

Faithful to the Children



"I'm founder and director of the Global Medical Relief Fund. I help children who are the victims of war or natural disasters," says Elissa.

Her interest in helping children was piqued at a fundraiser for Bosnia. "After the fundraiser, I scheduled a meeting with the ambassador to Bosnia. He reached in his drawer and handed me this letter this boy had written to him. He had lost his two arms and legs to a land mine," she recalls. "After my meeting with the ambassador, my whole life turned around. I, fortunately, worked for an orthopedic surgeon. I said to him, 'Can you help him?' We both reached out together. We got together. We got prosthetic companies. We got a hospital. We got the airlines."



Elissa eventually brought the boy, Kenan, home to live with her. Now 24, Kenan is a spokesperson for her foundation, and a role model to many children. "I feel like she gave birth to me," he says. "Through meeting her and getting physical help, therapy, prosthetics, she also healed me mentally."

"Over the past 10 years, we've helped about 60 children," Elissa says. "I am so blessed. I have the Shriners Children's Hospital. They provide the prosthetics, the surgery and the rehabilitation for free, until the children are 21."

Elissa says her biggest obstacle is not having enough money, but she stays committed to her cause. "If you believe in something strong enough, then you're just going to go for it all the way," she says.

Dr. Phil says, "You've given so much of yourself and so much of your life," he says. "When Robin sat down to write *Inside My Heart*, what she said is she wanted to inspire and connect with women who were using their lives, using their hearts, to make such a huge difference in this world."



Dr. Phil and Robin have created "The Heart of a Woman" award, which honors women who choose to live with passion and purpose.

"For being who you are, for living with the courage and conviction to reach out beyond yourself and do something that can make a difference in the world, we would like to present to you the first 'Heart of a Woman' award," Dr. Phil tells Elissa. "We do it to draw attention to your work and everything you do. We are honored to present this to you."



Robin says she is proud of Elissa's story. "I was not only very moved, but very humbled by you. From my heart to yours, I really want to thank you for all that you are doing for all women, all men, but especially for all children. No one deserves this more right now than you, and I so thank you," she says, embracing Elissa.

Dr. Phil has another surprise. "To exemplify this, Robin got together with the folks at Tacori to design something special just for you," he tells Elissa, presenting her with a pendant.

"It's the 'Heart of a Woman' diamond pendant," Robin announces. "It's made of white gold with a pink sapphire, and it has an inscription that says, 'To live with passion and purpose.'"

"We know that it's all about raising funds for you to move these children around to get all the help that they did," Dr. Phil says. "One of our partners, E-Loan, which is one of the online lending institutions, wanted to make a donation in your behalf to the Global Medical Relief fund for \$40,000!"



"Thank you so much!" Elissa says, overwhelmed.

To make a donation to the Global Medical Relief Fund, [click here](#), or visit their Web site: www.globmed.org.

Some of the footage on Elissa was provided by the documentary "To Walk Without Fear."