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HARARE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

29 March, 2011

Dear AISA Board Members,

The Twin School Program between Harare International School and rural Kadyamadare Primary School began by sharing a song in 1995. A music teacher invited students from Kadyamadare School, located 57km outside Harare, Zimbabwe, to sing with us at a UN Day Celebration on the front lawn of our unfinished campus. Electricity kept failing, but human voices permeated our hearts and souls with songs of endless global possibilities. Human connections in difficult circumstances are often initially powerful, but become fragile and short-lived. Long-term relationships require a lot of work. Inspired by the desire of HIS students to experience the culture of Zimbabwe and by Kadyamadare's students to experience ours, determined professionals and students from both schools collaborated to organize experiences of cultural exchanges for members of both communities. From these initial and tentative opportunities for mutual understanding, a vibrant Twin School Partnership thrives.



This partnership includes a unique opportunity in which eleventh grade students are invited into the homes of villagers to create relationships that can last through their two last years of high school. Students spend part of the day living with their local adoptive parent hosts. They learn cultural activities that include traditional

peanut-butter-making, farming, milking cows, building structures, thatching roofs, plowing with oxen, harvesting and storing food, weaving furniture, making pottery and shelves in kitchen huts, and repairing wells.



The afternoons are spent working on the community service projects collaboratively decided upon for that year. Many projects have been completed by the eleventh graders before us, who first meet with the School Development Committee to determine which goal will be brought forward for that year. In the past, these goals included painting the inside and outside of an Early Childhood Center that now

serves over 80 children, creating a fenced play yard with refurbished play equipment, and painting the inside walls with colorful graphics from which the children can learn. Other projects included preparing boards for library shelves that were hung in collaboration with experienced community workers, digging up



and cementing the floor, and providing books. Shortage of housing for teachers forces three families to share three rooms, so the students learned to rebuild and repair structures too damaged to live in. Activities included masonry, learning to wire rooms for electricity, and building Blair toilets.

All projects require scrounging for materials and funding. After deciding on projects, HIS students contribute their willingness to learn and to assist skilled villagers in completing them.

Community members contribute cement or the use of their carts and oxen to transport crushed rock. Projects such as electricity took 8 years to achieve, but the computer program was built during those years with the belief that electrification would eventually be achieved. By involving a rotation of HIS students over 15 years, many seemingly impossible dreams became reality. Our driving belief is “Dreams are the seeds of reality.”



As next year’s eleventh grade students, we are taking up a challenging project of providing sewing machines and materials for students and local people to learn entrepreneurial skills in producing uniforms. This will involve fitting the Early Childhood Center with tables that we will refurbish, sewing machines that are both hand-driven and motor-driven, security bars to protect the machines, and initial supplies of material and thread. We have a good

source of sewing machines at \$87.00 each, and hope to acquire at least ten. Parents are willing to help us with some cloth at reduced prices, for which we will also raise money. We need to weld security bars for the windows, make a secure door, and furnish strong padlocks.

Our students have been able to hand this torch of service from one class to the other for over fifteen years. Although this project will require financing, we are eager to learn more about sustainable projects as we explore and document this venture with our local cultural partners. We believe that we will have contributed to the future well-being of the students and the community members if we can achieve it. We sincerely request that you consider our application for the AISA Service Award of \$1000.00, knowing that we would be able to raise additional required funds ourselves. The pride of accomplishment encourages us to continue this service towards the growth and sustainability of our partner community, as we become active global citizens together.



Sincerely,

The Eleventh Grade Students of 2011-2012
Harare International School, Zimbabwe
Kathleen Chromicz, Coordinator, kchrom@email.com