BOOKS FOR AFRICA

A simple name, for a simple organization with a simple mission: We collect, sort, ship, and distribute books to children in Africa. That's all we do. Our goal: to end the book famine in Africa.

Since 1988, Books For Africa has shipped more than 6 million books to 21 African countries. The books are on once-empty library shelves, in classrooms in rural schools, and in the hands of children who have never before held a book. Children who are hungry to read, hungry to learn, hungry to explore their world in ways that only books make possible.

We've sent millions of books. Millions more are needed.
Dear Friends,

We generally use this space to provide an overview of the past year’s activities—an introduction to the more detailed accounts you’ll find in the pages that follow. We use it, in other words, to talk about what Books For Africa has achieved since our last report to you. Indeed, this has been another year of tremendous accomplishment for BFA, and we’re eager for you to read all about it. But for the moment, and at this moment in history, we’d like to talk briefly about why it is that we—and you—have chosen this work.

We’ve chosen it because we believe, as Henry David Thoreau wrote in Walden, that “books are the treasured wealth of the world and the fit inheritance of generations and nations.” We’ve chosen it because we believe, with James Russell Lowell, that “books are the bees which carry the quickening pollen from one to another mind.” We’ve chosen it because we believe, in the words of Barbara Tuchman, that “books are the carriers of civilization…. Books are humanity in print.”

And we’ve chosen it for personal reasons—because, beginning in childhood, books have been of inestimable value in shaping our minds, our dreams, our very selves. Having grown up in a society where books were plentiful, having received their gifts so liberally, so easily, we are compelled to do whatever we can to end the book famine in Africa. Over the past 13 years, BFA has made remarkable progress toward this goal. At the same time, our work has barely begun.

As you consider your year-end or new-year gift to Books For Africa, we’d like to ask you a question: What’s the most important book you’ve ever read? Not necessarily the best book, the most critically acclaimed, the weightiest or most ambitious, but the book that was most important to you. The one that unfolded a world you’d never imagined, filled you with an awe you’d never experienced, showed you a future you’d never thought possible, offered you a comfort you’d never dared hope for. Think of how that book made you feel, physically and emotionally; think of the sheer trembling excitement of discovering such a book. Then multiply that feeling a million-fold, and you begin to get a sense of what we can accomplish, together, for the book-starved children of Africa.

Thank you for your contribution to this vital work, and may all of us, throughout the world, know peace and happiness in the months and years to come.

Sincerely,

Lane Ayres  Robert Kowalcyk
President  Executive Director
“Where there’s a will, there’s a way”

NO SMALL ACCOMPLISHMENT IN SIERRA LEONE

SHARE EXPRESSES SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR THE CONTAINER OF BOOKS THAT YOU DONATED TO US. WE WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT IT HAS GONE A LONG WAY TO REDUCING THE BOOK FAMINE IN OUR COUNTRY. THE WAR CREATED SUCH DESTRUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THAT OUR EFFORT WAS GREETED WITH COUNTLESS NUMBER OF REQUESTS, FAR MORE THAN WE WERE ABLE TO SATISFY.

Elvis Gbanabol Hallowell, Executive Director, SHARE, Sierra Leone

The relief was palpable in St. Paul, Minnesota and Freetown, Sierra Leone when 25,000 textbooks finally reached that war-torn West African nation in March 2000. The shipment culminated four years of effort between BFA and its partner organization in Sierra Leone, SHARE (Save Heritage And R ehabilitate the Environment). An indigenous, non-governmental organization focused on national development, SHARE’s motto is: “Putting people in the center of things.” SHARE’s incredible persistence and determination to address its country’s book famine in the midst of a decade-long civil war is a fascinating story that illustrates how BFA works.

April 1997 – Initial Contact: SHARE first learns about BFA through an Internet search. Following this cyberspace contact, Program Director Zainab Kamara explains that SHARE’s purpose is to help people become self-sufficient through education and development projects. She describes Sierra Leone’s 4.5 million people as on the brink of hopelessness, second to last of all nations in poverty ($500 per capita income) and illiteracy (69%). With the civil war destroying much of the educational infrastructure, SHARE’s commitment to education, she writes, is “as towering as the sky above us.”

BFA Director Bob Kowalczyk replies immediately, describing BFA’s mission and how it gathers large contributions of new and used textbooks from American schools, libraries and publishers. He explains that BFA donates each container of 25,000 books, but it will be SHARE’s responsibility to raise the shipping costs. However, he also explains how SHARE can apply for a BFA grant to cover up to half the costs.

May 1997 – A Plan Is Made: Zainab articulates SHARE’s connection to several prominent educational
institutions throughout Sierra Leone, reporting that over 2,000 students hold voluntary memberships with SHARE. She provides the specific needs for primary, secondary, and college textbooks, and makes a commitment to raising funds.

**November 1997 - The Realities:** Zainab writes that a military junta has toppled the newly elected democratic government. Outraged, 90% of Sierra Leone’s citizens have become active in civil disobedience and the junta is eventually overthrown. But more chaos ensues. Schools and postal services close. Even more distressing, the corporations that had offered shipping funds months earlier have now either declared bankruptcy or left the country.

**August 1998 - Renewed Contact:** After nearly a year of no contact, SHARE writes to pledge again its commitment to help repair the country’s educational sector. More information on the devastation in the country is relayed, and then again communication is suspended. Finally, in October 1999 BFA receives an e-mail from SHARE’s Executive Director Elvis Hallowell. A former teacher, journalist and poet, Elvis explains: “The organization lost your address in the inferno of fire that ate the city. This morning as I was going into the Internet, I thought to myself that if I should type www.booksforafrica.org I would definitely be hooked up. And there I was browsing into your website!” Hallowell’s perseverance has paid off.

**November 1999 - Grant Secured, Plans Detailed:** Hallowell notifies BFA that the international relief agency CARE has approved a grant to cover half the shipping costs. BFA quickly responds in kind, providing SHARE a grant for the other half. Details regarding SHARE’s textbook needs are again worked out. (Continued on page 4)
January 2000 – BFA Prepares SHARE’s Shipment: In the basement of BFA’s donated warehouse space in St. Paul, thousands of textbooks contributed by schools, libraries, publishers and individuals are stacked. Supervised by warehouse manager Tom Parry, volunteers congregate weekly to sort books for quality and appropriateness. The volunteers come from diverse backgrounds — many through their love of books, others through their connection to service organizations or their keen awareness of the need for books in Africa. Patiently they work their way through the mountains of unsorted books, until the warehouse tables are neatly laid out with stacks of books separated by grade level and subject matter.

With SHARE’s book request list in hand, Tom calls in Ramsey County’s Sentence to Serve “volunteers” (those given community service sentences through the courts) to pack books. In three weeks, 650 boxes are sealed and carefully labeled, secured on pallets, and loaded into a 20-foot sea container for shipment to Sierra Leone.

March 2000 – SHARE Meets the Ship: A month after the container leaves the warehouse, SHARE sends word the shipment has arrived. It is a joyous occasion. The 25,000 books are trucked to SHARE’s central distribution point and are then given to beneficiaries determined by SHARE and the Sierra Leone Ministry of Education. Twenty-five percent of the books go to primary schools, 25% to secondary schools, and 50% to colleges. In all, 52 schools receive books.

2001 HIGHLIGHTS

• Dr. Natalie Hahn, senior advisor for the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships, met with BFA’s staff, volunteers and Advisory Board.

• $25,000 capacity building grant from The St. Paul Companies provided a sprinkler system, sign, cardboard baler and new brochure for BFA.

• First Lady of Tanzania Mama Mkapa met with BFA regarding the development of the Nyerere Memorial Library in Tanzania.

• 1,400 copies of Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African-American Experience were distributed throughout eight countries in Africa. The books and funds to distribute them were provided by the Citigroup Foundation in partnership with Africana.com.

• Tom Warth, BFA’s founder, publicly recognized:
  • Harriet Van Meter Humanitarian Award for International Relations
  • International Children’s Champion Award
  • The Warth Library named in Mbinga, Tanzania
  • 2001 Twin Cities International Citizen’s Award
Recipient schools range from the Methodist Boys High School to the Freetown Secondary School for Girls, from The Sierra Leone Grammar School to Makeni Teachers’ College, from the Flaming Evangelical Ministries School to the Muslim Congress Secondary School, from The College of Medicine & Allied Health Sciences to the College of Business Studies.

December 2000 – BFA Evaluates Its Accomplishment: Following distribution, Elvis provides BFA with documentation of the distribution process, including photos and a sheaf of thank you letters from school principals. On BFA’s book evaluation form he indicates that the textbooks are appropriate and useful. None have gone unused.

In his final letter, Elvis writes: “SHARE expresses sincere appreciation for the container of books that you donated to us. It has gone a long way to reducing the book famine in our country. The war created such destruction to educational institutions that our effort was greeted with countless requests, far more than we were able to satisfy.” In closing, he requests consideration for another shipment of books.

Although more complicated than most, the Sierra Leone project demonstrates “where there’s a will, there’s a way.” Now multiply this project by 40. That is the number of projects that BFA carried out during 2001. Through those projects, children throughout Africa are the beneficiaries of BFA’s ever-growing list of partners and supporters.

PARTNERING WITH ROTARY CLUBS
Rotary clubs in Minnesota and across the country joined forces with BFA this year to help address the book famine in Africa. The Rotary clubs of North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale (MN), Grand Island Sunrise and Noon (NE), Woodbury (MN), and Savannah South (GA) partnered with BFA to send 200,000 books to the children of Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Uganda. BFA provided the books, while the shipping costs were paid by the sponsoring Rotary clubs, matched by their respective Rotary District Foundations, and then matched again by the Rotary International Foundation.

Complementing these efforts, the Inver Grove Heights-South St. Paul (MN) Rotary Club conducted a Minnesota statewide public school book drive resulting in over 100,000 books being donated to BFA. Rotarians gave willingly of their time to pick up books and deliver them to BFA’s St. Paul warehouse – where Rotarians regularly donate their time sorting and packing books. In addition, Rotary clubs in Districts 5950 and 5960 and their foundations contributed $50,000 toward BFA’s Malawi Project. Rotary clubs have partnered with BFA since its founding in 1988. Thirteen years later, Rotary’s commitment to the children of Africa is stronger than ever.

I WRITE TO THANK YOU MOST SINCERELY FOR THE CARTONS—FULL OF BOOKS DONATED TO THE SCHOOL. WE REALLY APPRECIATE SUCH A TIMELY AND THOUGHTFUL GESTURE.

Mrs. A.C. Roberts, Principal, Annie Walsh Memorial School, Sierra Leone
CONTRIBUTORS

CONTRIBUTORS

6

Elizabeth C. Grant and William Casey

Gail C. Grissom

Rosalie H. Hall

Robert J. Howett Jr.

R. Donald Hawkins

John and Jean Hedberg

Quinnin and Sally Heinmeier

Gary Hill

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Daisy McKeen

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Carol Steinberg

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Nancy Hood

Merle Stroehlen
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

2001 2000

ASSETS
Current Assets $222,559 189,261
Net Property and Equipment 14,367 3,662
TOTAL ASSETS $236,926 192,923

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
Current Liabilities 27,535 29,581

NET ASSETS
Unrestricted 121,720 108,342
Temporarily Restricted 87,671 55,000
TOTAL NET ASSETS 209,391 163,342

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS $236,926 $192,923

SUPPORT AND REVENUES
Tew Foundation Contribution $171,474 $131,200
Other Contributions 235,127 258,570
Interest Earned 4,558 3,629
Grant–Other 149,245 64,080
Warehouse Space Contributed 67,420 41,430
Books Contributed 8,031,331 6,289,725
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUES 8,659,155 6,788,634

EXPENDITURES
Program Operating Expenses - Overseas 8,477,066 6,664,430.
General and Administrative Expenses 94,975 78,928
Fundraising Expenses 41,065 15,278
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 8,613,106 6,758,636

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS $46,049 $29,998

Year ended June 30, 2001

* Copies of the full audit and the IRS 990 are available upon request.
** The Charities Review Council, an independent organization that researches and reviews national and local non-profit organizations that solicit funds in Minnesota, has found that in fiscal year 2001 Books For Africa met accountability standards in all four areas: Public Disclosure, Governance, Financial Activity, and Fundraising.
HOW TO HELP BOOKS FOR AFRICA

For every $25 you contribute, Books For Africa can send $2,000 worth of high-quality new and used books to Africa to be read by over 2,500 children. Here are the many ways you can help:

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
Books For Africa relies on volunteers to help sort and pack books, plan special events, produce publications, raise funds, and speak to groups. If you would like to put your special skill or talent to work for the children of Africa, please call us at 651-602-9844 or email info@booksforafrica.org.

CASH GIFTS
Your cash, check, or credit card gift to Books For Africa can be designated for a specific program or directed to where the need is greatest. All gifts are deductible, as specified by law. For your convenience, gifts by credit card can be made directly online at www.booksforafrica.org.

WILLS AND OTHER PLANNED GIFTS
Books For Africa can be named a beneficiary in your will and receive other deferred gifts such as life insurance. These gifts are not subject to estate taxes.

MATCHING GIFTS
Check with your employer about matching gifts. Many corporations and other organizations match employee donations dollar for dollar to the charity of the employee’s choice. Some employers match gifts of retired employees and employee spouses. Others also make financial contributions to match employees’ volunteer hours to the charity of their choice.

GIFTS OF APPRECIATED STOCK
Books For Africa and you can benefit from gifts of stock (provided you have held the stock for 18 months or longer). You can eliminate capital gains taxes, avoid income tax on the gifted stock, and receive tax deductions for the full value of the stock.

SPEAKERS BUREAU
If your employer, club or group would like to learn more about Books For Africa’s mission and work, we are happy to present our program in person.

For additional information, please call 651-602-9844 or visit our website at www.booksforafrica.org.

MAJOR DONORS PROVIDE LONG-TERM SUPPORT
The generous and steady support of major donors has helped BFA achieve its mission year after year. “Donors who contribute something each and every year make a huge difference in our ability to put books in the hands of African children,” says Board Chair Lane Ayres. “These are friends we can count on.” Among the leading donors are the following people who each have contributed a cumulative total of $3,000 or more over the years: Lane Ayres and Marion McNurlen, James Challancin, Marla and Bill Kennedy, Louise and Bill Klas, Barbara Leibundguth; Whitney and Betty MacMillan, Don and Judy Maurer, Dr. and Mrs. Edward E. Ordman, Marilyn Robertson, Jeffrey and Lea Scherer, Tom Warth, and an anonymous donor. Our special thanks to each of them for their generosity.
ON BEHALF OF THE ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY AND STUDENTS OF THE COLLEGE OF WEST AFRICA, I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITH THANKS AND DEEP GRATITUDE YOUR GENEROUS DONATION TO OUR INSTITUTION. IT HAS GONE A VERY LONG WAY IN HELPING TO EASE THE PERENNIAL PROBLEM OF SHORTAGE OR LACK OF BASIC TEXTBOOKS.

George Monu,
College of West Africa, Liberia