



Literacy *focus*

SMILE AFRICA Newsletter – Jan/Feb 2007

beCAUSE™

CHANGING AFRICA BEGINS WITH EDUCATING CHILDREN

Smile Africa's beCAUSE campaign is based on the premise that education can do more to combat poverty, and give children the hope that a future they can control awaits them.

SMILE AFRICA INTERNATIONAL led by Chris Ellom has a mission: “WIPE OUT illiteracy” among the poorest populations of Africa and thereby break the cycle of poverty. The conception of the vision of SMILE AFRICA began in 1992 when Chris returned to Ghana, his homeland, to attend his father's funeral. After witnessing the dehumanizing poverty in rural communities and the lack of opportunity for children to learn, Chris and his wife Kathie decided to take action. And so it began. In 1995, SMILE AFRICA INTERNATIONAL was registered as a non-governmental agency, and has since been working to address the barriers to development on the continent. By all indications, the modest number of over **40,000 books** – three portable libraries and

three computer labs that the organization has established in South Africa and Angola represents the beginning of a sizable trend. SMILE AFRICA's new strategy for cascading its literacy and education initiatives in rural Africa is:

- **Establishing** small school libraries and stocking them with multi-lingual books,
 - **Providing** computer labs free of charge to disadvantaged schools,
 - **Granting** scholarships to girls, and
 - **Partnering** with local communities to run Saturday Schools for novice students.
- It takes **\$5,000** of outside donations to build a library with 2500-3000 books, furnishings, twelve computers and the training of teachers and volunteer reading coaches. **...beCAUSE we can, we should!**



Smile Africa Library – Soweto, South Africa



Smile Africa's DtT Program, Angola – Nov. 2006

GIVING THE GIFT OF LEARNING

As part of Smile Africa's DtT Program (Door to Technology) – to narrow the digital divide – the organization has teamed up with Computer Recycle Society of Canada to provide computer labs free of charge to disadvantaged schools in Africa. It was nothing but smiles for students in Luanda, Angola as Smile Africa delivered 65 PII/PIII computers to three schools. Unless provision is made via programs like this, many students will get passed through school without the ICT (Information and Communication Technology) skills they'd need for college or work. This is where your support is able to make a life-changing difference. **Let's do it beCAUSE...**



Ellom (left) presents 65 computers in Angola

beCAUSE Declaration:

“beCAUSE every child is endowed with the dignity of a person, he or she has the right to an education which is relevant to survival and quality of life. By this education, every child can be liberated from illiteracy, ignorance, poverty and oppression; and simultaneously learn values of love and responsibility towards humanity, of which every child is a vital and inseparable part.” – Smile Africa International

Assistance program in Ghana this year. The project is a tribute to **Ghana’s 50th Jubilee** celebration of independence from Britain.

Ten schools across Ghana’s ten regions will each receive a Smile Africa Library, and as well, 50 girls will be awarded \$100 scholarship each. As for the library, the community provides land and some labour, and gains pride and ownership in the process. “With passion and the knack for turning the odds in our favour, I believe we will put everlasting smiles on the faces of many children so they know that we believe in their future. That’s how you begin the transformation, by

“That’s how you begin the transformation, by educating children to take what exists and make it better for tomorrow.”

CHRIS ELLOM

educating the children to take what exists and make it better for tomorrow.” According to Gladys, the librarian in South Africa, “the learners are beginning to realize that books can widen their knowledge and the stories can be shared with other friends.” So, wherever they are, our libraries generate a passion for reading.

Children come in waves eager to borrow books. Smile Africa maintains high expectations and is striving to help a million children achieve literacy by 2010.

be the CAUSE:

- Sign the Declaration
- Give Generously
- Build a Library
- Wear the Hat
- Tell a Friend

www.SmileAfrica.org
Or call: 250.448.9669

SMART PARTNERSHIP: Kiwanis PNW gets booked for the 'CAUSE

Kiwanis International is one of the most thriving organizations of service and community-minded people in the world. In keeping with its “Read Around The World” program, Wendy Falkowski, Lt. Gov. of Kiwanis Division 7 has taken on Smile Africa’s literacy campaign as a pet project. With District Gov. Lori Bryant’s blessing, Smile Africa is gaining momentum and support from other clubs in the District. While raising funds to build a library through Smile Africa is entirely voluntary, yet there is a side benefit.

New Kiwanis clubs can be potentially raised in Africa to support the beCAUSE campaign – to WIPE OUT illiteracy – and other Kiwanis projects. Funds raised by Kiwanis clubs will leverage other donations to build more libraries this year. Please contact us for more info. Thank you for your support ;):)

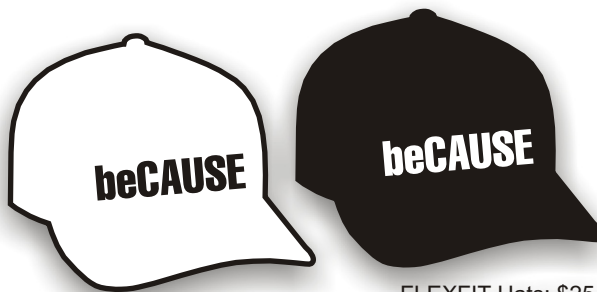
Smile Africa Fundraiser:



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Tax receipts issued for donations above \$10 ▪ Photos: Courtesy of Chris Ellom



FLEXFIT Hats: \$25

Wear the Hat. Show Your Support. SmileAfrica.org