



Libraries For Kids®
INTERNATIONAL

Books Open Opportunities 4 Kids®

March 2026 Newsletter

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From the Chief Executive Officer

March was a busy month, and I was proud to represent Libraries for Kids International at key events across South Carolina, highlighting the organization's growing visibility and impact.

[The South Carolina Nonprofit Conference](#) in Greenville is where leaders from across the state gathered to collaborate, share strategies and strengthen community-focused initiatives. During the event, I met [Hailey Evans, MBA, founder of Epic Impact](#), who hosted an exhibitor table. Libraries for Kids International was selected as the winner of Hailey Evans' \$1,250 Marketing Power Package, designed to help nonprofits elevate their message and deepen donor engagement. I was honored and grateful to receive this package. Clear communication is essential to our mission, and this support will help us reach more people who believe in transforming childrens' futures through books.



In Little River, South Carolina, I was guest speaker at the Little River Rotary fundraiser. I spoke about our global grant collaboration and our continued efforts toward securing an international Rotary grant this year. Rotary's global perspective and commitment to education align beautifully with our work. Their partnership strengthens our capacity to reach more rural schools across East Africa.

Two shipping containers of books originally scheduled to depart in late March or early April are now being pushed back to late April due to global shipping costs and limited availability on key routes. While these challenges are affecting many international shipments, we remain patient and strategic. We are monitoring the situation closely. Our responsibility is to steward our resources wisely and ship at the moment that ensures the greatest impact for the children we serve.

Laura Winkel
Chief Executive Officer

Libraries for Kids International Prepares for World Book Day Fundraiser April 25

Libraries for Kids International's 5th annual charity fundraising event, held in conjunction with World Book Day, is Saturday, April 25, at [Port Royal Sound Foundation](#), Okatie, South Carolina. With the theme, "Dreams Under the Serengeti," the evening event promises adventure, inspiring stories and testimonials, breathtaking visuals, music and food.



"Attendees will enjoy a surprising and immersive journey 'to Africa' for the evening, through sound and visuals," said **Laura Winkel**, CEO, Libraries for Kids

International. "There is a great menu, curated and executed by a [James Beard Foundation](#) semifinalist."

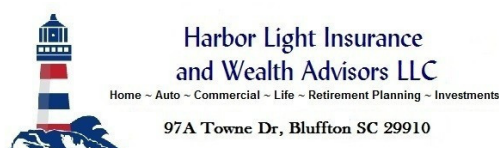
Anyone – those attending or not attending -- can participate in an [online auction](#) opening April 18, which helps fund the organization's vital mission, Winkel said. Participants can place bids on art creations by local artists, dining, experiences such as tickets to significant sports events, plus camping, fishing, hunting and skiing opportunities, gift baskets, private events and travel to places such as Canada, Europe and Pacific Islands. Online auction items can be viewed now on the event website. A portion of each item bidders purchase may be tax deductible.

[Tickets are available](#) for individuals, couples and tables for 10 attendees, which includes a seated dinner, music and open bar, plus presentations and more. To learn more, [view a video](#) of the 2025 event.

"Dreams Under the Serengeti" builds momentum and raises funds for Libraries for Kids International's mission to provide books to establish libraries in publicly funded rural schools across Africa. Event goals are to raise \$200,000 to fund eight containers which hold 336,000 books for more than 2,200 school libraries, reaching some 560,000 students.

Sponsorships are also available on the [website](#), ranging from \$500 to \$20,000 and above.

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



First-ever Libraries for Kids International books arrive in Uganda, deliveries continue in Kenya



Libraries for Kids International delivered its first shipping container of books to Uganda, left, this month, where they are destined for publicly funded rural schools in Uganda, said **Laura Winkel**, CEO, Libraries for Kids International. Meanwhile, book deliveries to rural, public schools continued in Kenya.

The Uganda team began their first regional delivery the third week in March, the first successful book delivery with Libraries for Kids International's expansion into Uganda. Fifteen schools now have books for their libraries, Winkel said.

The first shipment of books arrived March 13 in Mbale, Uganda. Unloading began Saturday, March 14, followed by book sorting and stamping, ensuring recipients get the books they requested and that reading levels are appropriate. Sorting and book stamping is done by hand, Winkel said. After the books are stamped, they are placed into boxes marked for particular schools, then labeled and stacked for departure to their final destinations.

"Over the past two weeks, our teams carried thousands of books across steep valleys, winding mountain roads and long border crossings to reach students in Uganda and Elgeyo Marakwet County in Kenya," said Winkel. "What unfolded was more than a delivery mission -- it was a reminder of the courage, kindness and quiet heroism that makes this work possible." Team members recorded [photos and videos](#) of the Uganda book arrival.



One thing remained constant: the joy that spreads when a school receives books, Winkel said. "Head teachers signed delivery forms with pride. Officers stayed close to the team through deliveries out of genuine care. And for the first time, Libraries For Kids International watched our stamped boxes enter Uganda -- an emotional moment that reminded us why we do this," she added.

Wanjiku Francis, Kenya operations coordinator for Libraries for Kids International, led a team of volunteer drivers and motorcyclists, right, that delivered 1,227 boxes of books to 947 schools since the books arrived in the country.

The books for Kenya schools were included in a shipment of 297,000 books in five shipping containers sent by Libraries for Kids International beginning in August 2025, arriving in October 2025.



Since 2019, the organization has shipped more 1.4 million books, establishing 11,983 libraries in rural schools in Africa. It has served more than 2.9 million students, and their families and teachers.

Bluffton Methodist congregation sponsors Libraries for Kids International as 'Miracle Jar' recipient

Every month, Bluffton (South Carolina) United Methodist Church (BUMC) sponsors a charity through its "Miracle Jar" program, and Libraries for Kids International is the

March 2026 recipient. Before the Covid pandemic, there were mason jars in every pew where people could place contributions for the designated charity of the month. Now, there are receptacles in the sanctuary for donations.



Once a year, the congregation features Libraries for Kids International, and **Roy Austin**, above right, founder and board chair, provides an [update](#) to the congregation. His latest presentation can be found on the video at the 9-minute, 45-second mark.

Over the years, BUMC Miracle Jars have contributed \$6,200 to Libraries for Kids International.

Monthly Author Event features Jack Gannon and *Task Force*, *InSpectre* book series



Join us **Monday, April 20**, beginning at 10:30 a.m. in Bluffton, for Libraries for Kids International's free Monthly Author Event, featuring author [Jack Gannon \(with co-writer Cyndi Williams-Barnier\)](#). Gannon will discuss his *Task Force* book series and his paranormal-supernatural *InSpectre* book series. He will speak

at The Roasting Room, 1297 May River Rd, Bluffton, South Carolina (2nd floor above Corner Perk).

To learn more, [read an interview](#) with Jack Gannon and Cyndi Williams-Barnier.

Following Gannon's presentation is an optional Dutch Treat lunch with the author. Libraries for Kids International sponsors the 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 [send an email message](#) to reserve a spot or ask questions. Lunch orders are placed ahead of time. Please request our special author talk menu if you will be staying after the talk, and send Tamela your selection.

Making a difference: 'The books opened up the world to me'

Can one book make a difference? I've had the privilege of making seven trips to Africa, visiting places in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa and Namibia. I've visited 40 rural schools and talked with hundreds of teachers and students. A favorite conversation was with a 13-year-old boy named Branmuu. I asked him his favorite subject, and he replied: "Science." We had supplied books to his school, so I asked how the books had helped. "Before the books came, I was failing science. The books opened up the world to me," he said.

I didn't see his home or village, but in most cases, the homes are made of mud and sticks. He didn't have a cell phone, tablet or television, so his knowledge of the world was limited. I asked him what he wanted his life's work to be, and he said he wanted to be an engineer and work on airplanes.

Your [donations](#) to Libraries for Kids International can change lives for children such as Branmuu. A book opens possibilities and dreams. The most common replies when I talk with learners about the impact of the books are that their English vocabulary and speaking have improved. The teachers say the same thing.

I ask children what they want to be later in life. Like children everywhere, they aspire to be doctors, lawyers, nurses, pilots, engineers, etc. The children say their



motivation for their dream profession is to help their families and villages.

Can one book make a difference in the life of a child, a village or the world? Yes! If you want further proof, read *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*. It is a true story about a boy in Malawi who accomplished amazing things because he was inspired by a book.

Join our cause. [Make a donation](#).

Books **can** make a difference. Thank you!

Roy Austin

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- **Support** our program directly
- **Volunteer your time** to join us in our efforts
- **Share our story** on social media and tell friends and family

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