



"Educating Children Around the World"

January 2015

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SHARING A LITTLE PIECE OF ADVICE

Each little piece can be a part of a greater peace!

OEF is often asked why it offers a free pen pal program.

Educators in our program quickly respond with all the learning opportunities found in the authentic, real-life writing context that can't be found online or in a book.

But there is another piece.

The program promotes peace in a world that sorely needs it.

Each letter, story or drawing you send promotes curiosity and understanding for a pen pal who may look very different or have different beliefs. **Our young peoples' pen pal letters/pictures model how to express curiosity and compassion through communication rather than ridicule or violence.**

Recently, each student at Loveland Elementary in Omaha, Nebraska made a puzzle piece for a school bulletin board project. Each piece displayed artwork and a caption which depicted a person, place or thing found in their school community.



For example, the first grade made self-portraits to show the diversity of the school.

They placed all the pieces in the shape of the state and made replicas to send to their pen pals at St. Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School, Kumasi, Ghana who will then re-assemble the pieces. Not a simple task, as creative math was needed to organize the numbering of pieces, creating an outline and grid to recreate their hard work in Ghana.



Thank you to Deanna Stevens, an awesome educator at Loveland, who shared the pictures and story. If you have a story, picture or letter idea – please send it to: schools@opportunityeducation.org

We would be grateful to share your little piece of good news!

WHAT'S NEWS IN OEF SCHOOLS!

Is It a New Year?

In the USA, the school year is half done but many OEF schools have just started their new school year in January.

It is helpful to note when your pen pals' school year starts and ends and what holiday breaks they may have, in order to time your letters accordingly.

This is a fun topic to do research on your pen pal school: what are their seasons; do they have a spring, summer, fall, winter or rainy season; how do these seasons impact the school year?

To help you get started and plan your letters the following is a very general schedule of the school year in the countries that we serve:

Cameroon – September through June, with holiday breaks throughout.

Ghana – September through late June, with holiday breaks throughout.

India – School year start dates vary by state; a general term is a June/July start through March finish. There are many holiday breaks that are very interesting according to the state and religious nature of the celebrations.

Lesotho – January through December, with many holiday breaks.

Nepal – April start through March end date, with winter season and holiday breaks.



Sierra Leone – September through June, with many holiday breaks.

South Africa – January through December, with many holiday breaks.

Sri Lanka – January through November, with many holiday breaks.

Tanzania – Generally 3 terms, January to March, May to July and September to November.

Uganda – January to December, with many holiday breaks, and a long break in August.

Zambia– January through December, with many holiday breaks.

Please remember to:

1) CHECK your country mailing directions here before you mail:

<http://www.opportunityeducation.org/site/page/view/contactUs.mailing>

2) REVIEW all the letters that you send and receive – to ensure proper content.

3) EMAIL schools@opportunityeducation.org before you mail letters, so we may help track their safe delivery.

In Indian news...

OEF South India Country Manager, John Kandichetla, was recently invited to speak at a multi-school event attended by over 3,500 students and 100 teachers. The theme of the day was, "Society Needs You," which asked both students and teachers to reflect on self-improvement and contributions to their communities.



This is a stressful time of year in Indian schools as students take exams that determine their future opportunities. Mr. Kandichetla offered encouragement to make use of programs like Opportunity Education, and examples of people like OEF benefactor, Joe Ricketts, who strive to help communities educate their own. He also affirmed that failing an exam is only temporary and that all students have gifts and talents to offer to better themselves and their society. Clearly it was a universal message that we can all appreciate.

In Tanzanian news...

Jamaal Mlewa, OEF Tanzania Primary School Program Manager, has been busy unpacking OEF materials to be distributed to Tanzanian schools that start their new school year in January.

He is pictured with the head teacher, Pamela Revetha, of JK Nyerere Primary School in Moshi, which is near Mount Kilimanjaro.



WELCOME NEW SCHOOLS!

We welcome the following schools to our free, international pen pal program which is a fun and easy way to meet Language Arts, Social Studies and History/Civics standards. Share [this link](#) to invite others to join.



Welcome to:

Gardiner High School, Gardiner, ME and Luanchele School, Zambia
Northwest Elementary, Lebanon, PA and Living Life School, Tanzania
Phillips Prep. School, Mobile, AL and Pelican Park Primary, WC, South Africa
Sowers Middle School, Huntington Beach, CA and Akyawkrom School, Ghana
Whitetail Elementary, Gretna, NE and Akyawkrom Primary School, Ghana
Baston C/E Primary, Baston, UK and St. Xavier, India
Park Elementary School, Tulsa, OK and Tawheed Primary School, Tanzania
Dr. Ralph J. Bunche Elementary, Markin, IL and Raskazone Primary School, Tanzania
St. Elizabeth Seton, Rochester, NH and Bosofour RC Primary, Ghana
St. Elizabeth Seton, Rochester, NH and St. John's Foncha Street, Cameroon
St. Elizabeth Seton, Rochester, NH and Catholic Primary, Nkambe Cameroon
St. Elizabeth Seton, Rochester, NH and Mother Theresa EM School, India
St. Elizabeth Seton, Rochester, NH and St. John Berchman's School, India
St. Elizabeth Seton, Rochester, NH and St. Patrick's Basic School, Zambia

OEF would love to have more international schools. If you have educator friends, anywhere in the English-speaking world, forward their details to us and we will connect their school to one of our outstanding schools in Africa or Asia.

Email today and start writing tomorrow! schools@opportunityeducation.org

THIS SCHOOL NEEDS PEN PALS!

Nyimba Basic School is located in Zambia. Zambia is a land locked country in southern Africa consisting mostly of high plateaus with some hills and mountains, dissected by river valleys. At 752,614 square km (290,586 sq mi) it is the 39th-largest country in the world, slightly smaller than Chile. Zambia is also home to Victoria Falls, reputed to be the largest falls in the world, being twice as wide and one and a half times as high as Niagara Falls.

Nyimba Basic School was established as a government school in 1955 and now has 2,203 students from grades 1 to 9. There are 42 teachers and an average of about 91 students in each of the 24 classrooms. No fees are charged from grades 1-7 but students in grades 8-9 pay about \$40 per year. This crowded school is facing a water shortage and a need for bathroom improvements. With only 12 toilets, there is one toilet per 184 pupils. The school is striving to provide computer education, with the principal's office serving double duty as the meagerly supplied computer room.

Despite the lack of financial resources, the school is blessed with a very supportive community that wants to add much-needed space and improve the playground. Nyimba has been in the OEF program just a short time but is very eager to be matched to a pen pal school.

Writing letters is an excellent opportunity to learn more than textbooks or even the internet can offer...just email us and we will put a Welcome Folder in the mail to you today!



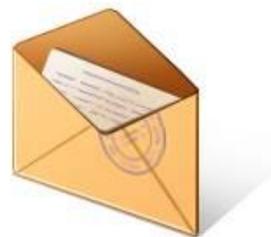
Email: schools@opportunityeducation.org and you can start writing today!

If you already have a pen pal, refer a friend to our [OEF Pen Pal](#) link.

FEATURED SCHOOL & GIFT CERTIFICATE WINNER

Congrats to Kristine Choi, a talented third grade teacher at Mosby Woods Elementary in Fairfax, Virginia.

On behalf of your pen pals from Manhyia Methodist Primary School in Ghana – thank you for sending letters!



Kristine, send an email to: schools@opportunityeducation.org to claim your prize!

Want to win next month?

Just email schools@opportunityeducation.org after you mail your letters and you are entered to win!

START WRITING – RIGHT NOW!

Now is the perfect time to write your pen pals!

No lesson plan is needed, but if you need one – we have them!

Writing letters is a great activity to keep students productive during homeroom, study hall or downtime.

You can also integrate cross-curricular objectives into lesson plans that we have created to maximize learning through letters.

[Click Here for Letter Ideas and Resources](#)

[Click Here for Letter Lesson Plans](#)



We also have 4 options to stay up to date with our international pen pal program.

OPTION 1: To keep up with our "Friends" – we have a Facebook page just for you!

Visit our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/OpportunityEducation>

OPTION 2: Unable to get on Facebook? No worries.

Visit our Pen Pal Blog. <http://opportunityeducation.wordpress.com/>

OPTION 3: Pinterest. <http://www.pinterest.com/opportunityed/>

OPTION 4: Twitter. <https://twitter.com/OpEdFoundation>

Check out our social media for interesting ideas, stories, and links to help generate enthusiasm and discussion about education plus lesson plans to integrate pen pal letters into your standard requirements.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Write Your Pen Pals!

Even if it's been a while, now is still the best time to write. The name, address and mailing instructions are available on our website. Start by [clicking here](#).

You can also email:

Schools@OpportunityEducation.org



Get Others to Write!

We have 355 schools very eager to have English speaking pen pals.

Share the following link – and make sure you CC schools@opportunityeducation.org – to get a gift certificate. [Click Here to Refer A Friend and Get a Gift Certificate!](#)

Visit an Opportunity Education School!

Take a life-changing trip to teach, share and learn in an Opportunity Education school in Africa or India. [Click Here to Learn More.](#)



BEFORE – no doors, open to playground **AFTER** – new privacy doors

Picture of the Month:

Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible;
and suddenly you are doing the impossible. – Francis of Assisi

It's easy to see the importance of a door – on a bathroom stall – particularly in this picture where the stalls open up facing a playground. Like schools everywhere, there just seems to be more needs than funding, so the doors have not been replaced. During a recent OEF school visit, a spunky 12 year old girl stood up in front of both visitors and her giggling classmates to present her school improvement project of replacing the damaged and missing doors to the toilet stalls. Ignoring the snickers, she chastised her peers saying, it is not proper and we should do something about it. By standing up and "saying her peace" she inspired a donor to replace the doors. We all can contribute a little piece to make our world a better place. It's up to us to inspire and empower young people to do the same or is it the other way around?

For more information please contact:

TERESA ROLL

OUTREACH & SISTER SCHOOL COORDINATOR

OPPORTUNITY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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STAY CONNECTED

