



"Educating Children Around the World"

**February 2014**

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## SEND A VALENTINE OR THROW PAINT?

Do you send a Valentine or Throw Colored Paint...  
how do you say you love someone?

As we get ready to share the love on Valentine's Day...do a little research on how your pen pals' culture celebrates demonstrations of love – in very unique ways.



For instance, in India, The Festival of Colors, Holi, is a cherished and growing international spectacle that celebrates love, secret crushes, the coming of spring, and maybe even equality?

The festival signifies the victory of good over evil, the arrival of spring, end of winter, and for many a festive day to meet others, play and laugh, forget and forgive, and repair ruptured relationships. The date varies from year to year depending on the spring equinox, this year it will fall on Monday March 17.

A little background on Holi, in one Hindu tradition...the story goes that Lord Krishna is playing with his favorite "girl friend" and notices that her skin is fair while his is dark. He sulks to his mother and she tells him to throw color on her face so that the difference can be erased. Lord Krishna's ploy has now grown to a noble endeavor to splash colors on one another, with hopes to erase the difference of color, creed and religion, promoting a more equal society.

The last day of the Holi festival is characterized by a loosening of social norms where the whole community comes together to celebrate the festival of colors. People fill the streets and squirt one another with colored water, water balloons and paint each other's faces.

In the end, multicolored revelers look like one another, symbolizing the bright colors of a new spring.

Have your students compare and contrast Holi with the holidays they celebrate. What does the Festival of Colors share in common with Valentine's Day, Christmas, Easter, or even Halloween?

To expand this lesson to a whole new level of fun...let students celebrate the Festival of Colors. Find a creative and safe way you can "splash" colors on each other. Take some pictures and send them to [schools@opportunityeducation.org](mailto:schools@opportunityeducation.org) – every picture you send enters you in the drawing for a gift certificate!

Don't forget to summarize your multi-colored experience with pictures and letters to your pen pals!

## LOOKING FOR SOME MONEY?

Apply for this grant! While aimed at geography, all of our Pen Pal Coordinators should be encouraged to apply as your letters and lesson plans have geographical aspects, in addition to the language arts benefits.



The NCGE (National Council for Geographic Education) is now accepting proposals for the E. Willard and Ruby S. Miller Grant for research in Geography Education. The grants are intended to advance the frontiers of geography education by supporting and promoting innovative research in theory, practice, and application. Projects should enhance the understanding of geographic learning and teaching through original investigations of learning processes, techniques, and content.

Projects may focus on geographic learning and teaching at any level, preK–college, and could include research on pre–service and/or in–service programs for geography educators. Investigations concentrating on the micro–scale examination of individual learners and teachers are welcome, as are studies that pursue issues of geographic education at the classroom, school, district, college, state, national, or international levels. Proposals can be submitted to Susan Hume, NCGE VP for Research, before March 14, 2014. Visit <http://www.ncge.org/awards> for all possible awards, and the specific grant at: [http://www.ncge.org/files/documents/Miller\\_Grant\\_Announce\\_2013\\_1.pdf](http://www.ncge.org/files/documents/Miller_Grant_Announce_2013_1.pdf)

## THE ADVENTURES OF A PEN PAL LETTER?

Rampur Higher Secondary School is found in the far West of Nepal.

Delivering the pen pal letters from their American Sister School, Waterford Kettering High School may start off easy enough through the US postal system, but upon reaching Nepal, the letters take a plane ride to the to an airport that lacks a terminal.

When traveling there – you would get off the plane and wait for your luggage by the big tree.



From this airport to Rampur Higher Secondary School is a two hour drive, steeply uphill. The route is beautiful but treacherous. The sides of the road are held together with a wired, netting system that keeps the rocks and therefore the road intact. (You can see the road winding around the mountain and the netting in the picture).

Looking down isn't a pleasant option – so forging onward the letters will eventually be in the hands of students who are very eager to return letters to their American pen pals!

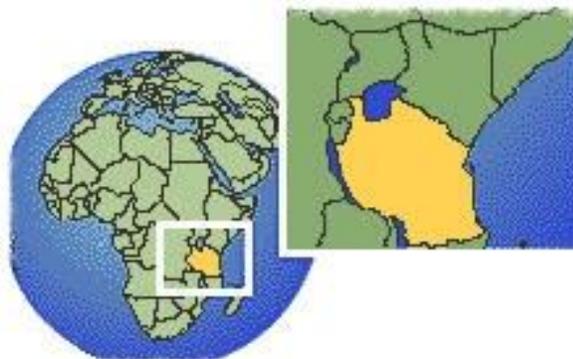
OEF is extremely grateful to Astrid Smith, with United Mission to Nepal. Astrid has been a phenomenal OEF program coordinator. She has faithfully sent pictures and updates to our pen pal coordinators – giving them amazing details of life in Nepal.

## THIS SCHOOL NEEDS PEN PALS!

Masama English Medium School is located in Moshi, Tanzania.

Moshi is where the lucky travelers on the OEF Education Experience Trip will be visiting schools in July 2014.

A benefit of writing to this school is that we can personally deliver your letters and bring pictures of your pen pals when we return.



This school was established in 2007 and has grown to 111 students from preschool to grade 7.

Few parents can afford full tuition leading the school to seek help from other donors to supplement its income. There are many orphans in the immediate community and the school charges reduced fees for both orphans and poor children.

Writing letters to this school 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.](#)

We are thrilled to have our first pen pal school in Brazil!

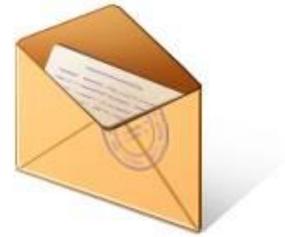
Global English Course, Lagoa Santa, Minas Gerais, Brazil  
Piedmont High School Monroe, NC  
Rudd-Rockford-Marble Rock CSD, IA

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



## FEATURED SCHOOL & GIFT CERTIFICATE WINNER

Congrats to Rachel B.  
a great pen pal educator from  
Red Lake Middle School, Red Lake, Minnesota!



On behalf of your pen pals from Bhumi Raj Primary School, Nepal,  
thank you for sending letters. Send me an email at  
[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!

Start your year off right by writing your pen pals!

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

Writing letters is a perfect 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](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.](#)



### Picture of the Month:

Pictured are students from F. Castro Secondary School, Pemba, Tanzania. OEF visited the school in January to celebrate the launch of the Opportunity Tablet. Both students and teachers were excited to engage in individualized tablet learning since this is the only high school in Pemba that teaches science and there are only 2 computers to be shared by hundreds of students.

TERESA ROLL  
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OPPORTUNITY EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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*STAY CONNECTED*

