



**Books For Africa** is the world's largest shipper of donated text and library books to the African continent. Since 1988, Books For Africa has shipped over 23.5 million books to 45 African countries. BFA's mission is to end the book famine in Africa.

**Fall 2010 Newsletter**

## Books For Africa Celebrates African Literature with Top Authors

*"Books saved my life... Books For Africa helps alleviate poverty of the imagination where imagination is most needed—where war and hunger, corruption and injustice seek to crush inspiration."* —author Alexandra Fuller

**Books For Africa hosted two events** celebrating modern African literature on October 9, 2010. The first was a Conference on African Literature at the Humphrey Center at the University of Minnesota, featuring a panel discussion and readings from three distinguished authors: Alexandra Fuller (Zimbabwe), Uwem Akpan (Nigeria), and Billy Karanja Kahora (Kenya). Thomson Reuters was the Presenting Sponsor.

The second event was an intimate evening with the authors at the University Club in Saint Paul, Minnesota, featuring a keynote address by Alexandra Fuller, author of *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*. The reception was made possible thanks to a generous donation by John Rupp.

Fuller grew up in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and currently resides in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, USA. During her keynote address, she spoke of the importance of books and her appreciation for freedom of speech. She also discussed the profound influence of her mother, and recounted some of her experiences fighting injustice. ■



Photos on this page by Rebecca Oehrig of Liminality, [www.liminalityphotography.com](http://www.liminalityphotography.com).

**Above:** A good time was had by all at the "Evening With African Authors"! Pictured above from left are Pat Plonski, Judy Hawkinson, Tom Gitaa, Alexandra Fuller, Billy Karanja Kahora, and Uwem Akpan.

**Below:** BFA Executive Director Pat Plonski, Dan Melin of Follett Educational Services, and BFA Board President Tom Gitaa presenting Follett Educational Services with the 2010 BFA Award of Merit for providing millions of books for shipment to children in Africa.



Alexandra Fuller presents the keynote address at the BFA reception in honor of African authors.



## First Year in Atlanta a Huge Success

**Books For Africa expanded operations** in May 2009 by opening a second warehouse in the greater Atlanta area. The tremendous support received by the local community has made the expansion an unqualified success.

BFA is able to keep container shipment costs so low largely thanks to the hard work of volunteers who sort and pack books. The enthusiasm of the Atlanta volunteers has been impressive.

The business community in greater Atlanta has also been very welcoming. Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi (RKMC) law firm in Atlanta hosted an extraordinary evening on June 25, 2010, presenting Books For Africa to members of the

Atlanta community. In attendance were Vince Farley, Honorary Counsel of the Republic of Mali, and well as the Honorary Counsel of the Republic of Botswana and other dignitaries.

Books For Africa celebrated the one-year anniversary of the Atlanta warehouse with a volunteer appreciation party on May 8, 2010. The event featured musical entertainment by the Books For Africa warehouse band. Tom Gitaa, BFA board president, thanked everyone in the Atlanta area for the tremendous support provided over the past year, noting that the thousands of warehouse volunteers have exceeded our wildest expectations. Thank you, Atlanta! ■



**Above:** Guests at the RKMC reception included new BFA board members Sabrina Jackson (Coca Cola) and Donna Ford (Johnson Controls), pictured here on right.

**Below right:** Attendees at the Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi law firm reception.

**Below left:** Nancy Stafford, attorney with King & Spalding in Atlanta, and Lane Ayres, Director of the Jack Mason Law & Democracy Initiative, at the RKMC reception.

**Below center:** BFA board members Sabrina Jackson (Coca Cola) and Henry Bromelkamp (Bromelkamp Co.) at the Atlanta warehouse.



**ROBINS, KAPLAN, MILLER & CIRESI LLP**



## New Research Illustrates the Tremendous Power of Books

A recent **New York Times** editorial cites new research showing that kids who grow up in homes with many books receive the equivalent of three years more schooling than kids without books. In addition, having books in the home helps children identify as “readers” and improves school performance. These are powerful reasons to help BFA put books into the hands of African children and promote a culture of literacy in Africa. ■

**“Children growing up in homes with many books get three years more schooling than children from bookless homes.”**

“Family scholarly culture and educational success,” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 28 (2010) 171–197

## Stretch Your Donated Dollars with BFA

In challenging economic times like these, we are all looking for ways to get the most return for our money. Books For Africa works to make efficient use of your donations. By leveraging valuable donated books, the organization is able to put 98% of its overall budget directly into programs, so you can send two books to Africa for every dollar donated.

That's why Charity Navigator has awarded BFA its highest four-star rating four years in a row, an accomplishment only eight percent of the charities reviewed achieve. Charity Navigator also recently named Books For Africa one of ten highly rated charities relying on private donations.

**“More than 95% of their [BFA’s] total revenue comes from private contributions, which makes the efficiency of their fundraising operations all the more impressive.”**

—Charity Navigator, 2010

As you plan your end-of-year giving in the coming months, think about BFA and what a difference you can make with your donation. One easy way to make a gift is through our website at [www.booksforafrica.org](http://www.booksforafrica.org), or through GiveMN's website on "Give to the Max Day" on November 16 at [givemn.razoo.com/story/Books-For-Africa](http://givemn.razoo.com/story/Books-For-Africa). We'll make sure that your gift goes far—all the way to an African school or library! ■



#10718



### BFA Shipments in FY 2010

Country	Containers	Country	Containers
Ghana	30	Rwanda	4
Uganda	21	Botswana	2
Tanzania	20	Djibouti	2
Ethiopia	17	Eritrea	2
Nigeria	11	Malawi	2
South Africa	10	Swaziland	2
Kenya	9	The Gambia	2
Liberia	6	Republic of the Congo	1
Sierra Leone	6	Sudan	1
Cameroon	4		

**Totals: 152 containers, 1.6 million books sent to 19 countries**

### Board of Directors

- Tom Gitaa**, Board President *President and Publisher, Mshale Newspaper*
- Michael Henley**, Past Board President  
*CEO, Hansen Henley Yoder & Lamb*
- Fiona McCrae**, Board Treasurer *CEO, Graywolf Publishing*
- Luanne Nyberg**, Board Secretary *Senior Policy Analyst, Hennepin County*
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*Books For Africa*
- Henry A. Bromelkamp** *President, Bromelkamp Co.*
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- Michael Wirth-Davis** *CEO, Minnesota Goodwill Easter-Seals*

### 2009-2010 Ambassadors Circle Members

- Abdurashid Ali** *Aaran International*
- Frank Babka** *World Population Balance*
- Carol Engebretson Byrne** *Minnesota Int'l Center*
- Don Hawkinson** *Minneapolis Uptown Rotary Club*
- Jeanne Kant**
- Rang Hee Kim** *Counterpart International*
- Jim Klobuchar** *Writer/Speaker*
- Margaret Li** *International Consultant*
- Lee Lynch** *Carmichael Lynch Public Relations*
- Victor Mbaba** *Africa's Children's Fund*
- Beth McClurg** *Cushman & Wakefield*
- Meredith McQuaid** *University of Minnesota*
- Joseph A. Miller** *Follett Educational Services*
- The Honorable Anna Mkapa** *Equal Opportunities For All Trust Fund*
- David Murphy** *Better World Books*
- Solomon Negash** *Kennesaw State University*
- Tom Pfeifer** *Thomson Reuters*
- Irene Qualters** *Computer Scientist*
- Laurie Schmidt**
- The Honorable Ombeni Sefue** *Tanzanian Ambassador to the United States*
- Margaret Sents**
- Shaun Skelton** *Visions In Action*
- Chris Smithco** *World Vision*
- Valerie Staats** *International Book Bank*
- Pam Pappas Stanoch** *The Athena Group*



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**“I hope you have seen the expression on the children’s faces when they pick up a book in the library for the first time. They are always so excited about learning.”**

*Gloria Reichmann, Peace Corps Volunteer who helped distribute BFA books in The Gambia*

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## Botswana Book Project Distributes BFA Books to 107 Schools and Charities

Pam Shelton and her colleagues at the Botswana Book Project sorted and distributed over 28,000 BFA books in southern Botswana in September 2010. The books were given to teachers, Peace Corps Volunteers, and representatives from Rotary clubs, hospitals and clinics, and multiple charities, such as Kagisano Society Woman’s Shelter Project.

Next up for the Botswana Book Project is another BFA shipment in early 2011 focusing on medical, health, and wellness books, which are in very high demand in Africa. To learn more about this longtime BFA partner, visit [www.botswanabookproject.org](http://www.botswanabookproject.org). ■



**Right:** This little girl helped her mother choose books from the BFA shipment for Gabane Primary School in Botswana.

**Left:** Three Baobab School girls help select books for their school.



**“The Baobab staff were ecstatic over their selection of primary level books. ‘What a great selection’ was the comment I heard most often.”**

—Pam Shelton, founder & director of the Botswana Book Project