the last 35 years in his travels to 70 countries. He calls them his "global family albums."

"Having travelled so much, I don't see people as belonging to separate cultures or nationalities," Zelinski says. "We are a large and diverse family."

The books, *Untitled*, *From the Field* and *One Small Flame*, were created by the Oakville native who has enjoyed a career in photography since 1977.

He has published seven internationally acclaimed photography books, which include forwards by Prince Philip and Justin Trudeau.

Zelinski says the books are being used by charities for children around the world, as an aid for fundraising, literacy, cultural understanding, addiction counselling, child abuse prevention, gifts to donors and volunteers, rescued slaves, impoverished schools and families.

"In Asia the books are used as gifts to rescued victims of sexual slavery," Zelinski says. "In this case a gift of my book, *Untitled*, is not only a photographic introduction to the world; it's the first thing these children have ever owned."

Many societies lack the basics North America takes for granted, Zelinski says. Children are the most vulnerable and Zelinski believes people should view the human race as a family. He says he hopes the books he donated will serve as a gift for these children and as a tool for the charities working to help people around the world.

"I've experienced societies that are less privileged than ours," Zelinski says. "My heroes are the social workers, volunteers and charities that work every day to help others. It's exciting for me to use my photography books as a gift for children and a tool for charities around the world."

Zelinski will be at Chapters in New Sudbury today at 1 p.m. to have a book signing, power-point presentation and donation of his books. Zelinski will be distributing copies of the three books to Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Greater Sudbury and the Canadian Red Cross.

"Children are improving their literacy by writing their own stories for the cultural portraits in my books," Zelinski says. "Photography has been my window to the world. The best part is that now I can share that with others."