

# LAUREN BUSH



Feed - Send Poverty Packing

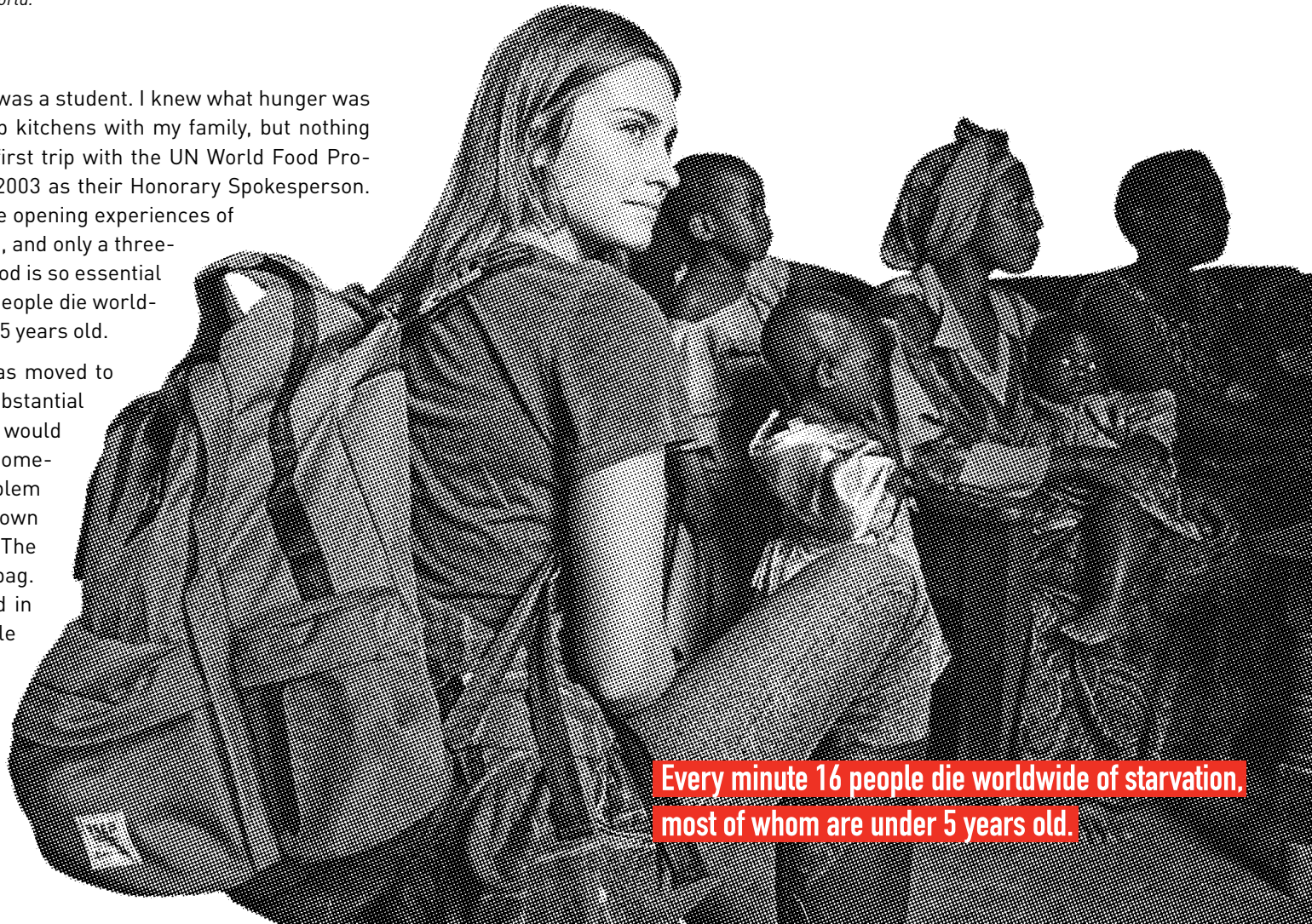
## Lauren Bush

*Former model, activist, and presidential niece Lauren Bush is the Co-Founder and CEO of FEED Projects, a charitable company with the mission of creating good products that help better the world and an honorary spokesperson for the UN World Food Programme. She created the FEED bag with the idea that a reusable bag can feed the world.*

→ [feedprojects.org](http://feedprojects.org); [wfp.org](http://wfp.org)

**M**y journey to FEED started when I was a student. I knew what hunger was only through volunteering at soup kitchens with my family, but nothing could have prepared me for my first trip with the UN World Food Programme (WFP) to Guatemala in 2003 as their Honorary Spokesperson. For me, it was one of the most eye opening experiences of my life. To see poverty and hunger firsthand, and only a three-hour flight from my home, was shocking. Food is so essential that it is unbelievable that every minute 16 people die worldwide of starvation, most of whom are under 5 years old.

Through my education and my travels, I was moved to fight world hunger in a measurable and substantial way. And I had an inkling that other people, would enjoy a meaningful and tangible way to do something as well. But how does one take a problem as big as WORLD HUNGER and break it down so everyone can be apart of the solution? The answer I came up with was as simple as a bag. Each "FEED 1" bag sold would feed 1 child in school for 1 year - and the bag would double as a reusable, eco-friendly bag and cool badge of honor for whoever might buy one. I designed the first "FEED 1" bag to look like the bags of grain being distributed around the world by WFP. Thus people are connected aesthetically to the cause, as well as by the measurable donation each bag makes.



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Now fast forward 4 years, and FEED Projects the company is born. I partnered with Ellen Gustafson, who was working at WFP at the time - and with sheer enthusiasm and idealism we began selling FEED bags! Today, FEED has sold over 500,000 bags which equates to over 50 million meals, and we are still striving to "create good products that FEED the world", which is our company mission statement.

But lets back up... before the bags started selling, I had the privilege of meeting Jeffrey Sachs at a party in New York. I had read his book "End of Poverty" and underlined almost every line- he was one of my idols. Beyond being a brilliant economist, he is also a very compassionate and likable person. I told him about my FEED bag scheme

and he agreed to meet with me- in his home, with his family- to hear my ideas. He gave me advice and encouragement, which I will always be grateful for!

Now lets fast forward to the present... Jeffrey Sachs and his lovely (and equally brilliant) wife Sonia contacted FEED in search of a bag provider for their new Community Health Worker (CHW) Program. Being the vendor of all things bag and humanitarian related, this seemed like a perfect fit! Essentially there are over 900 trained CHWs serving twelve clusters of Millennium Villages in Africa. They provide door-to-door, basic healthcare to their communities. But they had been doing these household visits with limited supplies, as they could not carry everything they need. Daily, CHWs walk miles, sometimes in very rough terrain, to visit all the houses they are responsible for. The backpack we designed is made of recycled nylon material, with each pocket purposefully laid out for a specific purpose. We succeeded in making the bag environmentally-friendly, while also being functional and durable. Also the bag has to serve the important dual purpose of being appropriate for an American kid to bring to school and also for an African CHW to use as their doctor bag.

After the bag was developed, we got the amazing opportunity to visit Community Health Workers using their new FEED Health backpacks in Ruhiira, Uganda. It was a thrilling moment to arrive after a day of travel to a rural village and see a smiling Ugandan woman carrying the backpack. Armed with her bag, she looked so professional, and acted equally so, that you would easily confuse her for a proper doctor. She had her bag packed to the brim with medical supplies - Malaria tests, birth control, bandages, vitamins, a comprehensive health manual, and much more that she had neatly organized and labeled.

We spent the next few days doing household visits with several Community Health Workers. To see the way people live in little mud and tin box houses scattered on

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lush, banana tree covered mountains was amazing! During our household visits, I was most impressed to see how receptive everyone was to have the CHWs, their community peers, come into

their homes and give their family basic healthcare. I saw the relief on a mother's face when her child's Malaria test came back negative. And I saw another woman with seven kids choose to take birth control, probably for the first time, to prevent having more children that she could not feed or educate. It is moments like these that the FEED Health Backpack help enable. By buying a backpack, you are empowering Community Health Workers to provide a revolutionary healthcare system in Africa. Join the movement!

