

# BOOKS FOR AFRICA

Spring 2001

Newsletter

## BFA Africa Tour 2000 Children: A Natural Resource Worth Conserving

Last fall, from October 24th to November 15th, Books For Africa Executive Director Bob Kowalczyk led a group of seven travelers through five African countries: Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya and Egypt. In addition to the usual sightseeing, the group visited schools and organizations which have received books from BFA—or would like to. Here's what the travelers had to say about their experience:

### Bob Kowalczyk

Each time I return to Africa—and this was my seventh trip—I'm struck by its natural beauty and grandeur. And equally struck by the equally natural



(left to right) Clark LaChapelle, Bob Kowalczyk, Richard Brusseau and Frank Babka plant a Pride of Bolivia tree on the campus of Daystar University in Kenya, commemorating their visit there during BFA's Africa Tour 2000. Daystar University is a recent recipient of a large donation of college level books from BFA.

(and grand!) expressions of children suddenly discovering the world within the books we bring. We visit lots of schools, only a handful of the thousands that receive books from us, and an even smaller handful of the thousands that

don't. Going back to visit schools that have been on the receiving end is proof of the change that is occurring against overwhelming odds.

The other thing I get to see each  
*continued on page 2*

## The Power of Juby Peacock

By Vicki Lofquist, BFA  
Development Director

Maun, Botswana, is a small town in a distant land—more than 20 hours by plane from where I live in St. Paul, Minnesota. When I arrived, I was delighted to find impressive administrators, teachers, and students at the schools, who were in turn delighted with the books they had just received from Books For Africa. Of all the people I met, the most impressive was Juby Peacock, a 17-year old student at Maun Secondary



School. She was full of news.

She introduced me to her friend and said that the two of them called themselves "Girl Power." I can vouch for Juby's power—she was bright, confident, and full of pride for the work of her school. The news continued with a report that a girl in her class

was in Turkey, playing in an international chess tournament. And the biggest news of all—a boy from the school, Glody Dube, had recently finished in seventh place in the 800 meters at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia. He trained with

*continued on page 2*

## BFA Africa Tour 2000

*continued from page 1*

time I return is Africa through my fellow travelers' eyes. Take a look...it will open your eyes. Then help us open more books for these children.

### Richard Brusseau

The opportunity to spend time in schools in Africa was certainly educational and heartwarming. The beautiful children—any country's greatest natural resource, with their wide-eyed excitement as they entered the library to select a book—were almost overwhelming. What a joy to hear them read to us, dressed in their uniforms, in very basic classrooms or even outdoors under a tree. It was great to meet with school administrators and teachers to see and hear their dedication. In some cases, teachers actually gave up their workroom to start a library. All this made it very clear to me that BFA is providing a wonderful service to African children that will have a lasting effect on the development of a continent. Little wonder why BFA has received worldwide recognition for their efforts.

### Jane Granzow

The trip to Africa was educational, exciting and filled with new experiences. I was touched by the visits to the schools. Seeing the children's faces as they came into the library and chose a book to read was heartwarming. In the United States, I would not have given such action a thought. But knowing that there had been no library, or only a few books in the library before BFA sent books, made all the difference. The process of receiving books was more complicated than I had thought. Understanding the complexities involved was an eye-opener: where to house the books, what system can or should be used so that every child gets a chance to choose and read a book, which schools get which books and how many books to give each school.

### Clark and Vonnie LaChapelle

Our trip to five countries in Africa was a wonderful experience. We found the

people to be very warm, friendly and polite. They smile so much and seem so happy, yet are so poor by our standards. We visited many schools and it was very special to see where and how the books were put to use. The children seemed to have such respect for the books, something we take for granted. In Botswana, a shipment of 25,000 books from BFA had arrived prior to our visit. As a result, the schools we visited had well-organized libraries with nice assortments of books. We definitely felt that BFA's books were warmly received and appreciated.

### Pamm Shelton

As director of Golden Sun Services in Botswana, it was a pleasure for me to host the BFA Africa Tour 2000 group. I appreciated the opportunity to join the group for the rest of their tour to Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Egypt. Aside from the marvelous sites we experienced as a group, I especially enjoyed an impromptu visit to a primary school in Egypt. This visit was an interesting contrast to the schools that I work with in Botswana – very different, but in many ways the same. Like schools all over Africa, this school had few books. The headmaster's parting words to us: "Please send me some books!"

### Frank Babka

I think very highly of BFA. It is no wonder to me that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, knows of BFA and is impressed with the work they are doing in Africa. Traveling with BFA, I saw much more than the average tourist would and enjoyed being in the schools very much. A couple of months ago, I read that the likelihood of civil war in developing countries goes down by 20% with each additional year of education that school children receive. My impression is that BFA, through its book donation program, is playing a critical part in the education of children in Africa, thus reducing the likelihood of civil war in the countries it serves.

**BFA will be hosting another trip to Africa in the fall of 2002. If you are interested in participating, contact the BFA office.**

## A Call to Schools

The BFA warehouse is getting low on textbooks. Please consider donating your discards. **RECYCLE** your books; please don't send them to landfills!

## Juby Peacock

*continued from page 1*

one of the school's teachers, running along the river that passed my hotel and right by their school.

I found Juby such a dynamic and thoughtful student that when I returned to the U.S. I wrote her and asked if she would write about her school for the BFA newsletter. Here's what she sent:

### Juby's News

*Extra-curricular activities have a lot of support from teachers. This is because they know that a lot of potential lies in their hands, and they try by all means to drive it in the right channels. Many of our athletes and sportsmen and women have reached international competitiveness regularly. These students are given our highest respect. They come back to inspire other students who in turn are ambitious enough to emulate them and bring medals home.*

*In my opinion, the library is the backbone of all our success stories. Books For Africa donated 11,000 books to our school last year. The library was tripled in size in order to accommodate them. We have recently just opened our computer room also in the library. I am pleased to note it is of international standards, giving students a fair chance, as there is no question to how much one can acquire through research. We are exposed to a world of informative writing and communication.*

*On behalf of my school, I would like to express my appreciation and indebtedness to the whole Books For Africa organization. I would also want to encourage donors to send more science-based textbooks. I am very optimistic that Maun Secondary School will be one of the model schools in this continent.*

If you would like to learn more about Books For Africa please call 651-602-9844 (fax 651-602-9848).

E-mail: [info@booksforafrica.org](mailto:info@booksforafrica.org) Web: [www.booksforafrica.org](http://www.booksforafrica.org)

## BFA Founder Tom Warth Receives Two International Humanitarian Awards

**The Harriet Van Meter Humanitarian Award**, August 2000, presented by The International Book Project, Lexington, KY.

**International Children's Champion Award**, September 2000, presented by Africa's Children's Fund, Inc., Atlanta, GA. Last year's recipient was Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

## Your On-line Purchase Can Help BFA

Books For Africa is a designated recipient on the iGive.com website. This means, when you use iGive.com to purchase items from hundreds of your favorite stores, BFA can benefit by receiving a percentage of the sale. There is NO COST to you. Check it out today: [www.iGive.com](http://www.iGive.com).

## BFA Honored by Citigroup Foundation and Africana.com

BFA received a donation of 1400 copies of *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African-American Experience*, a comprehensive encyclopedia on black history and culture co-edited by Harvard University professors Dr. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. The books were donated by the Citigroup Foundation in partnership with Africana.com and will be distributed throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

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Churches, synagogues and mosques make excellent partners in sending containers of books to Africa. Ask your place of worship about a program for donating funds for humanitarian work. If you have a contact or idea for a project, call Vicki Lofquist in the BFA office: 651-602-9844.

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## "Take A Hike, Tom!"

### *Tom Warth Launches Walk Across Minnesota*

Tom Warth wants to be told to "take a hike." Tom, BFA founder, is planning to walk across Minnesota this spring and summer to raise funds for BFA and to encourage support for Minnesota's system of walking trails. Tom's *Walk Across Minnesota* will cover more than 200 miles of Minnesota trailways and roadways. Every step he takes will ultimately help further the education of schoolchildren in 21 different African countries supported by BFA.

The exact value of Tom's walk will be up to the generosity of BFA supporters. Tom is hoping to raise at least \$25,000 from the walk. "With each pledge of 50¢ per mile," says Tom, "we can send over 330 books to African classrooms and libraries."



**You're invited**  
to celebrate the launch of  
Tom Warth's *Walk Across Minnesota*  
Saturday, May 19,  
10:30 a.m.  
the State Capitol steps

Special guests include:  
St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman  
Drummers  
from the African Drum Corps of  
the Walker West Music Academy  
Joe Carter,  
internationally renowned singer

The short program will be followed by Tom leading a procession from the Capitol steps to the BFA warehouse at 253 East 4th Street in St. Paul (about a mile). Please join us and bring a book to carry to the warehouse to donate to BFA. Enjoy the music of the African Drum Corps and refreshments at the end of your walk.

For more information about walking with Tom or for a pledge form call 651-602-9844.