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...telling the stories of women*



SAVING MY SISTER

**By Elaine Houston**

In her native country of Liberia people with mental disabilities are thought to be victims of witchcraft, bad karma, or evil spirits. But when **Lovetie Major** saw pictures of kids in the U.S. who looked exactly like her sister, she realized her sister suffered from Down Syndrome. She was excited-now she had a diagnosis. She brought her sister here and she learned to read and earned a vocational education. Lovetie then started a non-profit called "My Heart's Appeal." She also set up the Down Syndrome Association of Liberia in 2013. 100 students utilize the programs so far. She also wrote a book about how her sister inspired her to help others. It's called, "**A Sibling's Vow.**" **Shespeaks2us!**  
For more information on My Hearts Appeal, go to [www.myheartsappeal.org](http://www.myheartsappeal.org)

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## SHE SPEAKS 2 ME-DOES SHE SPEAK 2 U?

Women are changing the world. We are activists, scientists, teachers and preachers. We are changing our communities, the status quo and the old way of doing things. We're not a part of the club or the clicke, We are here to blow people's minds.

## LOVETIE'

**THE COURAGEOUS WOMAN WHO TRAVELED HUNDREDS OF MILES TO SAVE HER SISTER!**



....SHE GOT AN EDUCATION  
....SHE STARTED AN ORGANIZATION  
....SHE CHANGED THE COURSE OF HER SISTER'S LIFE

To ask Lovetie Major to talk about her sister is to touch her heart. In fact, her non-profit organization which helps those with developmental issues in her native country of Liberia is called "My Heart's Appeal." It is in Liberia that she watched as people marginalized her sister and others like her who suffer from Down Syndrome and other developmental disorders. In Liberia those with mental disabilities are not educated—Lovetie's sister Titema Telewoda has never attended school in their home town of Monrovia. Lovetie says the culture there believes those with mental disabilities are victims of witchcraft, bad karma, or evil spirits.!

However, when Lovetie saw students in the U.S. with Down Syndrome, she was awestruck. "Tears came to my eyes," she said. First, there was finally a diagnosis for her sister's condition but equally important was the fact that those students were getting an education and a chance to be productive. She knew she had to help her sister.

In 1994 she earned her Masters degree in Maryland in Special Education. She brought her sister over from Liberia hoping she too could be educated but her sister was almost 18 and too old to begin an educational program and try and catch up. So she was enrolled instead in vocational school, learned to read and got a job with a Movable Feast group-providing meals to the elderly. Accomplishments that made Lovetie and her family back home very proud.!

But, there are times when helping those you know personally and love isn't enough. Lovetie says God told her to go back to Liberia and help others there just like her sister. But, it wasn't that easy. There was still a stigma against people like her sister. There are education programs for those who are blind and deaf-but there was still no law making it possible for those with developmental illnesses to get an education.

So, she came back to the United States and taught disabled students -learning her craft- and then went back to Liberia and started a vocational program as well as residential day care center. She also set up the Down Syndrome Association of Liberia in 2013. 100 students utilize the programs so far. She also wrote a book about how her sister inspired her to help others. It's called, "A Sibling's Vow."

Then came Ebola and now the school and programs are shut down until the crisis is contained. However, Lovetie isn't stopping. She is raising money through her non-profit because she knows her heart is big enough to help so many more. For more information on My Hearts Appeal, go to [www.myheartsappeal.org](http://www.myheartsappeal.org)