

Action Without Borders

Kjerstin Erickson

Founder and Director, FORGE

Kjerstin (pronounced "Share-stin") is supposed to be a senior at Stanford University, finishing up her degree in Public Policy and applying for jobs-but she's not. Instead, she is following her heart down a path for which she is conspicuously under-qualified: Founder and Director of an international NGO.

Deeply involved in service from a very young age, Kjerstin learned early the power and resourcefulness of today's youth. Thus, when she found her true calling in the education and empowerment of African refugees, she knew where to turn for allies in the struggle for justice. She created **FORGE** ("Facilitating Opportunities for Refugee Growth and Empowerment") to harness the potential of youth as catalysts of social change. In its first year of existence, FORGE's many projects reached over 20,000 refugees; this year, they will reach 60,000. Amongst FORGE's accomplishments is the establishment of the largest library in a refugee camp in the world.

Kjerstin was recently named one of America's "Top 10 College Women" by Glamour magazine. But don't let appearances fool you-she still works humbly out of a public computer lab, and is seeking assistance from a kind landlord with extra office or tenant space in the South Bay! Kjerstin is keynoting with FORGE's Associate Director Brandon Cohen, addressing the role of risk in realizing one's dreams.