



friends of **African**
Village libraries

Inside :

- News and views.....p. 2
- Volunteers and programs.....p. 3
- Photo of the month.....p. 4
- We need your help!.....p. 4

*This is our first mid-year newsletter.
There's too much happening for our
newsletter to come out just once a year.*

Fundraising priorities:

- \$5,000 for hiring a coordinator for the Uganda Community Libraries Association
- \$10,000 to build an endowment to support FAVL libraries
- \$10,000 for piloting more reading programs in all libraries

Help us bring the joy of reading to children in rural Africa!

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

New library opens in Kunkua village in Upper East Region, Ghana



FAVL/CESRUD coordinator Lucas Amikiye took the lead in working with the Kunkua community to establish the third FAVL-managed library in Upper East Region, Ghana. The opening was held in March 2008. Funding for the library came from a generous donation by Susan Stonecypher, who wanted an opportunity to honor the students, staff

and faculty of the Volusia County School District in Florida where she served while working with Apex Learning. The librarian, Ayamdoor Jennifer, was trained by Lucas at the Sumbrungu library. We look forward to continuing to support Kunkua as it moves to become a full-fledged community resource!

Chalula library opens in Tanzania

The project was conceptualized by a group of Habitat for Humanity volunteers who had been in the area building houses and decided to strike out into library support. They tapped into a deep network of generous friends and family. Their efforts were spearheaded by Bruce and Rosemary Harris, who travelled to Mvumi village for the opening in November 2007 and took care of lots of last-minute business, including arranging for a solar panel for the library and the hiring of the librarian. It goes without saying that the library is going to make a huge difference, especially for the village students. We are hoping that people will want to visit and volunteer in the library when they are in the area, near Dodoma.



Summer reading programs to be evaluated in Burkina

Thanks in part to a generous grant from Osu Children's Library Fund, FAVL will implement a randomized evaluation of three reading programs this summer. Children in 4th grade level in each of five villages will be randomly assigned to three reading programs. One group will be invited to attend a two-week reading camp. Another group will be invited to participate in a weekly book reading and discussion group. The third group will receive a small bookbag with two to three books for personal use over the summer. We hope to estimate the cost-effectiveness of different programs in maintaining or even improving reading abilities over the summer when children normally are absorbed in farm work.

News and views

Kitengesa Community Library uses a new eGranary

With its solar electricity, the Kitengesa Community Library is able to support several computers, and it now has three laptops of various ages. It has used them chiefly for maintaining the library's database and for teaching a few students basic computer skills. Now it has gone a step further. This January the library received as a gift from Teachers for East Africa Alumni (www.tea-a.org) an eGranary—that is, a hard disk with some 10 million texts on it, including the whole of Wikipedia. Most of the texts come from the Internet, and the eGranary comes with software to enable searching the material by keyword as well as by subject. Thus, although the Kitengesa library has no Internet access, it can now offer something that looks and feels like it. There is a “history” function too, so one can record the most frequently visited sites. This will be invaluable information for the Widernet Project, which has developed the eGranary, as well as for anyone interested in African villagers' responses to IT.



Talking about libraries... The Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA), initiated and supported by FAVL, held its first workshop on January 16-17 at the Pope Paul Memorial Hotel in Kampala. More than thirty people attended, and fifteen libraries were represented. The workshop, paid for by a grant from the U.S. Embassy, was on how to write a proposal—a topic of immediate relevance because the same U.S. Embassy grant will enable UgCLA to distribute, on a competitive basis, six grants of \$1,000 each. The participants had a fine time talking about what their libraries are doing as well as dreaming up new \$1,000 projects—so much so that this group was still talking when we came across them after lunch.

Pass the PLE In 2005, FAVL co-director Kate Parry conducted an analysis of all the books borrowed to date from the Kitengesa Community Library. There was plenty of activity, and people of many kinds were borrowing books but there was one worrying feature: very few children were included. So the librarians, with help from friends in Kampala, organized a Children's Reading Tent. Books were put on display, local dignitaries were invited, and a lot of speeches were made. More to the point, children from six different primary schools were invited with their teachers. When the speeches were over, they spent the day reading, drawing, and otherwise engaged in activities with books. Since then, the Kitengesa Library has held a Children's Day about once a month. A single primary school is invited each time to send a class with a teacher. The children read, draw, paint, play games, and have stories read to them. In this picture, the children are playing a game called “Pass the PLE (Primary Leaving Exam),” made by Mango Tree Educational Enterprises (www.mangotreeuganda.org/), a company that specializes in simple and inexpensive educational materials for Ugandan schools.



Read-a-thon at Sligo Creek Elementary School helps kids in Africa read more books!

The third graders at Sligo Creek in Maryland raised an impressive sum from their Read-a-thon, and teacher Anna Weaver writes: "Our third graders were motivated readers as a result of the inspirational work you are able to do in Africa. As teachers, we were not only able to encourage fluent reading in our classrooms, but we were also able to extend this valuable quality to students in Africa through this donation." Thank you Ann and students!

If you are interested in conducting a Read-a-thon in your school, the FAVL blog (on the website www.favl.org) has entries with suggested books and links to Africa-related materials suitable for students. Also on the FAVL

website are forms and instructions for a Read-a-thon. We'd be glad to help with more information. Send us an email at info@favl.org.

Volunteers in FAVL libraries

Volunteers are an important way for librarians to learn new ways of interacting with children. When they return, volunteers spread the word about the importance of providing opportunities for children and adults in rural Africa to improve their reading skills.

Meghan Coughlin, a Peace Corps volunteer in Burkina, has been working with FAVL to establish a new library.

She recently reported: "The library in Niankorodougou is really coming along. A gold mining company donated the money to buy furniture and bookshelves, which were just put in this past week.

I'm really happy with how everything looks. Attached are photos of the library as well as a few pictures from the primary and secondary school. It might not look like a



lot to everyone back home, but the fact that we have the building and furniture says a lot about how motivated my community is. Our mayor is organizing the library committee to hire a librarian and oversee logistics. Hopefully we will soon have funds for the books and librarian salary. Friends of African Village Libraries is going to make a trip to our village to work with the library committee and librarian. I'll keep you all updated with how the library is coming along. Thanks to all of you who have already made contributions towards the library project. If anyone else is interested in helping or has any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me." Her blog on the library is: all4nianko.wordpress.com/

Volunteer Chelsea Rangel spent three months in Burkina

Here's one report from Chelsea during her stay: "In the 'Can Read 25 Books' program, we now have more than twelve students who have signed up, two of which have already read over seven books. For each book the student reads, they are given a sticker on the poster sheet hanging in the library, after discussing the book with myself or a librarian. In this way, not only are we able to confirm that the student actually read the book, but we can

get a better idea of what type of books interests them. At first I think the students were very discouraged by this program, thinking it impossible to read twenty-five books in two to three months. But as one student signed up, another followed, and so on. Story time every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday has been relatively successful, considering my battered French pronunciation skills. But we haven't had fewer than 100 students each day since I started, and the kids are becoming more comfortable with me as I with them."

\$1,200 from Burkina Faso Ministry of Culture

FAVL was happy to receive an unexpected letter from the Minister of Culture of Burkina Faso, Mr. Philippe Sawadogo, with the good news. The Ministry granted FAVL-Burkina 500,000 CFA (\$1,200) and 65 boxes of books. This gift was very timely. FAVL was pleased to be able immediately to help the library of Niankorodougou with two boxes of books. This is FAVL in ac-



tion, partnering with government as a support for community libraries! Here's the official shot of the remise, as a donation ceremony is known in French in Burkina. Pictured from left are Meghann Coughlin, Peace Corps volunteer, Moussa Ouattara, Niankorodougou librarian, and Viviane Nabie, FAVL rep in Ouagadougou.

FAVL-sponsored photo exhibit at Martin Luther King, Jr. library in San Jose, California

"The Person in Front of You: Photographs from West Africa," features photos by Los Altos-based photographer David Pace and Kathy Knowles of Osu Children's Library Fund in Canada. David Pace is a lecturer in art and art history at Santa Clara University. Kathy Knowles founded Osu Children's Library Fund (OCLF) over fifteen years ago to give young African children the joy of reading by providing access to storybooks. A reception was held on May 11, with more than 100 persons attending. Imagine getting a personal tour by Kathy or David of their photographs! It was a treat.



Photographers visit libraries in Burkina Faso

FAVL was happy to host photographer David Pace, from Santa Clara University, who visited Burkina Faso for several weeks in March 2007 and again in January 2008. His work is on display in an exhibit sponsored by FAVL at the Martin Luther King Library, San Jose, CA, from May 3 to June 20, 2008.



We need your help !

FAVLs commitment is to a long-term intensive management of the community libraries. We ensure payment of librarians salaries, reading and cultural programs, and continued renewal of the book stock in the libraries. Your generous donations make this possible.

Friends of African Village Libraries

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