

BOOKS FOR AFRICA

FALL 2001

NEWSLETTER

Kids Helping Kids

American Students Support BFA

The simple message of Books For Africa—kids in Africa need our help—has touched the hearts of increasing numbers of American school children, and they're not sitting still. They have learned about our work from the BFA video or a speaker at a school presentation or simply from the spark of an individual classroom teacher. Sometimes the impetus comes from the excitement of a parent who has heard about us, perhaps at a Rotary Conference or Kiwanis meeting. Wherever and however it's presented, kids hear Books For Africa's mission as a call for action.

- 10-year old Ari Bearinger Resnick, a student at Kenwood Elementary in Minneapolis, was recently honored by *Minneapolis/St. Paul* magazine for contributing half of his allowance each month to BFA. Says Ari, "Just knowing that reading is so important to other people makes me enjoy my own reading even more."

- Last year, 8-year old Ryan

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Graham Ives, a 13-year-old student from Northville, Michigan, collected 1500 books from his neighbors and raised \$6,200 for students in targeted areas of Ghana.

Visit of the President of Tanzania Postponed

As you may know, BFA had planned to honor His Excellency President Benjamin William Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania at a gala event on September 24th. Due to the tragic events of September 11, President Mkapa's visit to the United States has been postponed, as he did not wish to add to the burdens of the U.S. government at this difficult time.

In a letter to President George W. Bush, President Mkapa wrote:

"Like all peace-loving people the world over, we too in Tanzania were

extremely shocked by such senseless acts of terrorism and callous disregard for human life. No cause, and no hatred, can justify such horrific acts of murder and destruction.

"As a country that lost its own people in other terrorist attacks on the American Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya three years ago, we are acutely aware of the trauma that such terrorist acts can unleash upon innocent people. We call, once again, on all peace-loving nations to join not only in condemning such terrorist attacks, but also in co-

operating to deal with this truly international threat to peace and security."

President Mkapa has assured us of his commitment to join us in the Twin Cities – perhaps as soon as October or November – to celebrate our 13th year and our special initiative to send a quarter-million books to Tanzania over the next 36 months. As soon as we have the new date for President Mkapa's visit, we will send new invitations. Please check our website at www.booksforafrica.org for updated information.

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 Grimshaw, a student at Brownville-Glen Park Elementary School in Watertown, New York, sent dozens of his own books to BFA, along with this note: "I felt bad for people who don't have the money to pay for books... I hope you can send them to where they are needed." This year Ryan has been promoting BFA at his school. Because of his efforts, 35 boxes of books are now ready for shipment.

- Spearheaded by K-Kids (part of Kiwanis International), students at Wilshire Elementary School in St. Anthony, Minnesota have supported BFA's mission for two years, and have made a commitment to carry their project over for a third year. This year alone, Wilshire students collected over 2,000 books and \$560.

- At Friendly Hills Middle School in Minnetonka, Minnesota, sixth grade students' interest peaked after studying Africa and reading novels set on the African continent. Seven sixth graders kicked off a book drive by running a BFA information booth at a school social event. Students also sold candy bars to raise money for shipping costs. After their initial kick-off, several more Friendly students got involved, making posters and announcements. Still others collected, counted, and packed books. In all, these students were able to collect over 1,100 books and \$200. Their teachers, Susan Hanebuth and Sandra Nelson, said, "many students donated books which have fond memories for them, and their wish is that the children who receive these books will enjoy them just as much."

- Students at another Minnetonka school, Gatewood Elementary, under the leadership of fifth grade teacher Rita Wigfield, assembled 72 shoeboxes of school supplies: glue, pencils, pens, colored pencils, markers, and rulers—items taken for granted by most American students. Fully-packed boxes were individually wrapped in decorative paper and included in a BFA book shipment.

- Winchester Elementary students



10-year old Ari Bearinger Resnick has contributed half of his allowance each month to BFA.

in Northville, Michigan, moved by their concern for worldwide literacy, collected 54,121 pennies—\$541.21—as part of their celebration of March is Reading Month.

- Graham Ives, a high school student from Northville, Michigan, learned about BFA from his father who had heard one of our presentations at a Rotary International Conference. Graham not only collected 1500 books from his neighbors, he raised \$6,200 for students in targeted areas of Ghana. Graham was able to reach hundreds of people in his community by developing a PowerPoint presentation about BFA which he gave to service organization meetings ranging from 14 to 600 people. In addition, he applied for and received a matching grant from Rotary International District 6400. The World Medical Relief organization offered money to cover shipping costs, freeing up other funds for 200 desks, paint for classrooms, teachers' tables and chairs and a special project for students in Ghana.

Graham's efforts did not go unnoticed. He received a certificate of Merit from the Boy Scouts of America for service to others, a certificate of Merit from Prudential Insurance, an invitation from the Harlem Globe-

trotters to be an official ball boy for a Michigan game, and a Year 2000 Millennium Dreamer award from MacDonalds and Disney. High on his list of gratifying responses was a personal visit from the Minister of Education from Ghana who made an unscheduled appearance at Graham's school. Graham said that the notes of thanks he received helped him realize that he now has friends among the children of Ghana.

Because Books For Africa has a simple mission, students have mobilized quickly and eagerly. The rewards of responding are many. Students tell us they like feeling a personal connection to students in Africa, that they have learned more about the African continent and its issues, that they feel proud of being able to start and complete a significant

service learning project. If you or your group would like to learn more about starting your own BFA project, please email us at info@booksforafrica.org.

Tom Wins Another Award

This September, BFA founder Tom Warth was honored again for his tireless efforts on behalf of Books For Africa. A coalition of Minnesota's business, non-profit, academic and governmental communities chose Tom to receive the 2001 Twin Cities International Citizen Award. This award recognizes individuals who have made a difference in the world by contributing significantly to international understanding, cooperation, friendship and development. Tom certainly fits the bill. Congratulations and thank you, Tom, for being an inspiration to us all.

For more information about the award please see the Twin Cities International Citizen Awards website at www.tcglobal.org.

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3/1/2001 – 7/31/2001

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Above: Tom crossing the finish line on June 17. Right (left to right): Amy Sundberg, kneeling with Kyffin, Roger Willette, Tom Warth, Zantha Warth, Robert Kowalczyk and Herb Lundberg.

Tom's Walk

On this past Father's Day, June 17, Tom Warth completed his Walk Across Minnesota. As he stepped over the Minnesota/South Dakota border on a remote township road West of Dawson, Minnesota, six friends, his wife Zantha, and two local residents warmly welcomed him. Of course, Kyffin, his black lab, was also on hand to join in the festivities, having walked the entire way herself!

Tom covered the 226 miles in just 17 days. He reports:

"Rain delayed us on some days but mainly the weather was excellent. The country was such a lush green it was really beautiful. I appreciated all the company... In fact there was only one day I walked by myself and even on that day I was joined by a walker for a couple of hours. The Luce Line and the Gateway Trails are State treasures."

Thanks to everyone who supported Tom's great endeavor. The money he raised will enable BFA to send over 40,000 more books to Africa. Now we're wondering: Where will Tom walk next?!

