



# Ashley *Mariko* Johnson

Founder, Mohala Eyewear

Ashley Mariko Johnson created Mohala Eyewear to provide a glasses line that complements a woman's style and her worldview. Through its partnership with Room to Read, Mohala helps bright young girls in Asia and Africa continue their education, which allows them to contribute to their families and community in ways that would not otherwise be possible. Beyond creating a product with a purpose, Johnson is also committed to spreading awareness about the importance of equality of education in developing countries. —*Morgan Chamberlain*

*"I struggled with reading in the first grade and had an amazing teacher at Punahou, Mrs. Betsy Hata, who spent time during recess to help me. That's why I'm so passionate about Room to Read and education—I know the experience of struggling at something and having someone help you until it becomes your strength."*

**What is your favorite charitable cause and why?**

Education because education is power. It creates confidence and self-worth, and inspires dreams and passions, which translate to drive, work ethic, career success and financial stability. This helps prevent people from being trafficked and becoming victims of violence and hunger. Education alters a human's worldview; it changes lives. An educated girl in the developing world will be healthier, live longer, empower herself against violence and adversity, lift her community and country, help her family, and educate her children so they can have a better life than her. Education builds sustainability; it is transformative.

**Why do you choose to give back?**

I've been blessed to be born in the United States, have incredible parents and receive a wonderful education from the teachers and staff at Punahou School and Santa Clara University. I did not get to where I am on my own and would not be who I am without those who have taught me and supported my success. To me, giving back means paying it forward and perpetuating the goodwill that has shaped my life and enabled me to be able to

help others. I also find it horrifying that, in 2018, these injustices are still happening to women worldwide.

**What is your biggest charitable accomplishment?**

Establishing the partnership between Mohala Eyewear and Room to Read has been my biggest charitable accomplishment to date. Since the launch of Mohala in December 2017, we have already been able to contribute thousands of dollars to Room to Read and raise awareness about the horrific socioeconomic issues that plague young females around the world. I truly believe our donations are saving girls' lives, and that is a huge accomplishment for Mohala.

**When did you decide to make Mohala Eyewear a business of social entrepreneurship?**

A turning point on my journey to starting my own business was seeing *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, a powerful documentary that chronicled the victimization of women around the world. That's when Mohala established a partnership with Room to Read Girls' Education Program and committed to support their mission. Our goal is for Mohala to fund 770 years of schooling by 2020.