Scott Graziano

**Forward 4 Africa**

**How a young, inspired student started an educational movement**

 Clifford Moskow, a Massachusetts native, who ventured on a service trip through his university decided to take full advantage of this life changing experience. Cliff attended St. Lawrence University which is a small liberal arts college located in Canton New York. Cliff is an outgoing charismatic man who always has an interesting story to tell, but when asked what was his most life changing journey, his answer consists of one word, “Africa.” Cliff went into detail about how he was blessed with the opportunity to take a service trip through St. Lawrence to Africa in the early 1980’s. His project while on this trip was to make a documentary, and while he was there his interest quickly gravitated to a Maasai Warrior, Mepeti Ole Serum. Cliff decided to focus his documentary on Mepeti and his people. This encounter was fate.

 The focus of the conversation turned to why this brave warrior peaked Cliff’s attention and as Cliff dove deep into the background of this man it became apparent that Mepeti had a drive and spirit that was something special and the story needed to be told. Mepeti was a very curious and intelligent individual who learned about the outside world from tourists who visited his village. With a hunger to learn more, at the age of nineteen, Mepeti went on to enter the first grade and in just three years graduated with an eighth- grade degree which was unheard of coming from his small village. Mepeti then went on to spread the word of the importance of an education throughout his village. Mepeti was not done there, he went abroad to the United States to foster tourism to his village and spread the word of the Massai culture. Cliff's documentary titled *The Wandering Warrior* played a large role in helping to raise money for these struggling African villagers and helped gain national attention for this cause. After he completed the documentary, Cliff knew there was more work to be done and felt like he needed to do whatever he could to help these people who left such an unforgettable impact on his life.

After this life changing trip, Cliff decided to start his non-profit Forward 4 Africa where he and his family open up schools for struggling African villages. This non-profit started when Cliff returned to where it all began and opened the Mepeti Ole Serum School in the Massai village in Kenya. Cliff, with the help of his four sons, went on to open the Kakamega School, the Thika School, Kibera Red Rose School, and the Malindi Orphanage which is overseen full time by Cliff's sister. This inspirational story which evolved through a singular service trip is the epitome of a life changing experience that is proof a single person can truly make an impact.

**Interview- Forward 4 Africa**

**Cliff Moscow**

**By Scott Graziano**

**Travel**

**Hello Cliff, I was just wondering if you could give a quick background on who you are and where you went to school.**

I am Cliff Moskow. I studied at St. Lawrence University in upstate New York. I work in commercial real estate, and I also own a non-profit called Forward 4 Africa. I am a father of four boys and live in Concord Massachusetts.

**Why Africa? What is your tie there and how did you first become interested?**

I first went to Africa in the early 1980’s when I attended a service trip to one of the small villages while in college. I fell in love with the people, and I came to realize there was so much work that needed to be done there. I felt like I could really make a difference.

**Africa is so large, how do you first come to focus on the areas you chose to help?**

I initially set out to do a documentary for a school project. I learned of a Maasai Warrior, Mepeti Ole Serum. I was intrigued by his story and wanted to learn more. I traveled to his village to do a documentary on him to spread the story of his people.

**What made Mepeti so special?**

At the age of nineteen he became inspired by American tourists that came to volunteer in his village. While he took them on safari he learned about the outside world. He decided to enter first grade, and he actually changed his name to “Tom.” In three years, he graduated with an eighth-grade degree, and he spread the word of the importance of education to others in his village.

**What did Mepeti do with his education?**

He was a skilled warrior and very charismatic. He travelled abroad to the United States to foster tourism to his village and spread the word of the Massai culture. He came to be a sought-after speaker at universities throughout our country. He later married and settled in the United States but frequently returns to his village to help his people, and he has brought tremendous attention and help them. The Maasai Village is where I started my first school with the help of Mepeti. He was my inspiration.

**What is the name of your documentary and how can others get a copy?**

The documentary is called *The Wandering Warrior* and it is available for $50. All proceeds go toward the school, the Mepeti Ole Serum School. The first school I opened in Kenya.

**You have since opened other schools, did you do this alone and where are the other locations?**

I have recruited the help of my four sons.  We currently have opened the Kakamega School, the Thika School, Kibera Red Rose School, and we have opened the Malindi Orphanage. I have a sister who oversees the orphanage full time.

**How can others help?**

There are three ways to help- to contribute with supplies and or money, volunteer- here at home or at the schools/orphanage in Kenya, or just spread the word through networking and social media.

**What are some of your biggest initiatives?**

The biggest initiative is to provide an education to the children of Kenya to help them have a better future. One of the simplest, but most helpful projects, was to provide pens for all the children. Without a pen they could not attend school, and yet they did not have access to pens.

To be honest one of the biggest successes we have achieved are the bonds we have built with the villagers. My sons and I are now adopted members of the tribe, and we have built a sense of trust that has enabled us to accomplish so much for these people.

There is still so much to be done, but it is rewarding to know we have somehow made a difference.

<https://www.forward4africa.org/>