

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## FutureDukes

**1990s** Kristin Kennedy Sanford ('95) and Todd, a son, Connor Jason, 3/31/16

**2000s** Crystal Smythe Epton ('01) and Wesley ('00), a son, Brady Wesley, 3/16/17

\* Brittany and Chris Fortier ('02), a daughter, Ansley Kallyn, 2/28/17 \* Courtney and Matt Horn ('02), a son, Hudson Rob-

ert, 9/2016 \* Sheryl Swenson Schy ('04) and Michael ('02), a daughter, Sophie Anne, 3/15/16

\* Kristen Pelosky Rodgers ('06) and Drew ('06), a son, Henry, 1/4/17 \* Amanda Lois ('07) and Zachary, a son, Grant, 5/8/17

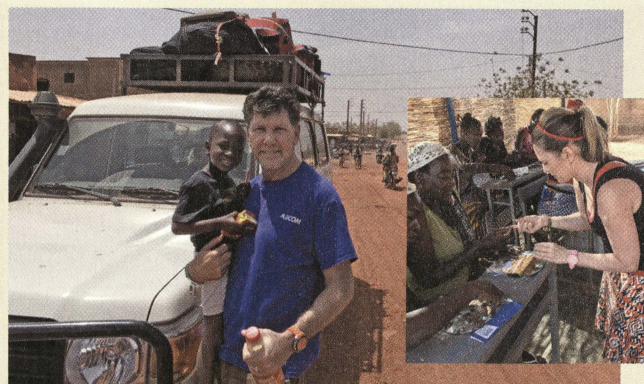
**2010s** Caitrin Rhoads Bennett ('13, '14M) and Chris ('14), a daughter, Ellie Marie, 3/27/17



On Saturday, May 20, 2017, 14 members of the Lambda Chi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha attended the Agape Dinner Soiree Celebration at Foode Restaurant in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Front row (L-R): Mona Martin Larkin ('93), Veleka Studivant Gatliff ('93), Angela Singleton Penn ('93); second row (L-R): Kimberly Fortune Brown ('94), Monyette Foreman Martin ('93), Danielle Ferguson ('94), Nettie Mahone Richards ('95), Tiffany Black Johnson ('95); third row (L-R): Mia Newell Valentine ('95), Clarysa Kelly ('96), Yvette Holmes Sheriff ('95), Nicole Cope-land ('95), Alexis McCombs ('95), Allison Gambrill Peterson ('93), Ebony Parker Waugh ('93)

While space is limited in **Madison** print issues, the Alumni Online Community gives you a chance to tell your full story, share your photos and communicate with other alumni!

Visit [alumni.jmu.edu](http://alumni.jmu.edu) to sign up and start sharing your news.



Steve Starke ('83) helps a child in the village of Yako as part of the Sheltering Wings organization. (Inset): Felicia Starke works with widows in the Women's Crisis Center.

## From Florida to West Africa

Steve Starke ('83), senior project manager, with AECOM's office in Miami, Florida, and his wife, Felicia, have sponsored children and widows in the West African country of Burkina Faso for many years and recently made a goodwill trip to the village of Yako to provide hands-on help as part of the Sheltering Wings organization, based in St. Louis, Missouri. The organization's projects include an orphanage, school and clinic in Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso, formerly known as Upper Volta, is one of the poorest countries in the world and has one of the world's lowest life expectancy rates.

Their two-week trip was busy!

While in Burkina Faso, Steve's geology expertise came in handy when a well was drilled. "It was humbling to be able to help provide a source of life-saving clean water to the people of the village."

Steve and his wife met Gnouga, a widow they sponsor through the Women's Crisis Center, which provides shelter to widows, trains them to bake bread and to make clothing and soap – trades that they can use to support themselves. In some areas in Burkina Faso, widows often become beggars as a result of cultural norms. "Gnouga lives in a 10-by-10 clay hut with no furniture or electricity and sleeps on a mat on a concrete floor," says Steve. "We had the pleasure to give her the first mattress she has ever had, a solar lantern and food items. Getting to meet and hug Gnouga after

sponsoring her for more than two years was an incredible experience."

The couple also met their sponsored child, Justine. Although Burkina Faso has public schools, they are not free. Justine could not afford to go to school without the sponsorship. Steve

and Felicia gave her school supplies, candy and her first backpack.

They also visited a local school and provided 800 pairs of shoes to needy children.

Steve and Felicia celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary while in Burkina Faso. "This trip impressed upon me that even though most of us don't even realize how much we are blessed, it is in blessing others who are less fortunate that we truly receive the greatest blessing," says Steve.

M