

Connecticut Schools Have Made A Difference!

Submitted by Dale Bernardoni,

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On the morning of Saturday, June 6, 2015, a shipping container holding 1,653 cartons of books and school supplies left its parking lot in North Haven to head slowly toward New York harbor. The cartons had been moved onto the container by volunteers from the West Haven Notre Dame track and field team. A few days later, the container was loaded onto a barge that sailed out on its six-week journey to Port Elizabeth, South Africa. When the container arrives, it will be downloaded into overland transportation and delivered to designated schools in the rural reaches of the Eastern Cape. In most cases, the teachers will have their first opportunity to teach using textbooks, and the children will hold a book for the very first time.

The contents of the cartons were donated by schools and libraries in Connecticut. For the past four years, donations of retired curriculum materials and gently used books have filled containers that have been shipped by the United States-Africa Children's Fellowship (USACF), a non-governmental volunteer organization located in Brooklyn, New York. The materials were distributed to the most rural areas of sub-Saharan African countries where there are no teaching materials, textbooks, or libraries. When the container left in June, *it is estimated that nearly a half million items had been shipped from Connecticut schools since 2011.*

The following schools and districts have contributed to collections over the past four years:

ACES Cooperative Educational Services (ACES)

Avon Middle School, Avon

Calvin Leete Elementary School, Guilford

Chester Elementary School, Chester

Daisy Ingraham Elementary School, Westbrook

East Hartford-Glastonbury Magnet School, Glastonbury

Ellington Public Schools, Ellington

Glastonbury High School, Glastonbury

Granby Memorial Middle School, Granby

Griswold Elementary School, Berlin

Hamden High School, Hamden

Hartford Public Schools, Hartford

Irving Elementary School, Derby

Kellogg Regional High School, Falls Village

King-Robinson Magnet School, New Haven

Long River Middle School, Prospect

Mansfield Middle School, Mansfield

McKinley Elementary School, Fairfield

Memorial Elementary School, East Hampton

Memorial Middle School, Simsbury

New Fairfield Middle School, New Fairfield

North Branford High School football team, North Branford
Notre Dame High School track and field team, West Haven
Pine Grove Elementary School, Avon
Sedgwick Middle School, West Hartford
St. Bridget's Parochial School, Cheshire
Stepping Stones, Waterbury
Thomas Edison Middle School, Meriden
Valley Regional High School, Deep River
Veterans' Memorial School, Preston
Waterford High School, Waterford
Windham High School, Windham
Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School, Hamden
Winthrop Middle School, Deep River

On behalf of the United States-Africa Children's Fellowship and its partnership volunteer agencies in Africa, thank you to the Connecticut children, families, schools, school districts and libraries for their generous donations. Most especially, thank you from the children of Zimbabwe and South Africa. The donated books and school supplies have enabled hundreds of children to pass their primary exams, go on to attend high school and perhaps even advance to community colleges. Connecticut schools have truly made a difference in helping to address global literacy!