

OPPORTUNITY EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2008

www.opportunityeducation.org

<<http://www.opportunityeducation.org/>>

Welcome back for school year 2009! I hope you enjoyed your summer.

Please restart your letter writing campaign to your pen pal school as soon as possible. We shall ask your sister school to start writing as well to try to maximize the number of exchanges of letters between the schools. Thank you.

We at Opportunity Education look forward to assisting your school in a cross cultural educational experience by aligning your school with a sister school in a developing nation. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need any assistance or have questions. Our goal is to facilitate the relationships between the schools and we have put together a packet to assist you. If you have not yet received one, please let me know by email and I shall send one to you.

Our goal at Opportunity Education for 2008 was to have 1,000 schools in developing countries in our program and we are well on the way to achieving this. Last year we assisted schools in Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, India and Sri Lanka. This year additional schools in those countries have become part of the program but, for the first time, schools in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nepal have also joined. Our next goal is to attract sister schools in the developed world for those 1,000 schools and you can help by referring teachers and schools to the Opportunity Education Sister School program. We shall again stoke the enthusiasm for the pen pal program by offering a free trip to visit your sister school in the summer of 2009 and shall include additional information about this trip later this fall in another Newsletter.

The trip to Africa in June of 2008 to visit sister schools was a real treat. For me, it brought to life the photographs and stories from our website. I saw first hand how Opportunity Education makes a difference to the education of these students...I also saw how your students and you make a difference in the lives of these young people...you really impact their lives by your participation in the pen pal relationship.

Don Ridder from St. Patrick's of Elkhorn, Nebraska went on the trip. Here are some of his comments:

“This summer I visited our sister school and several other schools in Uganda together with Terry Crum, Principal of St. James/Seton in Omaha, Jim Ricketts, Alan Barkley and Patti Davis from Opportunity Education and four teachers from Omaha schools. We found great people and wonderful children who had nothing but a great appreciation for Opportunity Education and their sister schools in the US. They treated us like kings and queens. When I walked into their classrooms they stood, clapped, sang and they smiled. They were very happy to have us as their sister school. The hospitality was overwhelming and they gave me several presents, all made by teachers or the kids. When I asked them if they enjoyed receiving our letters they responded like kids who just got their best Christmas present ever. They are excited to know that the kids here care for them and are praying for them. They also love writing the letters which the children at our school love receiving.”

To view photographs of the trip, go to www.photobucket.com/opportunityeducation <<http://www.photobucket.com/opportunityeducation>> .

I found out on this summer's trip that most schools do not have internet access. Usually the teachers or principals have to go to an internet café to retrieve their emails and they do so infrequently. If you email your sister school, please be patient if their response is slow.

FEATURED SCHOOLS:

Swampscott Middle School (<http://www.swampscottms.net/>) from Swampscott,

Massachusetts joined as a Sister School. Judy McKenzie from the school was visiting South Africa this summer and asked a taxi driver to take her to visit a school. The school she visited happened to be a school assisted by Opportunity Education and she became acquainted with the Sister School program through that contact. After returning home, she partnered with Siyabulela Primary School in Langa, near Cape Town.

Siyabulela Primary School was established in 1980 in Langa, one of the oldest black townships in the Western Cape, about fifteen kilometers from Cape Town. It serves an impoverished community with an extremely high unemployment rate and rampant crime and drug abuse. Despite these hardships the community is committed to the education and development of its children and this has resulted in very sound relations between the community and the educators at Siyabulela Primary. Last year one of the learners at Siyabulela was selected to be a student at Oprah Winfrey's Academy. View for more detail:

<http://www.khanya.co.za/schools/khanyaschool.php?emisno=0102042310>

For **Uganda and Tanzania sister schools**; please remember to mail your letters to Opportunity Education staff, Joseph Kawuzi in Uganda and Mbaki Mutahaba in Tanzania.

Kawuzi Joseph
P.O.BOX
70875 Clock
Tower Kampala
Uganda

Mbaki Mutahaba
P.O. Box 34202
Dar-es-Salaam
Tanzania

The students of your sister school thank you for making a difference in their lives. I heard many times in Africa that these children know that they have friends in America who love them. Those comments made my eyes moist. I thank you as well.

Sincerely,

Jim Ricketts

Assistant Director

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