



**Opportunity**  
Education  
Foundation

"Educating Children Around the World"

**March 2014**

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## PICTURE THIS MONSTER?



What do Bigfoot, Loch Ness, Mokele-mbembe and Gustave have in common?

March's Letter Lesson Plan asks...Are monster alligators lurking in our sewers? Does a large, hairy, bipedal humanoid called Bigfoot roam the forests of America? Both urban and not so-urban legends of monsters are great fun for kids of all ages. These monsters have been scaring us for generations. But why should the USA have all the fun?

In Tanzania a legendary 20-foot-long Nile crocodile wreaked terror on Lake Tanganyika. Tanzanians branded this man-eater, Gustave. Allegedly claiming the lives of 300+ people, this menacing monster evaded countless capture attempts for more than sixty years. Although the widely circulated (photo-shopped?) picture seemingly attests to his epic reputation, when hunters caught up with him in 2005, he ended up about 13 feet long – a little short for a species that can grow up to 16 feet in length.

In that same region of Africa, a water-dwelling dinosaur, similar to the Loch Ness monster, reportedly lurks in the Congo River basin. Mokele-mbembe meaning "one who stops the flow of rivers" in the Lingala language, was "sighted" even before a French missionary described the creature in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Similar to his Scottish counterpart, he remains a scary reminder that we never really know what lurks beneath the waters.

Get your students writing about their "favorite" monster. Research legendary beasts close to home. Follow by directing students to send a letter to their pen pals, describing every scary detail. Task your students to then draw a picture of their monster based on their description. It will be both fun and informative to evaluate just how good their descriptions are at "picturing" their monster. Send the letters to their pen pals in a separate sealed envelope, advising them not to open until they have read the letters. Ask pen pals to "picture" this monster based on the letters and then open the envelope containing your students' corresponding pictures. Send a letter to the teacher at your pen pal school and ask them to do the same "picture this monster" lesson. Explain that if there is no mythical monster nearby, that students can simply create their own descriptions of a monster and send the resulting pictures.

## A SPECIAL WAY TO SAY HELLO TO TANZANIA?

115 days and counting until we touch ground in Moshi, Tanzania, with 17 people on the Education Experience Trip who will share their time and talents in OEF schools.

Our greatest joy is sharing our schools with others. If you have a pen pal school in the cities of Moshi or Arusha – we would love to include your school in on the fun.

We will personally deliver whatever letters, videos or special projects you would like to share with your pen pals.



To give you ideas...students at Menallen Elementary in Pennsylvania are designing a canvass mural to share. Menallen will draw and paint half of the mural. We will deliver it to their pen pal school in Arusha who will then finish the other side of the mural and send back.

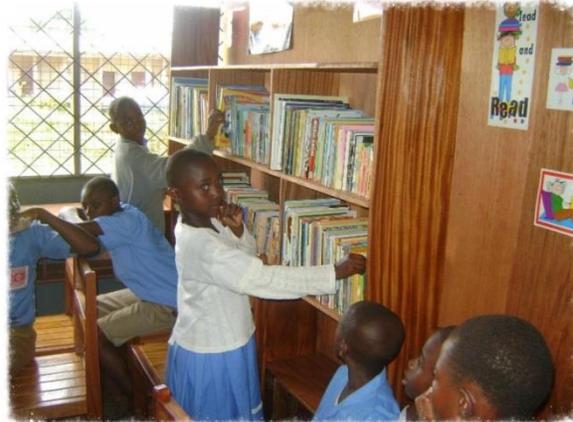
We are always delighted and amazed by the creativity of our schools' correspondence projects. Let us know how we can help you send a special hello to your pen pals!

## THE ONLY THING YOU NEED TO KNOW?

- There are more public libraries than McDonald's in the U.S. – a total of 16,766.
- Americans spend over 18 times as much money on home video games (\$18.6 billion) as they do on school library materials for their children (\$1 billion).
- "The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library." ~Albert Einstein

Seems like Einstein may be a smart enough guy to validate the value of a library.

Sadly, most OEF schools don't have text books and school libraries are rare. What isn't rare, is the generosity of Sister Schools who have wanted to send books to Africa and Asia.

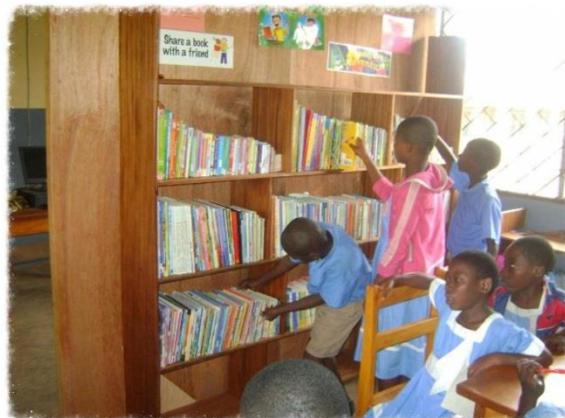


We applaud the efforts of the many teachers, students and schools who have helped build libraries for their pen pal schools.

Edison Elementary in Iowa is featured in the following OEF video. Edison's Sister School Coordinator shares her experience collecting books and traveling to Tanzania to help set up the library at her pen pal school.

<http://www.opportunityeducation.org/videos/educate-our-hearts/>

Recently, Sister Rosemary Arrah from Cameroon has collected hundreds of books in her "spare" time while pursuing her graduate degree. Although she will return to Cameroon soon, ready to put her education to work – she has already found her replacement to continue book drives for schools like St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Mamfe in the South West Region of Cameroon. Their new library is pictured above.



The library at St Joseph's was welcomed by the 7 teachers who staff the school's 6 classrooms filled with 330 students. Doing the math that is 55 students per classroom. Although the tuition is only about \$18 annually per student, fees often go uncollected due to poverty of the parents. This leads to difficulties paying teachers' salaries, not to mention providing educational materials like books.

Someday soon, OEF hopes to provide digital libraries to all of our schools but until then we are truly grateful for the generous efforts of all the OEF Sister School Pen Pal Coordinators who are building libraries one book at a time.

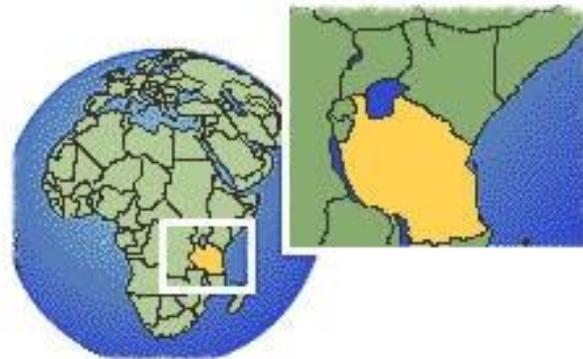
## THESE SCHOOLS NEED PEN PALS!

OEF would like to recruit pen pal partners for the following schools located in the Arusha and Moshi area of Tanzania.

As we will be visiting this area in July, we would love to jump start your pen pal process by offering to deliver whatever letters, pictures or projects you would like to share with your new pen pals.

### Arusha, Tanzania Schools

Integrity Primary School  
Loamo School  
Michael Pre and Primary School  
Mwaramu Pre and Primary School  
Nakido English Medium School  
SFS Pre and Primary School  
St. Monica Primary School  
Wilkabaa Nursery and Primary School



### Moshi, Tanzania Schools

Masama Kati English Medium School  
Moshi Airport School  
Rose Pre and Primary 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](mailto: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.

If you prefer a different school, simply email us and note what grade and country you would like to write to and we can get you writing, right away!

## 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:

- Scoggins Hill May PBSB, Pine Bluff, Arkansas

We have hundreds of schools waiting for pen pal partners – email today and start writing tomorrow!



## FEATURED SCHOOL & GIFT CERTIFICATE WINNER

Congrats to Melanie C.  
a great pen pal educator from  
St. Mary's School, Ponca City, Oklahoma!

On behalf of your pen pals from St. Charles School, Iringa,  
Tanzania – thank you for sending letters!

Melanie, send an email to: [schools@opportunityeducation.org](mailto:schools@opportunityeducation.org)  
to claim your prize!

Want to win next month?

Just email [schools@opportunityeducation.org](mailto:schools@opportunityeducation.org) after you mail your letters and you are entered to win!



## START WRITING – RIGHT NOW!

Right 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.

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## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.](#)



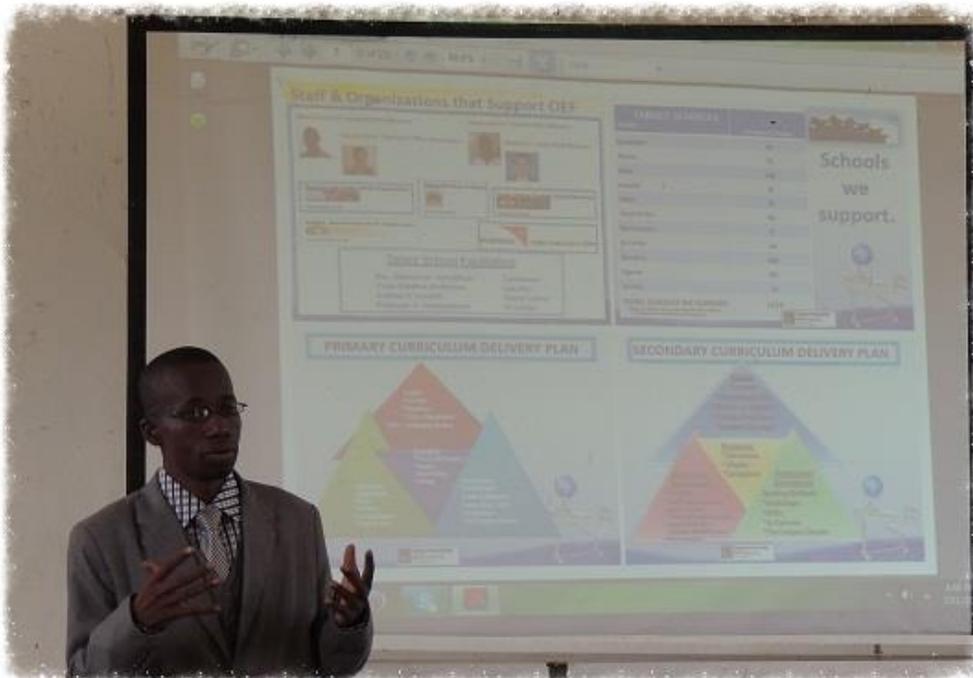
## SAVE SOME GREEN!

OEF is grateful to our generous suppliers, like Lakeshore Learning, which help us get the best deals for our students, teachers and schools!



[Click Here for OEF – Lakeshore Learning Coupon Link](#)

[www.lakeshorelearning.com](http://www.lakeshorelearning.com)



### Picture of the Month:

While Jamaal Mlewa has only been with OEF a short time, he hit the ground running, taking over the Target School education, professional development and pen pal program management in Tanzania. He is pictured presenting to a group of teachers in Iringa, Tanzania. Thanks Jamaal for all your efforts on behalf of OEF schools!

TERESA ROLL  
OUTREACH & SISTER SCHOOL COORDINATOR  
OPPORTUNITY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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STAY CONNECTED

