

- African Trip makes impact on teen
- Sister School Program presented at Malaika Conferences

ACTIVITIES
IN
OCTOBER

Malaika
Conferences

National Middle
School
Conference

National Gifted
Conference

Iowa Gifted
Conference

School Visits



The Gift of the Globe

Erika Goergen, daughter of Patti Davis, Director of Education for Opportunity Education, traveled with the group of teachers making the African Sister Schools trip in July, 2007. This moving essay was written by the seventeen year old senior.

Several years ago, my mother asked me to clean out my closet and pack up some of my old books and toys to send to “the poor children in Africa”. Although parents have used the “poor children in Africa” line for years and for a variety of reasons, including getting kids to clean their plates, my mother had actually met many of these children on trips to Africa as Director of Education for an NGO. So, when she told me to box up a few things, I knew they were really going somewhere around the world, not just to the curb. I packed up my

my school visits, I entered a classroom at Madera Boys School in Northern Uganda. The priest in charge introduced me as the girl who had given the school the books and the materials. The students stood and clapped, despite my embarrassment. I soon spotted the multiplication game in the makeshift library, a single set of shelves with approximately twenty ragged books set alongside my before rarely-opened encyclopedias. Then I saw it. The globe! It sat all alone on a table in a high school classroom. My mind quickly returned to that day when I was cleaning my closet of all of those useless fiction books and that stupid globe. Stupid, yeah right! This globe is



Erika, the children and the globe

GeoSafari globe, a set of ChildCraft encyclopedias, a multiplication game that I had never mastered, and a variety of ragged fiction books. I had done my part to save the world!

Fast-forward two years. My mother was making

alone changing the world for the hundreds of students in one village. It has become the focal point of their curriculum, the center of their learning. Not one student or teacher in the entire school had ever seen a globe before. They now believed that they had the entire world at their fingertips! The old globe that had nearly gone in the trash, had opened many eyes and provided hope for many to experience the world outside their village.

I saw the world differently that day too. I may have given them the globe, but they gave me the world.

another trip to East Africa and invited me to go along. While I was excited at the thought of seeing zebras and elephants in the wild, I was not thrilled that I would be accompanying a group of teachers and administrators (with a mean age of over 50). Yet, how often does a 17-year old get to travel half-way around the world? So, I packed my bags and headed off on an adventure that would change who I was and how I saw the world.

When I landed at the Entebbe, Uganda airport, I realized that I was certainly not in Nebraska anymore. The bare necessities that I take for granted, do not exist for most of the people in this country. Many of the children in the schools I visited did not have shoes, books, or basic materials. Worse yet, about 30-40% did not have parents.

Yet, despite all of the poverty and lack of the most basic necessities of life, the children had hope and joy.

On the last day of

All Sister Schools will have an opportunity to win a trip to visit their Participating School. Visit the website for more details.

www.opportunityeducation.org

Sister School Program Presented at Malaika Conferences

Patti Davis, Director of Education and Patty Duncan, Sister Schools Coordinator presented the Sister School Program to teachers at several locations during conferences sponsored by The Malaika Foundation in collaboration with the Nebraska Department of Education. The mission of the Malaika Foundation is to add an international dimension to learning in Nebraska schools and libraries, with the goal of build-

ing greater understanding among young people from different global cultural traditions. The Foundation believes that such understanding can lead to greater harmony in the increasingly diverse environments of classrooms and communities and add global thinking and international education to the lives of Nebraska children.

Current Projects of the Foundation include: Dr. Hank Beachell Fellows Program for Nebraska Stu-

dents and Teachers World Food Prize Youth Institute. (www.worldfoodprize.org); Great Teachers Training Institute, New York City; (www.fpa.org); Kenneth Morrison International Travel Fellowships. For more information on the Malaika Foundation visit the website at www.malaikafoundation.org

“Thank you very much for your very quick feedback. That for sure is a testimony that we are in very safe hands and the future is within our reach.”

Participating School Teacher

Patty Duncan—Sister School Coordinator

I am very happy to join the staff at Opportunity Education as Sister School Coordinator. The Program makes such a difference in the lives of students and teachers. It is my belief that we can change the world through the education and communication of our children and their teachers.

My goal is to match all Participating Schools with a Sister School. I am

also a resource for the schools. I have matched activities to National Standards and the Six Traits of Writing as well as started a bibliography of materials. I also have the responsibility to help facilitate the prompt delivery of letters and encourage ongoing communication. Please feel free to call me at 402-250-7168 or email me at [pattyduncan@opportunityeducation](mailto:pattyduncan@opportunityeducation.org)

.org. I look forward to helping you in any way I can.