



Diamond Government School Library Project 2011-2012

Project Overview

The Diamond Government School Library Project works with the school community to develop a library that promotes literacy development and a lifelong love of learning in children. The school seeks to create a library atmosphere that supports reading and learning, provokes the imagination, and promotes new ways of thinking. The project expands the role of the school library by providing a space for children to have class library time, library skills training, tutoring, and after-school homework assistance.

The school created a library committee of parents, teachers, and community members to spearhead the library development effort. In the 2011-2012 school year, the committee worked tirelessly to raise funds for furniture, paint, and new books for the library. On Thursday, September 20th the Diamond Government School opened its doors to its students and the Diamond Village Community.

Timeline of the Library Project 2011-2012

September 2011

The school adopts a new system of cataloguing books and puts each book into an electronic catalog

October 2011

Hands Across the Sea ships over 1,050 new or slightly used children's books to the Diamond Government School Library

November 2011

Courts Ltd. gives \$800 to the development of the school library

June 2011

The school creates a library committee of parents, teachers, and administrators to spearhead the library renovation effort.

December 2011

The ChildFund of St. Vincent gives \$1,000 donation to purchase new children's books for the library. The school partnered with Jujube's Bookstore to order excellent, award winning books for the school library

June 2011

The school creates a library project proposal and begins asking non-profits, businesses, government, and community members for financial support.

January 2012

Hands Across the Sea provides the funding for new paint for the library space. Volunteers Fari Young, Enrique Jacobs, and Al DaSilva donate their weekends to paint the floor and walls.

April 2012

BRAGSA donates the workmen to create the furniture for the library space, building and repairing the shelves, computer corner, and seating for 20 students.

April 2012

Members of the PTA assist in making over 2,000 pockets for the library cards.

September 20th, 2012

The Diamond Government School opens the school library. Former Head Teacher Ms. Diana C. Williams cuts the ribbon at the opening ceremony.

February 2012

Friends of Pastor Williams, Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Shelfer, visit the Diamond School and donate \$1,870 for the library furniture

June-September 2012

Ms. Junia Allan, teacher at the Diamond School, writes all of the library cards and assists in cataloguing the books after school and during the summer holiday

March 2012

The Diamond School Sponsor Walk to Rabacca Dry River raises over \$2,000 for the library

September 2012

Ms. Reba Allan volunteers her time to finish the school library for the opening on September 20th.



Paying Tribute to a Teacher: Mrs. Sharon DeFrietas Hopson

In 1995, Miss. DeFrietas Hopson gathered together the senior 3 class to start a library in the room that now serves as the sick bay for the school. Children searched through their own stacks and donated books to the effort and Miss. DeFrietas Hopson asked family and friends for donations to the effort. The library was so successful that other students expressed interest and donated books to the effort. A library committee was formed of Mr. Shorte, Mr. Otto Sam, and Miss. DeFrietas Hopson to spearhead the fundraising effort and further develop the space through a community dance. Miss. DeFrietas Hopson was able to keep up the library by charging late fees for the books. For over fifteen years Miss. DeFrietas Hopson has worked tirelessly to keep the library in order and offer children a space to read and grow.

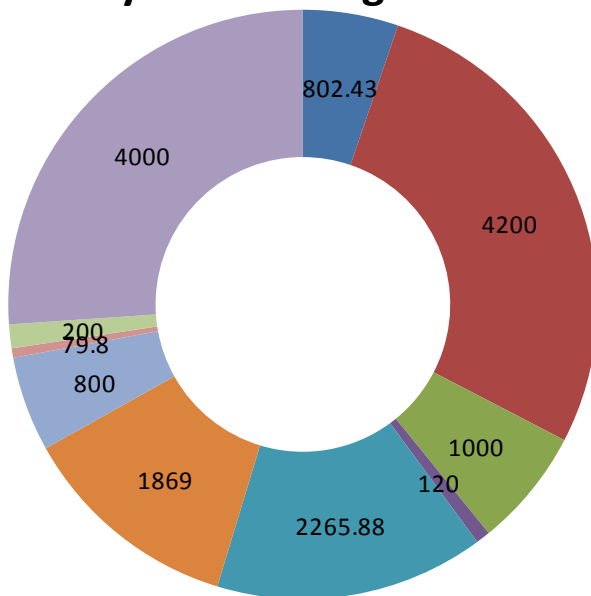


D.G.S. Sponsor Walk 2012

On March 14th, 2011 over 100 members of the Diamond Government School Community walked to the Rabacca Dry River to raise funds over \$2,000.00 for the school library project. The walk ended with a fun day of children playing cricket and football and families joining us for a local cook. The walk brought together our community and made the library project a community initiative. The Sponsor Walk was joined by funding from individuals, businesses, and the government to make the renovation a reality.



D.G.S. Library Fundraising Effort 2011-2012



- Hands Across the Sea Paint Donation
- Hands Across the Sea 1050 Book Donation 2011
- ChildFund St. Vincent Book Donation
- School Pay and Wear Fundraiser
- School Sponsor Walk
- Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Shelfer Donation
- Courts Donation
- Teachers Credit Union Paint Donation

Why School Libraries Matter

In 1989, Burchinal, Lee and Ramsey reported that children who are not presented with access to rich language experiences, like reading, from an early age show a gradual decline in their educational development. Reading contributes to one-third of a child's vocabulary every year and lack of access in the home can greatly inhibit a child's early reading development. Furthermore, studies found that children who start out with a slow reading development are often unable to bridge the gap in later years of life. Early childhood education and access to library programmes can assist in making sure that children are prepared to succeed in school. Libraries have the opportunity to expose children to a wide variety of genres and print sources from magazines to comic books that help to build a child's knowledge-base.

While parents of all socio-economic and educational backgrounds want their children to succeed in school, those parents who are not equipped with an educational background and resources are more likely to see their children fall behind. More often than not, the time a child spends out of school dictates their achievement level in school. During summer breaks children without "access" to learning materials often see educational declines while children from educated families can witness gains. School library programmes over the summer have successfully been shown to boost literacy rates far beyond other summer programmes offered to children.



The link between libraries and early childhood education has often been assumed but in 1993 Kupetz showed library outreach literacy efforts in pre-school led to increased pre-reading and emergent reading behaviors. A school library that is open to the community and promotes reading at all ages, with the support and assistance of parents, has the opportunity to significantly increase children's literacy levels. Oftentimes, children who are not exposed to a reading environment in the home are unlikely to participate or become motivated to read. This lack of motivation can be termed aliteracy which libraries combat through an environment and educational programmes that promote the fun of reading.

Libraries are most effective when they work under a whole school approach by incorporating the community, teachers and administration to develop concrete and achievable goals. Communities that are involved and motivated behind library development will be successful in bringing a holistic and quality literacy education to students.

D.G.S. Reading Club *Inspired by a teacher training workshop on remedial reading, Ms. Jasmine Spencer, has elected to start a reading club before school one day a week with students in the fifth and sixth grades. The multiple copies of chapter books sent by Hands Across the Sea in 2012 will allow all students to read and discuss excellent fiction and non-fiction books. The reading club is excited to read its first book Holes by Louis Sachar.*

Opening Ceremony of the D.G.S. Library

On Thursday, September 20th, 2012 the Diamond Government School opened the doors of the library to the school community. The opening paid tribute to the donors and volunteers who had made the school library a reality and celebrated the community led effort. Ms. Hannah Browne from the Ministry of Education spoke about the importance of the library to literacy development and her hope that the community's history could be found inside its doors: the history of the Walter Rodney Centre and local events such as the Emancipation Rally & Vigil. Mr. Simeon Greene spoke to the strong culture and spirit of community in his choral speech that took the form of a lover's quarrel. He described the village, "Diamond is like Diamond sparkling and cut, wild and provocative, shining and demanding" and the audience sounded its support with the response "we love thee Diamond." Mr. Greene also described the difficulties facing our village when sometimes "we don't read our head changes to clay" and "when we curse and fight the warmth of Diamond changes to ice," but as our audience resounded, "we still love thee Diamond." At the end, he captured that Diamond is still and will always be Diamond, "precious and indestructible," and that the school library enables our community to polish off our minds and build our future. Ctd. On Page 4

From whence I came

Years ago I lived in a room on the upper floor.
A group of seniors were the first to pass through my door.
As children sat around my table, they became more knowledgeable.
Thank God, for Ms. DeFreitas; her students enjoyed a delicious breakfast.

The meal was so sweet; all, they couldn't eat
So after a deep prayer, they realized they must share.
Down to the lower floor I came, that even the infants came to partake.
I do not only feed you with education, we travel around the world.
So you can experience many situations.
But, after all the fun and adventure, my door was closed so I took a deep doze.

Then came Ms. Julie Mills, who climbed many hills.
She hit me with a big stick, and said, "No more tricks!"
There's work to do, many children to feed from Kindergarten to Grade 6.

After two years of intense work, my room is renewed.
I feel so refreshed, no more stress!
Thanks to Ms. Julie for her vision. I am restored.
Now, I present myself to you, newer and better than before.
Now, it's time for Reading Extravaganza!

Ms. Hannah Harry, D.G.S. Teacher



Opening Ceremony of the DGS Library Ctd.

Ms. Julie Mills, the Peace Corps Volunteer at the Diamond School, recounted her memories of building the school library: “Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson, the Head Teacher, arriving hours late to Rabacca Dry River because she had begged \$120 from people along the route, Deron Richards mom coming to the school in a rainstorm with a bag full of books, Miss. Junia Allan writing over 2,000 library cards, and my first experience painting with Enrique Jacobs, Fari Young, and Al DaSilva.” She also stated that this project is part of the larger theme of activism and community development, echoing Mr. Greene’s statement that the Walter Rodney Center used to open evening classes and technical and craft programmes to over 150 persons at one time during the 1970s.

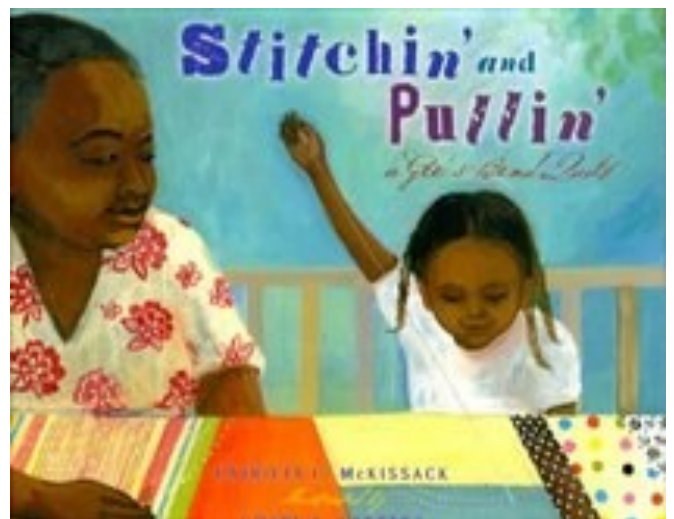
The students of Aunty B’s Preschool and Diamond Government School gave cultural items, including the poem written below that was read by the sixth grade class. And, Arianna Jack of grade 2 shared a book from the library *Is Your Mama a Llama?*. The morning ceremony ended with the ribbon cutting by past principal Ms. Diana C. Williams and the exploration of the library by invited guests. The Diamond School celebrated the community-led effort and is proud to have raised over \$11,150.00, including \$2,265.88 from the March 14th sponsor walk, and offer children more than 2,060 library books.



Take a Look in a Book: *Stitchin' and Pullin' a Gee's Bend Quilt*

by Patricia C. McKissack illustrated by Cozbi A. Cabrera

For generations, the women of Gee Bends have quilted. Their quilts tell their family story; the happy times and struggles of a band of strong willed women. For years, Baby Girl has played in the fabric and listened and now it is time for her to embark on her first quilt. Discover the story behind the famous Gee Bend quilts that today sit on the walls of US museums.



Hands Across the Sea

Hands Across the Sea is a US registered nonprofit, non-governmental organization dedicated to raising the literacy levels of Caribbean children by supplying high quality books and school materials to schools and libraries. In the fall of 2008, the organization shipped over 102,000 books to 178 schools serving 37,000 students.

The renovation of the Diamond Government School library would not have been possible without Hands Across the Sea. The organization has provided

the library with a shipment of over 1,000 excellent, culturally appropriate children's books in 2011. And, when donations were slow to the library and little progress was made towards the renovation effort, Hands came to our rescue by giving the school money for paint.

The school was excited to receive a second shipment of 1,000 books the week of September 24th to add to the library. The newest shipment provides multiple copies of excellent children's books for our newly established reading club, popular adult book authors for our community members, and additional nonfiction books for our children. Thank you to founders Tom & Harriet Linskey for their continued dedication.



Thank You

Mr. Simeon Greene, PTA President

Sponsors & Donors Ms. Raquel Franklyn, ChildFund St. Vincent, Mr. Alexis John, Courts Ltd., Mr. & Mrs. Tom Linksey, Hands Across the Sea, Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Shelfer, Mr. Julian Jack, Teachers Cooperative Credit Union, Darian BookAid

Contributors Ms. Michele Samuel, Jujube Bookstore, Mr. Cornelius Haywood, BRAGSA, Ms. Jaqueline Glasgow Browne, Ministry of Education, Ms. Hannah Browne, Ministry of Education, National Public Library

Volunteers Mr. Enrique Jacobs, Ms. Junia Allan, Ms. Reba Allan, Mr. Al DaSilva, Mr. Fari Young, Mr. Renneef Fisher

Parents and Families of the Diamond Government School for your financial commitment and support of the library

"Oh the places you will go! You'll be on your way up! You'll be seeing great sights! You'll join the high fliers who soar to high heights."

***Reading a book and being a child are both adventures.
We are happy to open this library and welcome you to new places.***