

We have our eye on

Mariatu Kamara

by Elaine O'Connor



In 1999, when Mariatu Kamara was 12, the Sierra Leone native was captured by child soldiers, who hacked off her hands. An estimated 20,000 civilians – half of them children – suffered similar amputations in the 11-year civil war. Another 50,000 were killed. Kamara survived, trekking to a medical clinic in another village. There she discovered she was pregnant, the result of a rape. Her son, Abdul, died of malnutrition before his first birthday. But still, she didn't give up.

Living in an amputee camp, she found new hope working for an awareness-raising theatre troupe. After reading about Kamara's plight, a Canadian man stepped forward to bring her to Ontario. She eventually found a home with a Sierra Leonean family in Pickering.

Today, Kamara is studying to be a counsellor for women and children who have experienced violence. Through her foundation (Mariatufoundation.com), she plans to build shelters backhome. She's a UNICEF spokesperson and is also raising awareness about child victims of war with her 2008 memoir, *The Bite of the Mango*. "All of their stories will be heard through this story," she says. "I may not have hands, but I have a voice."



HAVE YOU HEARD?

by Anna-Kaisa Walker

Nike's Just Do it slogan isn't doing it anymore, at least not in Europe. A slick new series of web films have debuted on NikeWomen.com, starring fierce female athletes such as the tennis pro Maria Sharapova. The new, softer slogan? Here I Am. Our pity reply? We're not sold. Thanks, Nike, but we can do more than just show up.

From the headlines

National Public Radio
 "RI schools required to teach about dating violence"
 by Siri Agrell

Rhode Island students in grades 7 through 12 are now being taught about dating violence, thanks to a law named after Lindsay Ann Burke, a 23-year-old who was murdered by her boyfriend in 2005. In Canada, a healthy-relationship program called "The Fourth R" was launched in 2001 and is taught in more than 800 high schools; several provinces (including Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia) have also created their own curriculums. While the message doesn't always get through – 38 percent of New Brunswick high-school students say they've experienced dating violence, despite being taught how to prevent and escape it – other stats show that violence decreases in schools that teach the curriculum. We say make it mandatory.

Someone to Watch

By Traiee Pearce

START

paying down your debt.

Christmas is over and all you have to show for it is a massive credit-card bill. Jump on it, says the financial guru Gail Vaz-Oxlade. Start with a monthly budget, based on your November expenses (December will be all out of whack). "Then go to it with a red pen," she advises. Say buy-bye to unnecessary expenditures and apply the extra cash to your cards. Pay off your highest-interest plastic first, while covering the minimums on any others. And cut off future spending, literally, by cutting up each card as you pay it off.

STOP

buying diet books.

It's one of the world's greatest mysteries (aside from what Katie sees in Tom): Why do smart women fall for fad diets? Despite its spotty rep, the Atkins regime soldiers on with yet another "new" edition hitting the shelves this month. And don't even get us started about the laundry list of other just-released titles, including *The Ultimate Tea Diet*, that hope to profit from the extra five pounds we've put on. Skip the bookstore and download one of our free dietitian-designed meal plans on Chatelaine.com instead.

Crush of the month

by Siri Agrell



Jason Segel

If the name doesn't ring any bells, this should: He's the guy who bared all in the surprisingly sweet romcom *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*. But Jason Segel – who also stars in CBS's *How I Met Your Mother* – is so much more than two minutes of full frontal. The cuddly man-child first charmed us in Judd Apatow's cult TV hits *Freaks and Geeks* and *Undeclared*. This month you'll find him in the big-screen comedy *I Love You, Man* – fully clothed, but as unguarded as ever.

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARIATU KAMARA, TONY ROCKY/THE TORONTO JUPITER IMAGES; JASON SEGEL, LEFT: P. C.