



Libraries For Kids®
INTERNATIONAL

Books Open Opportunities 4 Kids®

June 2026 Newsletter

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From the Chief Executive Officer

Turning Momentum into Meaningful Impact

This was an extra extraordinary month, defined by momentum, generosity and accelerated impact for Libraries For Kids International.



During and after our "Dreams Under the Serengeti"

World Book Day event, we raised an incredible \$105,000 to support our mission -- thanks to the strength of our community and \$35,000 of combined monetary and in-kind sponsorships. We were able to bring the vision of the evening to life. From transporting guests to "Africa" for the night, to creating an immersive experience, support was overwhelming. In fact, we spent just \$382 of our \$500 decor budget, a true testament to the heart and generosity behind this year's event. Watch the [wrap-up video](#) from our 2026 World Book Day event!

What happened next was just as powerful.

I was invited to Roseville, Minnesota, for speaking engagements on behalf of Libraries for Kids International at the annual fundraiser for Books for Africa, a strategic partner organization. Through an opportunity with Books For Africa, we allocated \$15,000 for a buy-one-get-one container match, quickly turning that into \$30,000 of impact in less than 30 days. This is what happens when generosity meets intention, and strategic relationships are rooted in making an impact in Africa.



During my Minnesota visit, I was also honored to speak alongside African Union Ambassador [Her Excellency Constancia Gaspar](#) and Angolan Ambassador [His Excellency Agostinho Dúnem](#), where Books for Africa presented Libraries for Kids International the Kilimanjaro Society Award (above) -- a recognition that belongs to each of you who makes our work possible.

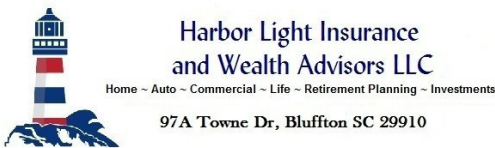
Thank you for continuing to believe in this mission and helping us turn moments into movement -- and movement into lasting change.

With sincere thanks and appreciation,



Laura Winkel
Chief Executive Officer

'Dreams Under the Serengeti' sponsors
Thank you!



Decor sponsors



Libraries for Kids International Founder Visiting Africa
Through June



Roy Austin's first meeting was in Rwanda to discuss possibilities for Libraries for Kids International in the country. With Austin, second from left, are Olivia Turiime, left, Paul Masterjerb, third from left, Rotary Club, retired educator and leader for building of the Rwandan National Library and Faddy Kafaridah, right, former Rotarian in Rwanda and meeting organizer.

Libraries for Kids International's founder, **Roy Austin**, went to Africa in mid-May, with plans to visit students, school officials, decision-makers and Rotary Club members in multiple countries.

Austin's itinerary includes meetings in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania.

His first meeting was in Rwanda, as Libraries for Kids International looks to expand its footprint. "The meeting was to understand the process of expansion into Rwanda," he reported.

The director of the National Library, Paul Masterjerb, gave Austin a tour of the library May 18, including an extensive history lesson on the history in Rwanda. Masterjerb also explained the culture and process of book deliveries in the country and why all books go through the library prior to distribution to the schools to preserve their history. Library services is a department within the Ministry of Education.

Visit to Uganda

While in Uganda, schools were on holiday and children we not present. Austin met with David Mabonga, Libraries for Kids International Uganda coordinator. They visited our processing/operations location in Mbale and some schools with teachers present.

Libraries for Kids International secured a container match May 13, and Uganda will be sent two containers later this year. Austin's site visit helps set a foundation to send these two containers to launch full book-container operations in Uganda.

Visit to Kenya

Austin arrived in Kenya over the Memorial Day Weekend from Uganda and Rwanda, and visited Sweetwaters Primary School, Nanyuki, and junior secondary schools in Kenya. Austin visited Sweetwaters several years ago with his granddaughter, Anna.

Sweetwaters has had books from Libraries for Kids International for several years now. We are excited to see attendance climbing every year and these children having access to books.



It is gratifying to see our mission being implemented in a school like this. This means that every child who is enrolling in the school has access to reading materials to expand their dreams and their mindset.

Austin plans to visit schools with Kenya Operations Coordinator **Wanjiku Francis**, plus two Libraries for Kids supporters who attended our Dreams Under the Serengeti fundraiser on April 25. Other planned school visits include Waso Primary, Samburu East; Ntuti Primary School, Kangeta; Kaumba Primary School, Mulango;

Enkongu Narok Primary School, Kajiado South; Esiteti Primary School, Amboseli; and Olmoti Primary School, Ol Tukai. Each school visit includes a visit to accompanying junior secondary schools.

While In Africa, Austin plans to meet **Ng’ang’a Wanjohi**, Libraries for Kids International board member, Nairobi, Kenya. Austin will also attend Rotary Club meetings in various places and plans to meet with Veronica Ndomba, Tanzanian Ministry of Education.

Update on Kenya book deliveries: Containers 32 and 33 left the Port of Savannah in early May, headed to Kenya. Wanjiku Francis, Kenya operations coordinator, began deliveries in mid-May, delivering books to 872 schools. She planned to deliver 781 boxes of books to primary schools, 656 boxes to junior secondary schools and 181 boxes to senior secondary schools. Transzoia County Schools are the recipients of this delivery journey. This county is Western Kenya, near the Uganda border.

Libraries For Kids International Expands Impact Through Strategic Trip to Minnesota

Libraries For Kids International CEO **Laura Winkel** [spoke at both the Books For Africa breakfast and lunch fundraising events](#) in Minnesota in mid-May. The visit strengthened key partnerships, opened new opportunities and increased the organization's ability to deliver books to children across Africa.

During the trip, Winkel highlighted the mission and growing impact of Libraries For Kids International. She also worked closely with Books For Africa to take part in a special matching program that doubled the power of donor support (see the CEO's column above). "This strategic move allows us to stretch every dollar further," said Winkel. "It means more children will have books in their hands, and the chance to learn and dream."

The Minnesota trip marked an important step forward for Libraries For Kids International as it continues its mission to increase literacy, expand access to books and create brighter futures for children around the world.

Libraries for Kids International's June 15 Author Event Features Brian Thiem

Author [Brian Thiem](#), right, is the featured author for Libraries for Kids International's monthly author event, June 15, in Bluffton, South Carolina. Thiem, a resident of Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, will discuss his books, *The Mudflats Murder Club* and *Killer in the Cordgrass*.



The event begins at 10:30 a.m. at the Roasting Room, 1297 May River Rd., Bluffton (second floor above Corner Perk). Following Thiem's talk, attendees can join the author for an optional Dutch Treat lunch.

Libraries for Kids International sponsors these free talks, but there is a suggested donation of \$5 to the sponsor. Books will be available for sale and signing.

Reservations are required because seating is limited. Call or text **Tamela Maxim**, Libraries for Kids International board member, at 843-683-4100 or email at tamela.maxim@libraries4kids.org to reserve a spot or to ask questions.

You Can Make a Difference! Make a Gift to Supply Books to Schoolchildren in Africa

Your support of Libraries for Kids International's mission to improve the lives of African students by providing much-needed books, helps students achieve success.



For example, a head teacher at Amboseli Primary School in Kenya, wrote to us: "The Libraries for Kids project has really helped our learners. When we received books you sent, the book ratio went up, and it made learning easier. When you sent the other storybooks and the encyclopedias, we created a small school library which serves as a resource place. It started to arouse reading interest to the learners, especially

those who like history and the English language. We really appreciate your effort to support the school."

We use **every** penny you give to supply books to rural schools in Africa. Join our cause. [Make a donation](#). Reading and education make a difference. Thank you!

☀ **Discover the Heart of Our Organization!** ☀

Explore the incredible impact you've helped us achieve. Visit [our website](#) to learn more about these key areas by following the links below:

- [Donor Spotlight & Honor Roll](#)
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How Can You Help Move Our Mission Forward?

Many of you ask how to support our mission. Here are a just few ways you can truly create an impact with us:

- **Forward this newsletter** to at least one person you know
- **Support** our program directly
- **Volunteer your time** to join us in our efforts
- **Share our story** on social media and tell friends and family

Libraries For Kids International
EIN: 83-4470093
PO Box 1013, Bluffton SC 29910
books@libraries4kids.org
<https://libraries4kids.org>
+1-843-597-4826

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Libraries for Kids Int'l | 15 Trescot Lane books@libraries4kids.org | Bluffton, SC 29909 US

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