



**Libraries For Kids®**  
**INTERNATIONAL**

Books Open Opportunities 4 Kids®

---

## April/May 2026 Newsletter

Visit our [website](#)

---

### From the Chief Executive Officer

Surrounded by the beauty of the Port Royal Sound, our community gathered for [Dreams Under the Serengeti](#) April 25. The evening celebrated the transformative power of books and the generosity of those who believe every child deserves the opportunity to dream.

Moments like these remind me why this work matters so deeply and why it is only possible because of an extraordinary community standing behind it. People traveled from over a dozen states to take part in this evening.



To everyone who traveled far and wide, attended, donated, sponsored, volunteered or helped bring this event to life, thank you. Your presence, generosity and belief in our mission transformed a single gathering into something far more meaningful: a shared commitment to protecting and celebrating the importance of dreams and the power of a book.

To our donors and sponsors, your support fuels our work today and ensures its continuity for tomorrow. Your investment is not only financial. It is a vote of confidence in the impact we are making together, from education and conservation to research and outreach. We are deeply grateful for your trust and partnership.

To our vendors and partners, thank you for lending your expertise and professionalism. Your behind-the-scenes efforts helped create an experience that was both seamless and special, allowing our guests to focus on connection, purpose and impact. Many of you complimented our superb emcee, Teresa Zito of [Giving4Good Events](#). Thank you, Teresa!

To the remarkable staff of [Port Royal Sound Foundation](#), thank you for hosting us the last Saturday in April every year. It is an honor to showcase our Lowcountry beauty through your venue.

To our volunteers, you are the quiet force that makes bold things possible. From planning and preparation to welcoming guests and lending helping hands wherever needed, your generosity of time and spirit does not go unnoticed. We are so fortunate to have you as part of our community.

To our board members, and to all supporters and friends, near and far, thank you for walking alongside us. Whether this was your first time engaging with our mission or you have supported us for years, you are a vital part of our story and impact. Together, we are building something lasting. I am deeply proud of what we accomplished together and even more inspired by what lies ahead.

We are grateful for your comments about our World Book Day celebration. Here are some examples:

"I wanted to thank you sincerely for the opportunity to attend your fabulous gala on Saturday. Everything was wonderful, and it could not have been a more perfect evening. Honestly, it was the best gala I have been to in a very long time."

"Thanks for hosting such a wonderful event. (We) had a fantastic time and got to celebrate with friends. If you keep these up, we may soon have our house decorated with artwork from Libraries for Kids events. Kudos on a job well done."

"You did a marvelous job. I told the young lady (Teresa Zito) who was the master of ceremonies that she did an outstanding job."

With sincere thanks and appreciation,



**Laura Winkel**  
Chief Executive Officer



## Libraries for Kids International's 5th Annual World Book Day Celebration an inspiring, uplifting event

Our April 25 World Book Day celebration – with the theme, "[Dreams Under the Serengeti](#)" – drew 150 people to Okatie, South Carolina, for an evening marked by meaningful images and video, plus learning and inspiration for our mission: to make the lives of schoolchildren in rural Africa better by supplying books and building libraries. Many others participated through donations and an online auction.



Our keynote speaker was Kika Otieno, left, born and raised in Kenya and now, a data analyst at USAA, an insurance and financial services company. "Standing here at an event dedicated to sending books back to Kenya feels deeply personal to me. It's more than a cause -- it's a full-circle moment," she said. Because her parents believed in the power of education, Otieno explained that they sent her to a primary boarding school, far from her home, because local schools did not offer the education they wanted for her.

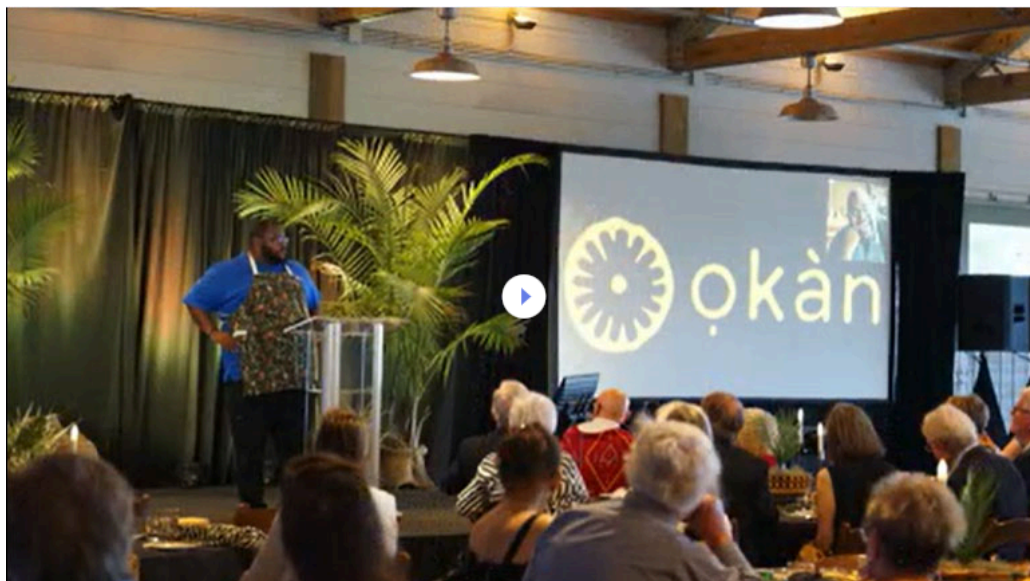
"That decision gave me access to something powerful -- access to learning, to books and to an environment that nurtured my dreams," Otieno said. "Education carried me forward. It opened doors. It shaped who I am." She completed a master's degree, moved to the United States and is working on a second master's degree.

"For many children, especially in underserved communities, something as simple as a book can be the beginning of a dream. A book can open a window to a world they've never seen. It can spark curiosity, confidence and imagination. It can help a child believe that their future can be bigger than their present," she said. Libraries for Kids International is "sending possibility and building dreams," through its mission, she told attendees.

"I encourage all of us to remember: When we invest in education, we are investing in dreams. And, when we invest in dreams, we are shaping the future -- not just for individuals, but for communities and generations to come," Otieno added.

Watch this space next month for a complete report of your gifts to our cause. Also, be sure to save the date for our next World Book Day celebration: **Saturday, April 24, 2027**. We hope to see you there!

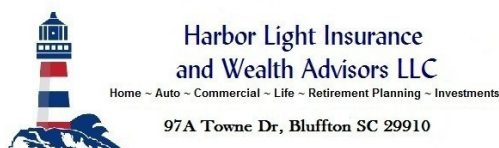
**Watch our recap video. More next month.**



Event photos and video by **Jean-Marie Cote, Shannon Kahl and Jess Mangano**

**'Dreams Under the Serengeti' sponsors  
Thank you!**

L O V E ,  
— ♥ —  
*Tito's*®



## Decor sponsors



## Libraries for Kids International delivers first books to Uganda schools

Libraries for Kids International delivered 20,000 books to 85 schools in Uganda in April, establishing libraries in rural public schools across multiple regions in the country. These were the first books delivered in Uganda by Libraries for Kids International.



The books were shipped from Savannah, Georgia, by sea to Mombasa, Kenya, and then trucked to Uganda in mid-March. After the books were unloaded in Mbale, they were stamped and sorted for delivery to rural schools. All book deliveries in the country were completed April 9, said **Laura Winkel**, CEO, Libraries for Kids International.

### Libraries for Kids' books make impact, librarian reports

Milly, a librarian at Kabore View Primary School in Chebonet, Uganda, said books delivered to her school have lifted students' enthusiasm for reading. "When I received the books in the library, I assembled, informed and showed the learners samples of the story books," she wrote to Libraries for Kids International. "I called each to open (a book) and read a few titles. They were very happy and showed gratitude by clapping, singing and dancing, while thanking God for answering their prayers through the Libraries for Kids International donors."

The books will help language teachers instill a reading culture with students in their early years, the librarian explained. And, because every class can read books each day in the library, student absentee rates are lower, she wrote. "At the end of the year, (students) will be given awards for reading 90 words per minute in lower grades and in upper grades, fluent and fast readers," Milly wrote. "May God bless you ... for carrying our schools and kids in your thoughts and prayers. You touched the lives of these kids."

Since 2019, Libraries for Kids International has shipped more 1.4 million books, establishing 12,068 libraries in rural schools in Africa. It has served more than 3 million students, and their families and teachers.

**And there's more:** In addition to our work in Uganda, more books are headed to **Kenya** this week! Libraries for Kids International's 32nd and 33rd containers leave the Port of Savannah May 4 for Kenya. More on this in next month's newsletter!

## Savannah's 'Maritime After Hours' attendees contribute \$715 to Libraries for Kids International



*Libraries for Kids International volunteers at April's "Maritime After Hours" were, from left, Laura Winkel, Roy Austin, Ann Van Winkle, Trish Semmoum and Frankie Thorton. Board member Steve Arthur also attended.*

Constituents attending "Maritime After Hours," a monthly gathering organized by the [Savannah \(Georgia\) Maritime Association](#), contributed \$715 April 1 to Libraries for Kids International.

At each monthly meeting of Maritime After Hours, a charitable organization is designated for donations from attendees. Libraries for Kids International is the organization's charity partner three times per year, said **Laura Winkel**, CEO, Libraries for Kids International.

Attendees typically travel from throughout the United States and locally to attend, including some who regularly give to Libraries for Kids International, she said. The event also provides an important opportunity for Libraries for Kids International supporters to share information about the organization's mission.

According to its website, the Savannah Maritime Association works for the common benefit of all participants in Georgia's ports, plus federal, state, city, commercial and community organizations. The association identifies and achieves common goals and objectives for the maritime community.

---

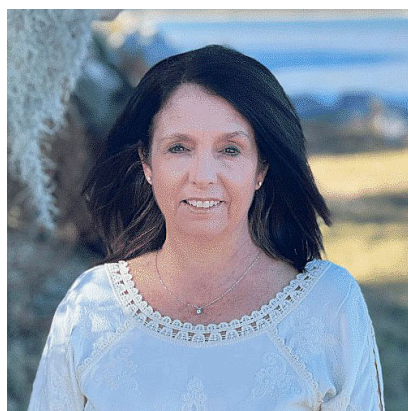
## Members of Bluffton congregation give \$1,250 to Libraries for Kids International through 'Miracle Jars'

[Bluffton United Methodist Church](#) (BUMC) members gave \$1,250 in March to Libraries for Kids International through its "Miracle Jars" program. Each month, the congregation, in Bluffton, South Carolina, designates a charity for member contributions, which members deposit in receptacles placed in the sanctuary.

Once a year, the congregation features Libraries for Kids International, and **Roy Austin**, founder and board chair, provides an update to the congregation. Over the years, BUMC Miracle Jars have contributed nearly \$7,000 to Libraries for Kids International.

---

## You're invited! Our Monthly Author Event May 18 features Laura Elizabeth and her books, *All is Now Lost* and *A Special Kind of Heartache*



Author Laura Elizabeth, left, enjoys a well-established career in business and a rich family life that, many years ago, took her to Daufuskie Island for the first time. Following her years of family experiences on the island, Elizabeth imagined Mongin Island as the home for her new cozy series, The Island Mysteries.

Join us **Monday, May 18, at 10:30 a.m.**, for a lively discussion led by Laura Elizabeth, part of our [Monthly Author Event](#) series. She will speak at The Roasting Room, 1297 May River Rd., Bluffton, South Carolina (2nd floor above Corner Perk), followed by an optional Dutch Treat lunch with the author.

**About the Book, *All is Now Lost*:** Carr Jepson is starting a new chapter in her life as she finds an empty storefront as the answer to her dream of creating a gathering spot for selling books, serving tea and celebrating the island's beauty through her photography. All goes well until a photographic outing to a remote corner of the island with her friend Barb.

**About the Book, *A Special Kind of Heartache*:** Carr Jepson, Mongin Island's amateur sleuth, and her friends are beginning to prepare for cooler days and fewer tourists. But things change quickly with the arrival of a girls' trip vacationing at the cozy Rosemont Inn.

Libraries for Kids Int'l 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 board member **Tamela Maxim** at 843-683-4100 or email at [tamela.maxim@libraries4kids.org](mailto:tamela.maxim@libraries4kids.org) to reserve a spot or for any questions.

Please save these dates for future Author Events:

- + Monday, June 15: Brian Thiem
- + Monday, July 20: Donna Wyland
- + Monday, Aug. 17: William "Billy" Douglas
- + Monday, Sept. 21: Millie West
- + Monday, Oct. 19: Scott Gould
- + Monday, Nov. 16: Annelore Harrell

---

## Libraries for Kids International in the news and on the airwaves



Did you see or hear us on the airwaves in Georgia and South Carolina in mid-April? Local media organizations provided time for Libraries for Kids International leaders to discuss our mission and World Book Day event in Okatie, South Carolina!

**Laura Winkel**, CEO, appeared on two Savannah television stations. She was interviewed by Camille Syed, host of "[Morning Break](#)" on WTOC-TV, upper left, and Kim Gusby, host of "[Community Corner](#)" on WSAV-TV, below right.

In addition, **Roy Austin**, below center, founder and board chair, appeared on a podcast, "[The Road to an Effective Classroom Environment](#)," hosted by Dr. Lashawnte McCray-Sarvis, a consultant and executive director, Williams Center for Achievement, Greer, South Carolina. Austin was also interviewed for a spot on a WSAV-TV news broadcast.



## You can make a difference! Make a gift to supply books to schoolchildren in Africa



Students in rural Africa want opportunities to learn and pursue their dreams for careers and success. Your support of Libraries for Kids International's mission to improve the lives of African students by providing much-needed books helps those students achieve success.

"Our school is very grateful for Libraries For Kids International," reports Florence, head teacher, Katundu Primary School, Voo, Mutha, Kenya. "Learners are enjoying reading your books. In fact, Libraries For Kids International has touched the lives of our learners so much (by) promoting in them a love for reading, writing and also their fluency in speech. We are hoping for more books. Thank you so much."

**Every** penny you give goes toward supplying books to rural schools in Africa. Join our cause. [Make a donation](#). Education through books **does** 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](#)

#### [Upcoming Event](#)

#### [Our Event Sponsors](#)

#### [Milestones](#)

#### [Our Mission & Impact](#)

#### [Volunteer Opportunities](#)

#### [Meet the Board Members](#)

#### [Our Visionary Partners](#)

#### [CONTACT US](#)

#### [SUPPORT OUR PROGRAM](#)

### 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](mailto:books@libraries4kids.org)

<https://libraries4kids.org>

+1-843-597-4826

See what's happening on our social media:



Libraries for Kids Int'l | 15 Trescot Lane [books@libraries4kids.org](mailto:books@libraries4kids.org) | Bluffton, SC 29909 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!