



friends of **African**
Village libraries

Generous donors have enabled FAVL to establish and continuously manage twelve libraries in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda. FAVL also supports the Uganda Community Library Association, with 28 member libraries.

Current fundraising priorities:

- Building an endowment for each of the FAVL-managed community libraries;
- Hosting summer reading camps in all libraries;
- Producing more microbooks in the local languages and the language of instruction;
- Continuing to build staff capacity to prepare for expansion.

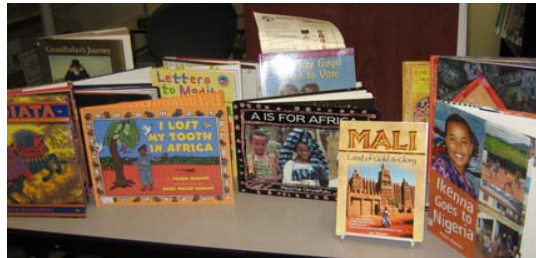
Friends of African Village Libraries is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit.

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Acting Locally and Interacting Globally: Ugandan Librarians at International Conference

Following a long and dusty journey by bus to Tanzania, an intrepid team from the Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA) participated in the *6th Pan African Conference on Reading for All* in Dar es Salaam in August. Several Ugandan donors helped fund the trip: Fountain Publishers, MK Publishers, Mukono Bookshop, and Dr. Alan Shonubi, Chair of the National Library Board.



The UgCLA members' presentation of their innovative work was very well received. In the first part, Kayaga Mulindwa, UgCLA's Treasurer and Director of the National Library of Uganda, described the state of libraries in Uganda and the reasons for establishing UgCLA. In the second part library managers Lincoln Wamala, Francis Kigobe, Augustine Napagi, Jasindo Afebuja, and Gulere Wambi described the most successful activities that their libraries had engaged in: the launching of the Nambi Sseppuuya Memorial Resource Centre, in collaboration with the Reading Association of Uganda; the organization of quizzes for primary school students at the Caezaria Public Library; the writing of a storybook in Luganda at the Kabubbu Community Library; the organization of crafts activities for library users by URLCODA; and the use of the Mpolyabigere Community Library for disseminating information about HIV-AIDS and providing free AIDS testing. (continued p.2)

Back by Popular Demand: Summer Reading Camps in Burkina Faso

FAVL will be holding its summer reading camps in Burkina Faso once again, thanks to a grant from the Lisle Foundation. The camps were so popular in the past two summers that parents in these poor rural villages offered to pay to provide more camps for their kids. This is the only opportunity these children will ever have to go to a summer camp.

Osu Children's Library Fund has been a generous sponsor of previous camps, which help instill in fourth-graders a love of reading in a fun environment.

"Arriving in Sara to see the reading camps, the first thing I noticed was children jumping and singing, not reading," recalls FAVL Vice President Leslie Gray. "It dawned on me

that this experience for the kids was much more than academic. It was social and fun, just like summer camp in the United States. The children were singing, doing art projects, theater, calisthenics, and spending a lot of time reading and discussing books. They got two nutritious meals a day and a T-shirt, which is a big thing in Burkina Faso." At the end of the day, the children each took home a book to read. (continued p.2)



News and views

exchanges.



Successful launch of study abroad program in partnership with Santa Clara University

This month marks the close of an intensive four-month immersion experience for the inaugural class of the *Reading West Africa* Study Abroad Program in Burkina Faso. Nine students from three universities in California combined academic work on the literature and development challenges of West Africa with immersion and community-based learning experiences in FAVL community libraries. The courses were taught by a tag-team of three professors from Santa Clara University. FAVL was the implementing partner for the program, which has greatly enhance the professional development and management capacity of local FAVL staff .

In the capital Ouagadougou, the students immersed themselves in the French language and West African literature, as well as courses in Development Economics and in Civic Engagement taught by SCU Professors and FAVL co-founders Michael Kevane and Leslie Gray, respectively. A course in digital photography was taught by SCU Professor of Photography David Pace, whose photographs have graced FAVL's website and past newsletters. Long-time FAVL supporter Alain Sissao, also a prominent literary critic in West Africa, taught a class on the literature of Francophone West Africa. In the village libraries, the students served as hands-on interns, working with librarians, teachers and villagers to create microbooks of photographs with simple text about village life. Check FAVL's website next month for a link to firsthand reports from the returning students and a peek at the children's books that they helped create. SCU is now accepting applications from college juniors for the 2010 fall semester.



Many Nice Things

Readers of Debbie Tenzer's book *Do One Nice Thing: Little Things You Can Do To Make the World a Lot Nicer* have been mailing in envelopes full of colorful stickers for FAVL librarians to use to encourage reading in their children's programs and summer reading camps. The stickers are extremely popular, as Bereba librarian Sanou Dounko attests in a video thank-you message—which you can view at www.favl.org/blog. Even if you don't understand French, Dounko's smiling face speaks a thousand words.

International Conference (continued from p.1)

A side-trip led the Ugandans to a smaller conference in the village of Kwekitui with Tanzanian library promoters, where they shared strategies for overcoming common challenges and planted the seeds for an East African network of community libraries.

One project highlighted was the storybook produced at Kabubbu Community Library. Collaborating with an illustrator and photographer, the librarians invited parents and children to contribute their stories and pictures to create a marvelous book in the Luganda language, *Essanyu l'yabato (Joy of Children)*. The project was financed with a \$1000 grant that UgCLA distributed from funds provided by the US Embassy in Kampala. UgCLA Board Member George Openjuru hopes to extend this work to other libraries.

Summer Reading Camps (continued from p.1)

In summer 2010, camps will be held in five villages in southwestern Burkina Faso. Each week, 20 students from each of the villages will go to camp under the supervision of five adults and two fifth-grade student assistants who attended the 2009 summer camps.

Students in Burkina Faso struggle with reading. Many of their parents are illiterate in a country with the lowest literacy rate in the world, according to a 2009 United Nations report. Fewer than one in four adults can read. In addition, class sizes that range from 65 to 90 students mean that teachers cannot provide one-on-one help to their students. FAVL librarians participate in the camps, where they learn new ways to help students improve their reading skills that they can apply throughout the year.

At least one of the adult counselors in each camp will be an international student, providing an opportunity for cultural exchange,

Volunteers and visitors in FAVL libraries

Volunteers help librarians learn new ways of interacting with readers. When they return, they spread the word about the importance of creating opportunities for children and adults to improve their reading skills.

Spotlight on two librarians

Amy Reggio, FAVL volunteer in Béréba, Burkina Faso last summer, salutes librarian Sanou Dounko:

I was particularly impressed with one of Béréba's librarians, Dounko, whose charisma brought in so many people. With his songs and stories, he made reading fun and educational, two qualities that should always be associated with learning. His contribution to the library reminded me that organizations are only as good as the people who work for them, and Dounko is a true advocate for reading, a teacher, and a friend.

Lauren Hudson and Holly Boyce volunteered last summer at the Chalula Community Library in Mvumi, Tanzania. In their report, they write of librarian Grace Myakwaka :

She helped us manage large groups of students and prepare for activities. Having an older, respected figure with such groups helped. ...She also understood the need to conserve supplies. She also readily stepped into the leadership role by utilizing her own ideas. An especially clever one was her method of tracking which books were most popular with the patrons. She had them fill out slips before they left saying which books they looked at.



More news from Chalula

Library co-founder Rosemary Harris reports from her visit in September:

The Chalula Community library has been open for close to two years now. There have been ups and downs—including our librarian's serious bout with malaria, and sand-encrusted solar panels—but for the most part

things are going well. The collection is growing and every day that we were in the village dozens of children came to read and be read to by the older children and the volunteers. The two suitcases of books and school supplies we brought were soon catalogued and added to the small collection as were two big boxes brought by our new friends Mungwe ABC Athman and Andrea Wall, the founders of PEN Trust, The Poverty Eradication Network. www.pentrust.org. Their help was invaluable on this trip and I am optimistic that this will be the start of a beautiful friendship. I spent half a day using clear plastic packing tape to rebind the ones that we'd left the last time we were there and I don't doubt that we will need to rebind them again the next time we visit!

Summer camps ignite readers

Volunteer Madelyn Bagby describes her experience in Béréba:

I will never forget the sight of over a hundred primary school kids sprinting to the library's hangar during their break from school, hoping for a story time. The energy radiating from the children was electrifying, and reading to such a large and responsive group was always a rewarding experience. During the summer reading camps, watching the stronger readers help the weaker ones in partner reading activities inspired a lot of hope that literacy proficiency can be improved. The camps also promoted the idea that reading is something to be done outside of school and



Partnerships with Peace Corps volunteers

throughout the year.



FAVL is working with two Peace Corps Volunteers in Burkina Faso who are raising funds to help establish libraries in the rural communities where they've been serving for a couple years.

In **Pobe Mengao**, Emilie Crofton reports that the library management committee of local leaders has been making plans, and the community is contributing 25% of the cost in the form of manual labor and this donated building. Follow their progress at pobemengaoibrary.blogspot.com.

Learning about libraries in Sierra Leone

In **Bougounam**, Jen Lazuta has signed on for an additional year of service to help the community get a library up and running. Read more at books4bougounam.wordpress.com.

For the past nine weeks FAVL networker extraordinaire Anne-Reed Angino has been on a fact finding trip in Sierra Leone:

I was quick to meet a vibrant, although small, network of library professionals, teachers and others devoted to building up the library infrastructure and promoting a culture of reading. I spoke with them to learn more about the current library system, their activities, successes, problems, goals and visions. The purpose was to see how the libraries are functioning, what type of books they have, and who is using the



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Friends of African Village Libraries: Enriching the Lives of Children

FAVL Volunteer Ricky Alexander’s photo captures the excitement of putting books into the hands of readers at the Chalula Community Library in Tanzania. African libraries scramble to obtain books in several languages since many children enter school fluent in their first language, but must become literate in the official language of their government.

