

Village Libraries

A Prospective from the Kingdom of Swaziland

By Penelope Lulane

The Second Wind Foundation (Books for the World) in America has an ongoing project of donating containers and books to many countries in the world including my country, Swaziland. The Rotary Club of Manzini, Swaziland, Rotary District 9400, and Rotary Club of Seabrook, Texas, District 5890, saw the need of training one person in Swaziland on setting up libraries, who can train other schools to ensure quality usage of the books donated. The Clear Creek Independent School District, Texas (CCISD) partnered with the Rotary Clubs to provide a vehicle for training-a-trainer for my visit to the USA.

CCISD and the Rotary Club of Seabrook, Texas choose Ed White Elementary school to be the training agent for Penelope Lulane who was chosen by the Rotary Club of Manzini, Swaziland. The principle of Ed White Elementary, Matt Paulson, is a Rotarian in the Rotary Club of Seabrook and Ed White is in CCISD and the Seabrook, Texas service area.



The Manzini Rotary Club Book Distribution Center receives donated books and containers from the Books for the World Project and then donates them to any school in Swaziland. My school (Khuphuka Primary School) has benefited from this project. We got two containers and books. The picture shows one of

the two containers. My school is situated in a poverty stricken, semi-rural area. Most of our kids come to school barefooted and without eating anything. As a result, the government of Swaziland is proving feeding schemes in all schools in the country. My school had a problem of water supply for the past years. In 2012 the Rotary club of Manzini and USA Rotarians though Charlie and Barbara Clemmons give my school borehole water.



I experienced many things in USA while I was undergoing my five week training in 2015. I visited four Rotary Clubs where I gave programs about my country, the projects undertaken by the Rotary Club of Manzini, Swaziland and about the project of building a library. We exchanged banners with each club I visited; the picture shows me and President Lizzy Moreno exchanging banners at the Rotary Club of Richmond, Texas.

I visited the Books for the World warehouse, where the books are kept before being sorted and donated to many countries. I learned how to bind and balance books on a pallet. The book pallets are then taken to the Exel Logistics warehouse where they are stored until cleared for shipment, loaded into the containers, and then shipped to other countries.

I was shocked by the high school volunteers (Interactors) in America, they come in numbers to help with books sorting and palletizing, before the books are shipped to many countries. Actually, we were receiving books without knowing how people work hard to get them ready to be shipped.



I felt highly honored to be among the young volunteers and I got a chance to talk to them about how the books have brought change and quality education in Swaziland. I also shared with them how the books have brought change in my school in the teaching and learning process. Since we received the books, the school has had an improvement. English grades have improved in all levels.

During my training, I visited a number of libraries in America, to observe how they use their libraries. The librarians meet frequently to fix their problems and plan for the future. I got to learn that library is not only a place for reading but also a place of creation. At Ed White Elementary school they were doing a solar project in the library.



How can my experiences help Swaziland ?

I have a great role to play in my country (Swaziland) to train other schools on setting up primary libraries with the help of the minister of education, director of libraries, Books for the World project and the Rotary Book Distribution Center in Manzini. To succeed in our rapid-paced, global society, all learners must be able to access quality information from diverse perspectives.

I believe that primary school libraries are very important because that is where children develop the reading habits of a lifetime. Establishing village libraries in Swaziland will instill the culture of learning to Swazis at a tender age. The sooner children are exposed to library usage the more they will be proficient and excel academically. Learning library and information development is a necessary investment. **A successful nation is an educated one.**

Swaziland falls under third World countries so the economic status is low; as a result parents are not able to send their children to national libraries in towns and cities. So establishing libraries in the village will cater to the needs of the underprivileged by giving access to information they need in order to succeed and grow intellectually.

Furthermore, village libraries can help close the gap between village and town learners, they will give rural students equal opportunities and resources.



The photo is of Penny Lulane with the District 5890 Interactors at the November 2015 book packing event.

The Second Wind Foundation is a Texas based

501c3 corporation which was organized by PDG Charlie and Barbara Clemmons. . It purchases the containers used for book shipment which was prohibited by the Rotary Foundation and donates them to a Rotary Club at the book recipient's site. The containers are converted into libraries, classroom, day care center, clinics, etc.

The sorting warehouse is managed by a group of Rotarians located in the East Texas Rotary districts. Chief among those operating the sorting warehouse is Terry Zeigler of the Rotary Club of West University and Tommie Buscemi, Interact coordinator for District 5890. Charlie Buscemi has handle the freight forwarding for many years. The project could not provide the books it does without the unpaid volunteers that work tirelessly year around.