

Othakarhaka
“Passing on the Kindness”

Ida Puliwa is a young woman in Mulanje, Malawi. An excellent student, she had dreams of attending University, but her family did not have the means. However, her command of English allowed her to work as an interpreter, and she built a strong bond with a Blacksburg woman, Marquita Hill for whom she often interpreted. Ms. Hill, who visits Malawi every year to help and work in community development, offered to pay for Ida’s University fees.

When Ida asked how she could ever repay her, she simply said, “Pass on the Kindness.”

In 2011, after University, Ms. Ida did just that. She returned to her home in Mulanje and founded a grassroots self-help group, Othakarhaka, which means: “Passing on the Kindness.”

In just a few years Othakarhaka has grown to over 2500 community member-volunteers in community development programs addressing local issues of education, orphan and elderly care, adult literacy, public health, malnutrition, irrigation, sustainable agriculture, and more.