



## NH pair put a face on need, potential of modern Africa

By NICHOLAS COATES

New Hampshire Union Leader Correspondent

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**NASHUA** – Paul seems an unlikely subject for a success story.

He landed in a Zambian refugee camp in Meheba after his family was split during raids in his Sudanese town. During those raids, Paul was forced to watch his mother and sister raped and killed.

He was forced from Sudan into the Congo and from the Congo into the Zambian camp filled primarily with displaced Angolan and Congolese refugees.

He's about 25 years old, but he doesn't know exactly.

"If you pretty much want a feel-good story about the potential that Africa and its people have, he's the one," said Nicholas Talarico, 25, director of development for FORGE, an organization that has American college-age students work with young refugees in Africa. "When he entered the camp, he had read two or three books in his life, and not in English. Three years later, he's read 76 books — he keeps count — all in English. He's blossomed as a person simply because he was given the opportunity."

Talarico, a 1998 Bishop Guertin High School graduate from Milford, said Paul's story is similar to that of many in Africa in that many of the continent's people do not have access to many basic rights Americans and their businesses take for granted.

Talarico and fellow '98 BG grad Matthew Bartlett of Nashua have been heavily involved in campaigns to educate area residents on the issues Africa faces and what they can do locally for a broader cause.

Last Tuesday night, Bartlett held a ONE Campaign house party in Nashua in conjunction with NBC Nightly News' live broadcast from Africa with U2 lead singer and ONE Campaign advocate Bono.

The party was aimed at engaging the community in the fight against global AIDS and extreme poverty, ONE Campaign Communications Director Meighan Stone said.

The ONE Campaign is a coalition of more than 2 million people working with 70 of the nation's advocacy and humanitarian organizations. Its goal is to get Americans to exert positive political pressure on their elected officials so that those leaders will do more to help save millions of lives in the poorest countries, according to Stone.

Stone said the people of New Hampshire have a unique opportunity to effect change because of the many Presidential candidates who come here to stump.

"The people of the state can let candidates know when they come here that they want to see fair trade, investments in education, money for ARV (Anti-Retro Viral) drugs, debt cancellation and even simple things like money for bed nets," Stone said.

And, what's in it for Americans?

Talarico said that it's prudent to make friends during wartime, especially with a continent that is 40 percent Muslim, while Bartlett said it provides big business opportunities for the country.

"It plays off the old saying, 'You give a man a fish and he eats for a day. You teach him to fish and he eats forever.' Well, if you teach that man to sell a fish, you now have a global economy. This is making globalization work for everyone, especially the bottom 1 billion people, which certainly have a lot to offer."

*For more information about the One Campaign, go to [www.one.org](http://www.one.org).*

*For more information about FORGE, go to [www.forgeprogram.org](http://www.forgeprogram.org).*

*To contact the state's U.S. Senators: call Sen. Judd Gregg at 202-224-3323 or Sen. John Sununu at 202-224-2841.*