

Luanne Leonard, a UNBer writes warmly about her travels throughout Southern Africa

# Life in an African

## *A visitor's persp*

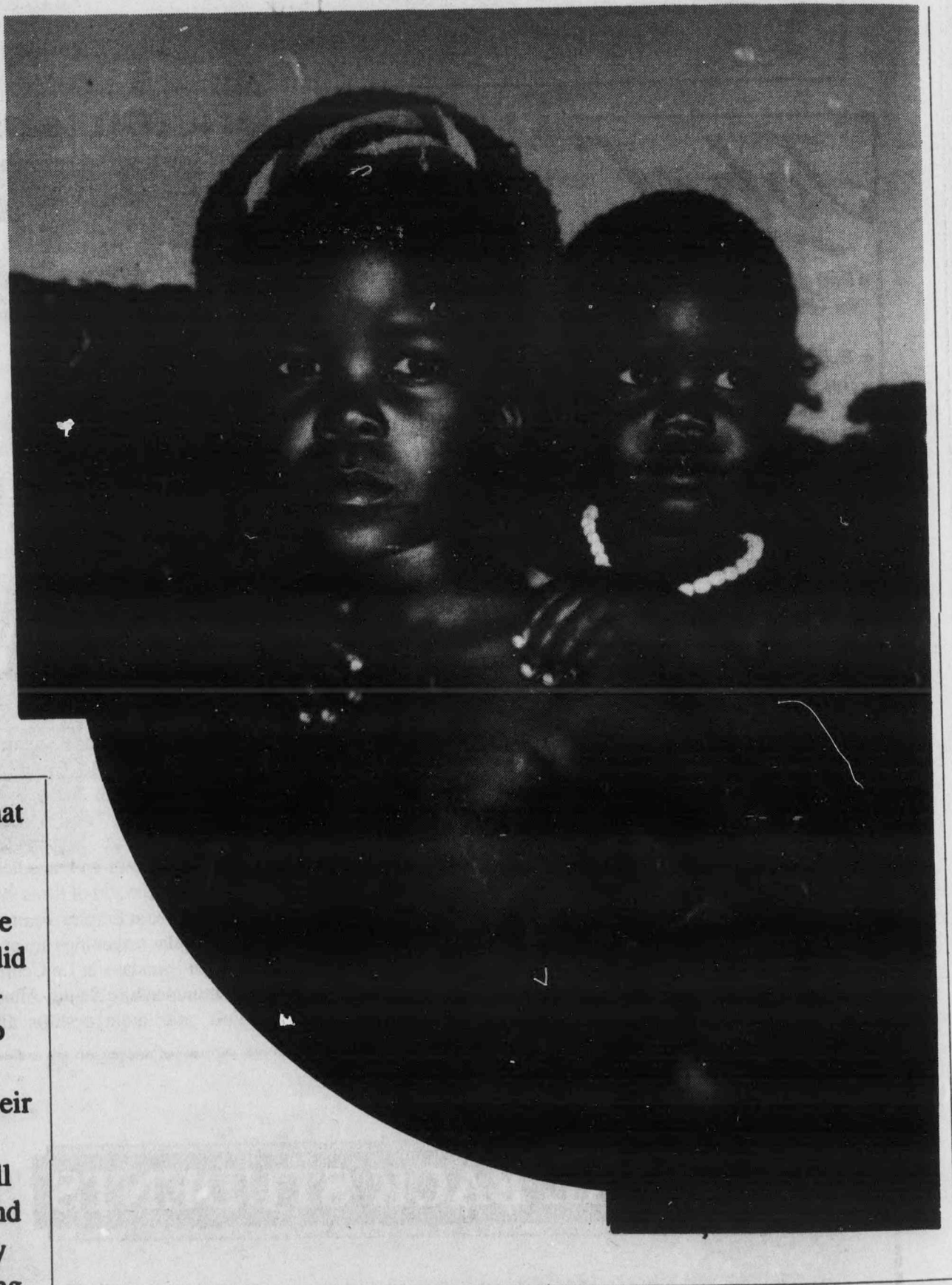
Luanne Leonard has recently returned from a five month volunteer placement in Botswana, Africa with Canadian Crossroads International.

**A**s I walked onto the plane at Toronto's International Airport I asked myself "what will my life be like in one week?" I knew that I was about to experience something totally different from anything I had experienced before, but I did not realize how wonderful it really would be. Two days and a lot of nerves later I landed at the Sir Seretse Khama airport in Gaborone, the capital of Botswana. Going to see the developing world for myself was never the question - I knew that I would - it was just a matter of when and could I handle it. Canadian Crossroads International gave me a chance to live out my dreams; or at least it gave me a small taste of these or at least gave me a small taste of these dreams.

**I** learned soon after I had arrived in Botswana that I had brought along with me a lot of misconceptions about what my host country was going to be like. I guess I was expecting to see rampant poverty, desolate faces, beggars in the streets, and starving children. I did not see these things, although in some parts of the developing world this is exactly what one would see. To the unexpected and quite pleasant contrary, I saw a world of happy, healthy people struggling to better their lives and the lives of their children. Yes, Botswana is still a so-called third world country and its people still suffer needlessly from health problems such as TB and malnutrition, and they are generally poor in monetary terms, but Botswana is healthy in happiness and strong value systems. It is rich in beauty and culture, and above all it is populated by perhaps the friendliest and most genuine people you will ever find.

**B**otswana is a landlocked country located in southern-central Africa. It is bordered by the Republic of South Africa on the South and south-east, on the north and north-east by the independent state of Zimbabwe, and on the west by the newly independent state of Namibia. Botswana itself is a very arid country, eighty-four percent of whose land mass is taken by the Kalahari Desert. Therefore a mere sixteen percent of the the land is inhabited by just over one million people. A small percentage of the population actually lives in the Kalahari. These are the indigenous people of Botswana who call themselves the BaSarwa, although they are commonly known as the Bushmen. However, the BaSarwa are abandoning their traditional ways for a more "modern" way of life in the villages, towns, and the major urban centres.

**W**ithin the cities and the villages of Botswana live the various tribes who came from surrounding areas. I lived in a



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