



African Library Project

Newsletter 2010

Dear Friends,

Whoosh! 2009 was another year of amazing work by our US book drive organizers and our African library partners. Over 200,000 books were donated to create 210 new libraries. In 2010, our ambitious goal of 300 libraries will be a 50% increase and will mean nearly one new library per day for African readers!

The secret of our success is, of course, our African partners and our U.S. volunteers. In 2009, the Swaziland National Library Service received their first two containers. They are transforming them into 50 thriving libraries. Malawi also joined our ALP family. In an innovative arrangement, DAPP Teacher Training College in Malawi is offering a course in simple library management to their student teachers, so they can apply for an ALP library at their new school placement. The Botswana Ministry of Education continues to be a strong partner and has now turned our donated books into 154 terrific primary school libraries.

At the ALP Summit our partners from across Africa met 60 teacher-librarians from Lesotho to learn from each other and celebrate the 120 ALP libraries in Lesotho that are absolutely transforming the educational opportunities in this Kingdom. The U.S. Ambassador and his wife inspired us with their personal stories of how a love of reading shaped their lives. During our visit to Swaziland, we were inspired by the great work of FUNDZA, a non-profit devoted to rural school library development. We are honored to join with FUNDZA as our newest partner in Africa.

I continue to be in awe of the hard work and initiative of our US book drive organizers. Without you, nothing would happen. The African Library Project Board and I are deeply grateful for your compassion, leadership and vision. Here's to 300 libraries in 2010!

Don't be shy. Tell everyone about us. They might start a book drive!

In gratitude,

Chris

ALP Summit Whopping Success

In November 2009, our 3-day African Partners Summit brought together 20 delegates from 5 countries. On Day 1 we visited four unique libraries in the tiny mountain kingdom of Lesotho. Our partners from Malawi, Swaziland, Botswana, and Lesotho were fascinated to learn about best practices for small classroom collections and for elaborate high school libraries. Day 2 sparked vigorous discussion on topics like best practices in teacher-librarian training and the application process for new libraries. We rolled out a new library evaluation system that uses cell phone texting to report hard-to-get statistics from each library. In the evening, 60 enthusiastic teacher-librarians from Lesotho arrived for their first international conference. After dinner, all 90 participants went wild with delight as they watched our ALP documentary short, *In Their Own Words*. On Day 3, our international team facilitated workshops on funding ideas for libraries, motivating readers, implementing ALP's new tracking system, and library staffing.

The afternoon featured a huge celebration in honor of ALP's 120 libraries in Lesotho. The local school choir performed songs in tight four-part harmony while we watched a traditional knee dance. We heard stories about the life-changing power of books and a moving keynote speech by the American Ambassador and his wife. There were tears of joy when we awarded our Compassion in Action Awards to Peace Corps Volunteer Becky Banton and Botswana Field Coordinator Olga Tsimanyane. We gave each teacher-librarian a special bag of books for their library, and (I am not making this up) they erupted again and again in spontaneous singing! The final evening campfire sparked stories, songs and dancing by each country.

A phenomenal Summit!



Our Mission

The African Library Project's mission is to start and improve small libraries in sub-Saharan Africa while educating Americans about Africa.

Our Guiding Principles

- **Partnership.** We create vital partnerships between organizers of book drives and African communities.
- **Community involvement.** We proudly rely on local, grass-roots participation to collect, sort, pack and ship books from North America and to set up, promote and run libraries in Africa.
- **Volunteerism.** We rely on a network of talented volunteers who contribute with heart and keep our operations affordable.
- **Efficiency.** We make it easy for anyone to collect and ship books, so that people with limited resources can still have a huge impact.
- **Sustainability.** We don't just ship books. We provide systems, support and follow-up to make sure our libraries succeed.
- **Cultural fit.** We send books with universal appeal or with specific relevance to Africa.
- **Learning for all.** We educate our book drive volunteers, especially schoolchildren, about current conditions in Africa.
- **Environmental impact.** We recycle gently used English language books to help meet the urgent shortage of books in Africa. Many of these books would otherwise end up in landfills.

The First ALP High School Club is Born!

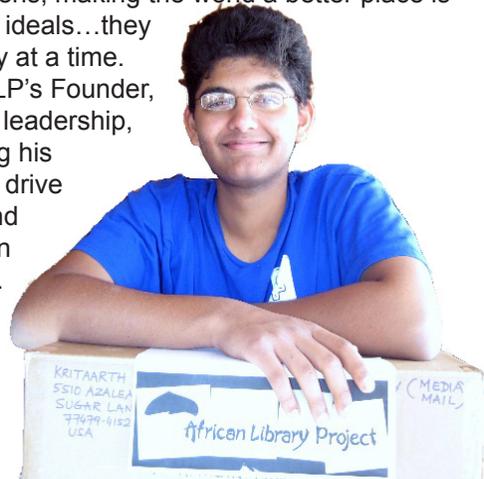
In Sugarland, Texas, 15 year old Kritarth Mahankali wants to make a lasting impact on the world. So he gathered his family and friends to organize a book drive to start four libraries in Lesotho and Swaziland during the 2008-9 school year. "That was pretty cool, but I thought we could do much more if we organized an African Library Project Club at my school." So Kritarth found a faculty sponsor at Clements High School and called an introductory meeting. Eighty eager teens showed up to help! Now the Club meets every other Monday after school. On alternate Mondays, the club's officers meet to plan.

Club members collect books from home and from friends and neighbors. The students meet in Kritarth's garage on Sundays to sort and pack books. They raise money to ship the books by selling African Library Project t-shirts at school and soliciting donations door-to-door in their neighborhoods.

Kritarth celebrated his 16th birthday in December by shipping three more school/community libraries to Lesotho as a result of the Club's efforts. Next semester, the Club will run their first school-wide book drive. As they gain more experience, they hope to organize book drives in the members' elementary and middle schools and to mentor other high schools to start ALP clubs.

For this group of teens, making the world a better place is more than just talking ideals...they are doing it one library at a time.

Chris Bradshaw, ALP's Founder, applauded Kritarth's leadership, "Kritarth is leveraging his experience as a book drive organizer to recruit and empower others to run their own book drives. He is breaking new ground, and I welcome other high school students to start their own African Library Project Club."



Celebrate Africa! ALP-Style

At our fall fundraiser, 175 people united on a sunny Sunday afternoon to "Celebrate Africa!" in Portola Valley, California. We had fabulous home-cooked African food (the Cameroonian greens, Poulet DJ and banana beignets went fast.) Storyteller Awele showed us the power of oral tradition, and our guests danced to African drums, carried buckets of water atop their heads, and tie-died shirts in traditional African style.

We also celebrated the amazing accomplishments of our volunteers. River Trail Middle School, Nancy Wilson, and St. Liborius Church Youth Group received Compassion in Action awards for their stellar efforts in starting libraries in Africa through the African Library Project. Generous individual donors contributed \$17,000 to support our work, plus a giant \$10,000 check from Microsoft was presented. Partygoers donated enough books in one day for Corte Madera School to start two more libraries in Lesotho. We sure know how to party!

A Lifesaving Book



Sometimes a single book can change a life. Rethabile, a 16-year-old student, was terribly depressed. Her teacher, Mapele Thabang Daemane, tried to draw her out, but she seemed unreachable. Then he found an ALP book, *The Mystery of Love*, and he read aloud some passages

to Rethabile. As she listened to the moving prose and the concerned teacher's voice, something broke loose in the troubled girl's heart. She began to cry and share her story with the kind teacher.

Rethabile's father had died. The young girl was caregiver for her mother and the family's sole provider. Hungry and no longer able to pay her school fees, she feared she must drop out of school. Then she was raped. "I must admit," the young girl said to her teacher as she clutched *The Mystery of Love*, "I was about to do something horrible today." She reached into her bag and handed him the poison pellet that would have ended her life later that day.

Mapele later invited a group of troubled students to meet after school. The students shared their stories with each other: parents and siblings lost to AIDS, their own HIV positive status, and tales of hunger, rape, and hardship. As the stories flowed, the walls of isolation crumbled, and powerful bonds of friendship began to grow.

Mapele arranged for a school scholarship for Rethabile and pledged to help her through this dark period of her life. Now he credits the book sent from California Middle School with saving Rethabile's life.

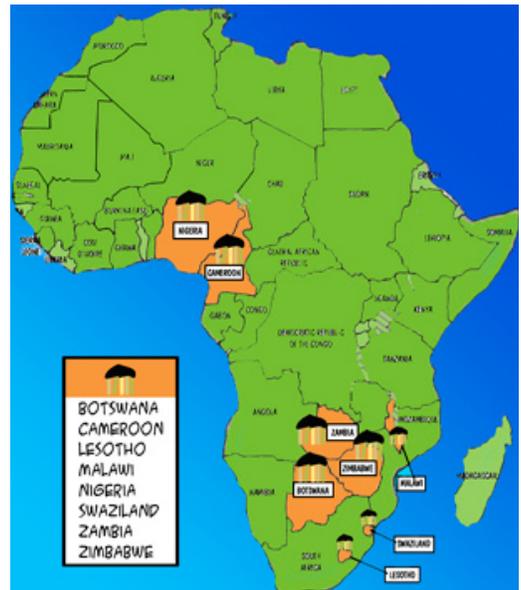
Before your books, I was only one teacher in a classroom of many children. Now each book is a teacher, and each child has many teachers.

- Grade 1 Teacher/ Linotsing Primary School, Lesotho

Why Donate to ALP?

There are so many great causes. Why does ALP deserve your contribution?

- We support literacy and fight poverty by giving eager readers the tools for learning.
- We empower local people to run African libraries for Africans.
- We are green – we keep hundreds of thousands of used books out of U.S. landfills and give them to people who need them most.
- We are all-volunteer in labor, so your dollars go to essential supplies and services, not salaries and overhead.
- We make the world smaller by providing U.S. book donors with a chance to personally make a difference for an African community.



Yes! I want to make a difference!

Donation Options

- Donate online: www.africanlibraryproject.org/donate.html
- Enclose a check for \$ _____, made payable to African Library Project.

Name _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

Day Phone _____ Home Phone _____

My donation is in honor of / in memory of _____

Address: _____

African Library Project is a 501(c)3 corporation. Your donation is tax-deductible: Federal Tax ID # 65-1261685

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Training Teacher-Librarians in Botswana

By Amy Hanson

I am a library school grad student and a former Peace Corps Volunteer. I am also passionate about children's literacy, so when I heard of the opportunity to come to Botswana to train teacher-librarians, I jumped at the chance.

For the past three months, I have been living and working at the Kanye Education Centre, the hub of ALP in Botswana. Here I have had the opportunity to visit schools, appear on Botswana TV, and meet the Botswana Minister of Education. Recently we conducted our first training workshop for 30 teacher-librarians. It is amazing how much we have accomplished in three short months but there is still so much to be done. People have so much respect for the African Library Project and so much determination to make it a success in primary schools across Botswana.

One of the goals of the African Library Project is to foster a culture of reading in Botswana. When I visit schools, I can see we are already making progress. The children love the library and are so excited to tell me what they are reading. Every school has a timetable for library visits, and if a teacher forgets to bring them on time, the children remind her so they never miss their opportunity to read.

It has been amazing to work in Botswana and see first-hand what a difference these books are making in children's lives. They have opportunities that many of their parents never had, and they are taking full advantage of them to improve their future.



Did you know?

- ALP has started 375 libraries since 2004.
- Our libraries are in African countries where English is the primary language of instruction.
- The amazing friends and families of US Peace Corps Volunteers have started 60 libraries.
- We take all ages! Serena Kapoor, age 8, from Atlanta, GA and John and Eunice Lassiter, age 80+, from Yukon, OK just completed their book drives.
- Girl Scouts and Brownies' girl power has started 51 libraries!
- You can become a Facebook Fan and learn about our latest news from Africa, stories, and shipping information at www.facebook.com/africanlibraryproject.



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