



# Infinite Family: Keeping in Touch

July 2011

### In the News:

**Third Annual  
Baubles at the Beach Sale  
Kismet, Fire Island  
August 5 & 7**

**For details, contact  
Bridget's  
Gems**

**Next Online Open House,  
a 30 minute webinar on  
video mentoring**

**August 11 at 7pm  
August 12 at 11am**

**September 22 at 7pm  
September 23 at 11am**

[Register Now](#)

Can't wait?????

**See a quick video  
ON DEMAND  
introducing the Infinite Family  
video mentoring program**

[Watch the Video](#)

View the Infinite Family blog.

[infinitefamily.blogspot.com](http://infinitefamily.blogspot.com)

Contact us or make  
a donation at:

[infinitefamily.org](http://infinitefamily.org)

[info@infinitefamily.org](mailto:info@infinitefamily.org)

212-400-7446

PO Box 618  
Yonkers, NY 10705

Infinite Family is a 501c3  
non-profit charity.

## Video Mentor Jill Howard: "Just showing up can be powerful!"

Jill Howard is an up and coming interior designer in New York City where she started her own firm, Jill Howard Design Studio, almost two years ago. She has mentored Kudina for the past 18 months and shares some of her impressions below.



### How did you hear about Infinite Family?

I discovered Infinite Family through the website [VolunteerMatch.com](http://VolunteerMatch.com). I had visited South Africa a few years earlier and was so touched by its people and their resilience. I wanted to give back to this nation, but never dreamed my efforts would be so "hands-on." I was blown away by the simple yet profound concept behind Infinite Family. This is the perfect opportunity for me to connect with someone almost 8,000 miles away... and I don't even have to leave my desk!

### Tell us about your volunteer experience with us.

I love how my friends and family have embraced my Net Buddy Kudina. I was visiting my extended family in North Carolina on Kudina's birthday, so we all put on party hats and surprised Kudina in the video chat with noisemakers and birthday wishes.

### What makes your connection unique or special?

We have similar personalities and connected right away. Kudina realized early on that in order to get the most out of this relationship, she needed to participate too. So, she asks lots of questions and shares her interests with me. I admire her for that. She is a really special young lady.

### What changes or improvements have you seen in your Net Buddy since you started your relationship?

Kudina had never used a computer before becoming a Net Buddy. Now, she takes charge during our video chats! Each week she proposes things for us to do during our VC, and then leads the way. She is a natural leader and has great communication skills that continue to improve. I cheer her on! She wants to be a businesswoman and our VC's are great practice for the presentations she will give in school and in her career!

### How long have you been a Video Mentor?

I've mentored Kudina for a year and a half. In that time we've celebrated two birthdays, including her first year as teen. This past December she was graduated from primary school and is now in high school. All milestones in her young life!

### What are your hopes for your video mentoring relationship in the future?

The beautiful thing about Infinite Family is that it is so personal. You are building a relationship. In her interview with [CNN Heroes](#), Kudina said "Jill is a part of my family, and a part of my life." I feel the same way! I hope our bond continues to grow, and she will truly understand I am there for her whether it is for homework, a good laugh or a cry.

### What have you learned about kids in Africa facing such challenging circumstances?

They are resilient, determined and desire to succeed in life! They have hope, and we should too!

### What have you learned about yourself and mentoring?

To simplify! I started out with grand visions of what it meant to be a mentor, but have learned that a smile, a hearing ear, or just showing up can be powerful.

*Photo courtesy of CNN*

## NET BUDDIES' BLOGSPOT



Many of our Net Buddies share their feelings and ideas in their blogs. Below and on a regular basis in future Keeping In Touch newsletters, we will feature excerpts from some of them. If you would like to view more of the Buddies' blogs, visit us on [Facebook](#).

### Marutla

I love my name.  
I love my name because it means peacemaker so I love to make peace in the whole world and I don't like to see people fighting, strong language or to see crime. That is why I love my name.

### Lebohlang

My mother.

Hi mom. I really miss you a lot. I wish you could come back. Life is too bad without you and life is hard without you. Some learners always like to talk about their mothers so for me this is so hard. Sometimes, I feel like I'm alone because someone who I used to talk to is gone forever. I even think I could follow you sometimes, when I need something I can't get because you are not here.

## KGOMOTSOG

*Why you should apologize*

An apology is a way of not only saying "let's forget and move on" but a way of saying that I have realized my mistake and I won't repeat it. We should learn to take what life throws at us and tremble, maybe fall, in order for us to say we learned our lesson. I have made a dozen mistakes in the past but the one I regret the most is not doing what's expected of me. Today in my lesson, I learned that even when something is hard for me to do I should always do the right thing.

## Big Rapids High School Donates to Infinite Family

Big Rapids High School in Big Rapids, Michigan has donated \$1000 to Infinite Family in honor of alum and Infinite Family Founder and Executive Director Amy Stokes. Stokes, a 1984 graduate, was the keynote speaker at this year's graduation May 22. In her speech, she referenced the class's motto, "If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door" and went on to encourage the graduates to persist in their endeavors. "Nothing else matters if you don't show up and show up and show up and show up," she said. "Like Woody Allen said, 'Eighty percent of success is showing up.'" "One of the greatest compliments I've received was last November on one of my trips (to South Africa) when I was greeting the kids at one of our computer labs. They told me that it was so exciting to see me and be part of Infinite Family. I asked why and this young man said to me, 'because Infinite Family keeps coming back, and I know you won't stop working to help us.'"



**GET SOCIAL!** Follow Infinite Family at:



*Infinite Family, a 501c3 charity, inspires and motivates teens and pre-teens with very limited resources or support networks in South Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, so they build the confidence, skills and global perspective that promote success. It is the only mentoring program using weekly video conversations to establish long-term nurturing relationships. These relationships with adults internationally are designed to transform young people into fully contributing members of their country's sustainable, developing society.*