

RIGHT TO READ RWANDA

A Rotary Project to Assist Teachers and Community Leaders in Rural Rwanda

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Project Phase One Begins With Teacher/Community Workshops

The first of 5 one week long teacher training workshops has now begun.

These will be delivered in different rural communities of Rwanda during November and December, 2014. With a focus to empowering women, the purpose of these training workshops are to improve English language proficiency, enhance teaching methodology, and to improve the use of instructional resources in classrooms. Rwanda only recently adopted English as the official language of commerce. Teachers must now scramble to improve their skills in English so as to better educate the children of today.....and in rural locations, with limited resources, this is a very difficult task.



The Training Team



Left to Right: Saudah Nadule (Rotarian and host project Team leader), Libby Weir, Hezekiah Owina, Eric Oketch, Elizabeth Ireri, Jill Fenton, Collins Odhiambo (Green Hills Academy), Ben Kigenyi (missing from photo)

Rotarian and educator Jill Fenton works tirelessly to lead a team of seasoned trainers to bring these workshops to 5 hub schools throughout rural Rwanda. After a life long career of teaching in Alberta, Canada, she and her husband Neil wanted nothing of easy retirement life and moved to Rwanda to head up the Green Hills Academy in Kigali. They took this school of 150 children in 1999 to the premier school of Rwanda with 1,800 students now enrolled and many graduates advancing to University studies both inside and outside the country. Jill and Neil have now moved on from active duty with Green Hills but still they want nothing to do with retirement. Seeing the disparity from urban to rural Rwanda schools, they organized a non-profit organization called Tools for Schools to upgrade the education system in rural communities of Rwanda.

Jill is now leading a team of trainers to deliver these needed programs to the rural communities. They have targeted five areas of Rwanda and will be conducting their workshops in one hub school in each area. The team consists of Jill leading three trainers from Kenya who are proficient in English, a local Rwandan who is also a member of the Mission of Hope Rwanda, and Libby Weir, artist, educator and Rotary volunteer who has been with the team for the past two years.





Nyamata, Bugasera District, Rwanda

Nyamata Primary School in Bugasera District is the hub school for the first teacher training workshop. It is located only a 40 minute drive south of Kigali in rural Rwanda but it is the first time these workshops have been held in this district. This is a typical rural primary/elementary school with 660 students from nursery to P6 (grade 6). Six teachers and two nursery teachers make up the entire teaching staff. Half of students come in the morning and second half in the afternoon. This means that each teacher has approximately 100 students/day!



The Workshops

On average about 65 teachers are attending the workshop each day. They come from a number of primary schools in this sector of Bugasera.



The workshop begins with introductions and an English language placement test used to place teachers into 4 classes based on their English language proficiency.

A typical day includes a group meeting upon arrival at 8am for introduction to the days activities. Period 1 is English class of 2 hours with one of the 4 trainers. There is a ½ hour break for African tea and a snack, then Period 2 begins. This period consists of special groups with different topics such as book making, poetry writing, debating, or learning teaching methods. There is another ½ hour break for lunch which is provided on site. Afterwards Period 3 begins with special groups again but with a different instructor. Circle time ends each day allowing for debriefing and sharing thoughts on the day's activities and singing songs that could be used with students in their classes and that also reinforce English language vocabulary. The day finishes at about 3:30pm to allow everyone to head home before dark.



Circle Time at end of day



Libby Weir marking entrance tests on day 1



Book making encourages creativity with limited resources while applying English.



Nyamata workshop also included a ½ day introduction to the use of internet and computer technology as instructional aids and teaching methodology in the classroom.

Sponsorship

This Project is being funded with the support of a TRF Global Grant. Rotary partners include: Rotary Clubs of Jasper and Stony Plain from District 5370 (Canada); The Rotary Club of Kigali-Virunga from District 9150 (Rwanda); and Rotary Clubs of Chennai Info City, Madras East, Madras Marina, and Chennai Towers from District 3230 (India).

Other partners include: Tools for Schools, a Canadian registered, not for profit organization established in 2000 specifically to support enhancing education in rural areas of Rwanda; and Mission of Hope Rwanda, a newly established Rwandan not for profit organization focused on improving the quality of education in rural areas of Rwanda.

