

Books For Africa

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GRANT FROM OPRAH'S ANGEL NETWORK HELPS TO SUPPORT ST. PAUL'S BOOKS FOR AFRICA

ST. PAUL, Minn. (September 24, 2008) – St. Paul-based Books For Africa, the world's largest shipper of donated English language text books to the African continent, has received a \$95,000 grant from Oprah's Angel Network to fund the shipping of nine 40-foot sea containers of books to three African countries (Liberia, South Africa, and Tanzania).

Oprah's Angel Network is a public charity that uses public donations to award grants to organizations around the world that are improving access to education, developing leaders, protecting basic rights and creating communities of support.

"Access to books gives children a window into the larger world and helps them think about their own futures," said Caren Yanis, Executive Director of Oprah's Angel Network. "Books For Africa brings opportunity to children who may have limited or no access to education. This grant will put books into classrooms and enable students to rise to their full potential."

The announcement was made by Books For Africa's (BFA) Executive Director Patrick Plonski along with Minnesota Vikings Darren Sharper, who is taking a leading role in BFA's projects and book drives. Upon learning of the Oprah's Angel Network's grant last month, Sharper reached out to BFA to also get involved to help collect books and raise more money for the organization.

"Oprah has a magical way of inspiring people...and she also inspired me," said Sharper, whose father was a school teacher. "Being involved with Books For Africa ties together my deep interest in education and helping kids. I pledge to do all I can to continue to raise more funds to ship more books that will provide educational opportunities for more children in Africa."

Sharper didn't waste any time getting involved. He, along with the Vikings, immediately helped to create "Books & Bucks Day," a book drive that will encourage fans to bring books and a donation to the Metrodome November 9th, when the Vikings host the Packers (noon game). Fans—whether or not they have game tickets—will be challenged in the spirit of competition to drop off their books and donations in either Vikings or Packers containers, which will be stationed at 10 entrances to the Metrodome. The team that collects the most books will have bragging rights.

Sharper, the Vikings and Books For Africa have other events planned in 2009, including book drives involving area schools. In addition, Sharper will host a trip to South Africa, one of the countries that will be given books. Sharper and guests will travel to South Africa in March of 2009 to receive the books collected during the book drives and distribute them in the local schools and villages. Individuals and businesses are invited to join Sharper on the adventure. For information, contact 651-602-9844.

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