



friends of **African**  
**Village** libraries

Generous donors have enabled FAVL to establish and continuously manage twelve libraries in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda. FAVL also supports the Uganda Community Library Association, with 42 member libraries.

### Current fundraising priorities:

- Building an endowment for each of the FAVL-managed community libraries;
- Hosting summer reading camps in each library;
- Producing more micro-books in the local languages and the language of instruction;
- Continuing to build staff capacity to prepare for expansion.

Friends of African Village Libraries is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit.

*West Africa Director*  
Michael Kevane  
Associate Professor of Economics  
Santa Clara University

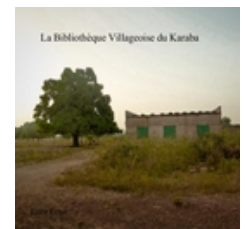
*East Africa Director*  
Kate Parry,  
Professor of English  
Hunter College  
City University of New York

Newsletter Editor Lori Zink

## Successful Launch of *Reading West Africa* Program

This month marks the close of an intensive four-month immersion experience for the nine international students in the *Reading West Africa* study abroad program in Burkina Faso, a partnership between FAVL and Santa Clara University in California. Courses in Development Economics, Civic Engagement, and Digital Photography were taught by SCU Professors Michael Kevane, Leslie Gray, and David Pace, respectively. Long-time FAVL supporter Alain Sissao, a prominent West African literary critic, taught a course in the literature of francophone West Africa. SCU is now accepting applications for *Reading West Africa* for Fall 2010.

The students also served as hands-on interns in the community libraries, working with villagers to create micro-books to help children and adults learn to read. Pictured here are books by (clockwise from right): Elena Giralt, Erica Ernst, and Lizzie Guerra. FAVL's blog has a link to the website where all the books can be viewed.



## Ugandan Librarians: Acting Locally and Interacting Globally



Following a long, dusty bus trip to Tanzania, a team from the Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA), participated in August in the *6th Pan African Conference on Reading For All* in Dar es Salaam, and also in a smaller but very productive workshop in Lushoto.

A side-trip led the Ugandan team to the two-day workshop (photo at right) with a group of Tanzanian community library promoters, where they shared strategies for overcoming their common challenges and planted the seeds for a much-needed East African network of community libraries.

One project highlighted was the collaborative creation of a children's story book in the Luganda language, *Essanyu*



(continued p.2)

## News and views

### ***Ugandan Librarians in Tanzania*** (continued from p.1)

*l'yabato* (*Joy of Children*) at the Kabubbu Community Library. Working with an illustrator and photographer, the librarians invited parents and children to contribute their stories and pictures. The project was financed with a \$1,000 grant that UgCLA distributed from the U.S. Embassy in Kampala. UgCLA Board Member George Openjuru hopes to extend this work to other libraries.



At the Pan-African Conference on Reading For All, the UgCLA members' presentation was well received. In the first part of their presentation, Kayaga Mulindwa, UgCLA's Treasurer and Director of the National Library of Uganda, described the state of libraries in Uganda and the reasons for establishing UgCLA. In the second part, Lincoln Wamala, Francis Kigobe, Augustine Napagi, Jasindo Afebua, and Gulere Wambi described their libraries' most successful programs: the launching of the Nambi Sseppuuya Memorial Resource Centre in collaboration with the Reading Association of Uganda; the organization of quizzes for primary school students at the Caezaria Public Library; the storybook project at the Kabubbu Community Library; the organization of crafts activities for library users by URLCODA; and the use of the Mpolyabigere Community Library for disseminating information about HIV-AIDS and providing free AIDS testing. In the final part of their presentation, Grace Musoke described the astonishing growth of community libraries in Uganda: UgCLA now has 42 member libraries, compared to thirteen at its launching in 2007.

Several Ugandan donors helped to fund their trip: Fountain Publishers, MK Publishers, Mukono Bookshop, and Dr. Alan Shonubi, Chair of the National Library Board.

### ***Back by Popular Demand: Summer Reading Camps in Burkina Faso***

FAVL will be holding its summer reading camps in Burkina Faso once again, thanks to a \$3,000 grant from the Lisle Foundation. The camps were so popular in past summers that parents in these poor rural villages offered to pay to provide more camps for their kids. This is the only opportunity these children will ever have to go to a summer camp.

Osu Children's Library Fund has been a generous sponsor of previous camps, which help instill in fourth-graders a love of reading in a fun environment.

"Arriving in Sara to see the reading camps, the first thing I noticed was children jumping and singing, not reading," recalls FAVL Vice President Leslie Gray. "It dawned on me that this experience for the kids was much more than academic. It was social and fun, just like summer camp in the United States. The children were singing, doing art projects, theater, calisthenics, and spending a lot of time reading and discussing books. They got two nutritious meals a day and a T-shirt, which is a big thing in Burkina Faso." At the end of the day, the children each took home a book to read."



In summer 2010, camps will be held in five villages in southwestern Burkina Faso. Each week, 20 students from each of the villages will go to camp under the supervision of five adults and two fifth-grade student assistants who attended the 2009 summer camps.

Students in Burkina Faso struggle with reading. Many of their parents are illiterate in a country with the lowest literacy rate in the world, according to a 2009 United Nations report. Fewer than one in four adults can read. In addition, class sizes that range from 65 to 90 students mean that teachers cannot provide one-on-one help to their students. FAVL librarians participate in the camps, where they learn new ways to help students improve their reading skills that they can apply throughout the year.

At least one of the adult counselors in each camp will be an international student, providing an opportunity for cultural exchange, which is what made the project appeal to the Lisle Foundation. Lisle's mission is to "broaden the ideal of a global community and increase the appreciation of all cultures" by bringing together people from diverse backgrounds. "The FAVL program was a great match, especially the aspect of having international college students act as camp counselors for the children in Africa," says Smita Patel, who acted as Lisle's mentor for FAVL. "What a valuable and rich experience that will be for all involved."



### ***Many Nice Things***

Readers of Debbie Tenzer's book *Do One Nice Thing: Little Things You Can Do To Make the World a Lot Nicier* have been mailing in envelopes full of colorful stickers for FAVL librarians to use to encourage reading in their children's programs and summer reading camps. The stickers are extremely popular—as Béréba librarian Sanou Dounko attests in a video thank-you message which you can view at [www.favl.org/blog](http://www.favl.org/blog).

## Volunteers and visitors in FAVL libraries

Volunteers help librarians learn new ways of interacting with readers. When they return, they spread the word about the importance of creating opportunities for children and adults to improve their reading skills.

### Spotlight on two librarians

Amy Reggio, FAVL volunteer at the library in Béréba, Burkina Faso last summer, salutes Librarian Sanou Dounko:

*I was particularly impressed with one of Béréba's librarians, Dounko, whose charisma brought in so many people. With his songs and stories, he made reading fun and educational, two qualities that should always be associated with learning. His contribution to the library reminded me that organizations are only as good as the people who work for them, and Dounko is a true advocate for reading, a teacher, and a friend.*

Lauren Hudson and Holly Boyce volunteered last summer at the Chalula Community Library in Mvumi, Tanzania. In their report, they write of Librarian Grace Myakwaka (pictured below):

*She helped us manage large groups of students and prepare for activities. Having an older, respected figure with such groups helped. She also understood the need to conserve supplies. She also readily stepped into the leadership role by utilizing her own ideas. An especially clever one was her method of tracking which books were most popular with the patrons. She had them fill out slips before they left, saying which books they had looked at.*



## Summer camps ignite readers

This year, FAVL held one camp in Ghana and five in Burkina Faso. Volunteer Madelyn Bagby describes the camp in Béréba:

*I will never forget the sight of over a hundred primary school kids sprinting to the library's hangar during their break from school, hoping for story-time or some other reading-related activity. The energy radiating from the children was electrifying, and reading aloud to such a large and responsive group was always a rewarding experience. During the summer reading camps, watching the stronger readers help the weaker ones in partner reading activities inspired a lot of hope that literacy proficiency can be improved. The camps also promoted the idea that reading is something to be done outside of school and throughout the year.*



### Partnerships with Peace Corps volunteers

FAVL is working with two Peace Corps Volunteers in Burkina Faso who are helping rural communities to establish libraries.

In Pobe Mengao, Emilie Crofton reports that the library management committee of local leaders has been making plans, and the community is contributing 25% of the cost, both in the form of manual labor and the donated building at right. You can follow their progress at [pobemengaoibrary.blogspot.com](http://pobemengaoibrary.blogspot.com).



In Bougounam, Jen Lazuta has signed on for an additional year of service to help the community get a library up and running. Read more at [books4bougounam.wordpress.com](http://books4bougounam.wordpress.com).

### Update from Tanzania



Chalula Library Co-founder Rosemary Harris reports from her September visit:

*The Chalula Community Library has been open for close to two years now. There have been ups and downs—including our librarian's serious bout with malaria and sand-encrusted solar panels—but for the most part things are going well. The collection is growing, and every day that we were in the village, dozens of children came to read and be read to by the older children and the volunteers.*

*The two suitcases of books and school supplies we brought were soon catalogued and added to the small collection as were two big boxes brought by our new friends Mungwe ABC Athman and Andrea Wall, the founders of PEN (Poverty Eradication Network) Trust. Their help was invaluable on this trip, and I am optimistic that this will be the start of a beautiful friendship. I spent half a day using clear plastic packing tape to rebind the books that we'd left the last time, and I don't doubt that we will need to re-bind them the next time we visit!*

The photos above and on back show the readers' enthusiastic response to this new shipment of books.

### Learning about libraries in Sierra Leone

FAVL networker extraordinaire Anne-Reed Angino reports from her recent fact-finding trip of nine weeks in Sierra Leone:

*I met with a vibrant, although small, network of library professionals, teachers and others devoted to building up the library infrastructure and promoting a culture of reading. From them I learned more about the current library system, and their activities, successes, problems, goals and visions. Since most of the Sierra Leone's population lives outside of Freetown, I visited as many libraries up-country as I could, to see how they are functioning, who is using them, and what type of books they have. Although most of the population remains illiterate without any access to books, there has been a huge push recently to rebuild what was destroyed during the war ten years ago. Currently there are eleven functioning libraries (not including any school or private ones); by next year there should be twenty, located in all twelve districts of Sierra Leone.*



**Friends of African Village Libraries  
P.O. Box 90533  
San Jose, CA 95109-3533**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
SAN JOSE, CA  
PERMIT NO. 1014

**Friends of African Village Libraries: Enriching the Lives of Children**

FAVL Volunteer Ricky Alexander’s photo captures the excitement of putting books into the hands of readers at the Chalula Community Library in Tanzania. African libraries scramble to obtain books in several languages since many children enter school fluent in their first language, but must become literate in the official language of their government.

