

Five friends use 50th birthday as fundraiser for African women

By **DANICA WRIGHT BOOTH**
Staff Writer

Five fabulous females turn 50 in February and have found a fantastic foundation for a fiesta.

The women, many of whom have been friends for more than 20 years, will have a very public birthday party Valentine's week to raise money for the Franklin-based African Leadership.

"The cool thing about all of these women, and why I love them dearly," Terrie Hill said, dabbing at her eyes with a napkin, "is they all want to live lives that have significance and purpose. I just didn't want to spend my life, for the next 20 years, entertaining myself."

African Leadership educates young men to become preachers in Africa and provides relief and development in 22 African countries.

The only other organized fundraising event for the organization is Ellie's Run for Africa, which was begun three years ago by a young Green Hills girl.

At Hill's prompting, the women, and two of their already 50 friends, met with African Leadership founder Larry Warren and decided the money they raise will go to single mothers in the region.

"We do some organized fundraising ourselves," Warren said, "but most of our support comes from individuals."



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These five women from Franklin and Nashville are turning 50 within three months of each other. Instead of throwing large, separate birthday bashes, they're combining their efforts and throwing a fundraiser for African Leadership in February. From left: Julie Hawley, Terrie Hill, Susan Davis (top), Betty Cope and Jane Carroll.

In Northern Uganda, the members of the foundation have built the Village of Hope, which contains nearly 100 homes for families and a vocational training center for single

mothers.

"The other half of their money is going to South Africa," Warren said, speaking of the micro-loans the fundraising will provide. "A

\$200 loan will put most of these women in business. They have kiosks selling fruits, soda, charcoal, sewing."

Cilla Crane and Martha Greenwood both reached 50 a few years ago, but they will assist the five birthday girls, Julie Hawley, Susan Davis, Betty Cope, Jane Carroll and Hill in planning the party.

With her husband, Greenwood runs Big Events Inc. out of Cool Springs and works as a professional party planner.

Their company has put on events for the Nashville Chamber of Commerce, Thomas Nelson Publishers and Verizon Wireless.

What they cannot get donated in the way of dessert and rental fees, the women plan on paying for themselves, so more money can go to relief efforts.

With two of their daughters traveling to Africa on a mission trip, the group has become increasingly passionate about the issue that continues to surface in their lives.

When Carroll saw President Bush speak at Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center recently, she took advantage of a question-and-answer session to quiz him on assistance to the region.

"I asked him, 'What can we do about genocide in Darfur?'" Carroll said. "He gave what I thought was a very thoughtful response.... We've invited him. He's on the list."

"So's Oprah," Hill said, laughing.