

# White-hatted supermodel Tasha de Vasconcelos 'very honoured' by Calgary tribute

BY LICIA CORBELLA, CALGARY HERALD AUGUST 27, 2010

Presented By:



Tasha de Vasconcelos, International super-model, actress, humanitarian and the 2010 European Union Ambassador for combating poverty and social exclusion was white hatted by Deputy Mayor Ric McIver during a ceremony at the Calgary office of Lifeline Malawi on Thursday August 26 2010 in Calgary. She was white

**Photograph by:** Dean Bicknell, Calgary Herald

"Wow," said Ald. Ric McIver to Tasha de Vasconcelos. "You look good in a white cowboy hat."

Talk about a gross understatement.

Fact is, de Vasconcelos -- who was white-hatted by McIver for her work with the Calgary charity Lifeline Malawi -- is an international supermodel and actress who looks fantastic in everything and has graced the covers of most major fashion magazines as a result.

"I feel very honoured to have this," said a blushing de Vasconcelos in the humble southeast Calgary offices of Lifeline Malawi. "J'adore. Merci."

De Vasconcelos, who lived through two civil wars, first in her native Mozambique and then what is now Zimbabwe, spent her teenage years in Vancouver, where she was discovered as a model and attended the University of British Columbia.

"Canada adopted me; I'm a Canadian citizen and I love Canada," said de Vasconcelos who lives in

Monaco but says her "heart is still in Africa."

The actress -- who starred in the British comedy, Johnny English, opposite Rowan Atkinson -- met Lifeline's founder, Calgary physician Chris Brooks, at an Anglican Church in Paris. He was speaking about the incredible need in the southeastern African country.

With tears streaming down her face, she approached the good doctor and told him that she wanted to help him save the lives of Malawians through her own charitable organization, Amor.

Quite independently, her uncle, Cecil Hards, who lives in Calgary, joined the volunteer board of Lifeline Malawi, so it's become a bit of a family affair.

That was in 2006. Last April, de Vasconcelos again had tears streaming down her face as she officially opened a maternity clinic that was fully financed and equipped by Amor, located at Lifeline's Kasese clinic.

Since the maternity clinic has opened, said de Vasconcelos, 502 infants have been born there and that has saved the lives of many babies and mothers and prevented the mother-to-child spread of AIDS.

Pat Laforet, who lives in Malawi and is Lifeline's executive director, says his wife recently helped deliver a baby at the Amor maternity clinic.

"After the birth, the mother bled and bled, and had she not given birth at the clinic, it's certain she would have died. As a result, three little children were not orphaned that day," said Laforet.

Last year, Lifeline Malawi treated more than 200,000 patients at its two clinics, saving thousands of lives.

De Vasconcelos said she is aware that many scoff at "another supermodel talking about humanitarian work. I don't care if it's not in fashion to do this work, it's what I've been called to do."

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