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## Talents merge for mission

*Concord's 'Miss Jackie' enlists others to help South Africans*

**By Josh Lanier**

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Tuesday, July 29, 2008

CONCORD - In the black and white world of South Africa's harsh living conditions, Jackie Pegram hopes to inject some color.

The Concord-based missionary better known as Miss Jackie returned from her eighth trip in seven years to Africa's southern tip last month. Whenever she returns, she brings back photos and stories of the tragic conditions coupled with the overwhelming drive for survival enveloping the predominantly orphan communities. It was those stories that energized some of her friends to begin working with her to get more attention and aid sent to the impoverished nation.

Kathleen Reeder, owner of Concord's The Bead Lady, has designed a line of jewelry to help raise money for Pegram and her mission work. The line of jewelry, called "Miss Jackie's Treasures," is sold at the Union Street store and 100 percent of the proceeds go to Pegram. She also uses the pieces as teaching tools, as each piece of jewelry contains symbols within for different biblical stories. Reeder and Pegram hope to someday teach the children in South Africa to make the jewelry themselves as a form of therapy.

"When you're down there you want to leave these children knowing that someone cares for them," Pegram said. "You want them to know that there is someone out there who will be there for them because a lot of these kids don't have that."

Pegram predominantly serves the families ravaged by the AIDS pandemic. Many of those families have parents who have died from the disease leaving children as young as 12-years-old to be the head of the house-hold. In her last trip, Pegram worked with 2,800 people, 164 of those homes were child-headed households. According to a Harvard University study, South Africa has the highest population of

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AIDS patients in the world with 5.5 million.

"It's so difficult to watch but so rewarding to see how talented and truly gifted many of these children are," Pegram said. "You can't really understand it until you see it for yourself."

Reeder said she's proud to be able to help Pegram mission to the children and hopes to help get more information out to the community about Pegram's work. She's also turning her store into a drop-off hub for donations Pegram will send to her missions and others across the globe.

"What she is doing is so vital and important to so many people,"

Reeder said. "Being able to make some jewelry that will help raise money and get people's attention is a big honor."

A mutual friend in Speedway Club General Manager Wanda Miller sparked the relationship between Pegram and Reeder after seeing how their talents could be merged.

"I knew how great of a jewelry designer Kathleen was and I just thought it would be such a fantastic idea to be able to send some jewelry down to those kids and raise some money here in our area," she said.

Miller said having someone like Pegram in the community has helped her educate her 9-year-old daughter on the importance of giving to the world rather than becoming a consumer and procuring of its goods.

"It's the bank of life," Miller said. "In the end, I want my daughter to know that you should always put more into the bank than you're taking out."

Pegram wears some of the jewelry Reeder has made for her mission work. On her wrist, Pegram models the "Heaven Bracelet."

Pegram points out the gold symbolizes Heaven's golden streets and the blue symbolizes the river of life. She said the symbols make a lot learning biblical stories and understanding grace much easier for many of the children she comforts during her missions. But the jewelry can also be used to show simple pleasures in life.

"These here sparkle and they can make you feel good to have a nice piece of jewelry on your arm," she said. "They're colorful, and that simple symbol can mean so much to people."

To find out more about Miss Jackie and her mission work, visit

[www.missjackies](http://www.missjackies.com)

[treasuresoftruth.com](http://treasuresoftruth.com).

- Contact Josh Lanier: 704- 789-9144

#### How to help

The Bead Lady, located at 1 Union St N. in Concord, will act as a drop-off station for items Miss Jackie will take on her next trip to Africa or for other missionaries. She is looking for:

- New shoes
- New sunglasses
- Used jewelry
- Travel-sized shampoo, soaps, lotion
- Antibiotic ointment
- New Socks
- Rubber gloves
- Hats
- Vitamins

To reach Kathleen Reeder, call 704-782-5699.

To reach Miss Jackie, call 704-262-9522

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