



THURSDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2020

MEDIA RELEASE

‘Let’s teach the world’: ACU educator & charity founder

An Australian charity founded and run by a dedicated husband and wife team is celebrating its 10-year birthday after educating a staggering 17,000 African school students.

Canberra locals’ Dr Jann Carroll, an Australian Catholic University education lecturer and her husband Simon Carroll CEO of their charity Global School Partners, have a vision to teach the world by fundraising to help educate children in third world countries.

Jann and Simon partner Australian schools with Kenyan schools in a powerful fundraising model. The funds raised by the Australian schools are used to provide teaching resources including, books, stationery and other educational supplies and even build the Kenyan communities’ schools and libraries.

Equally as important, Global School Partners improves the children’s health by providing clean water, hand washing stations and toilets.

There are plans to expand Global School Partners to Asia.

Jann said it was important the charity provided a hand up to impoverished third-world communities, rather than a handout as they work together with partner schools.

“We’ve had strong responses from schools in the ACT and NSW, but we really need schools from the other states and the territory to get involved. Partner schools know that 100 per cent of funds raised go directly to the recipient schools.”

Philippa Brearley, Principal of Holy Trinity Primary School, Curtin, ACT, has been instrumental in introducing the program to three ACT schools.

“The Australian students have benefited greatly from their partnership with schools in Kenya, as they’ve been able to see in a very real and tangible way, how their fundraising outreach projects have made a difference to the lives of children who are disadvantaged,” Philippa said.

Australian children are also learning about diverse cultures and the ways others live as they exchange letters with their partner schools.

Jann and Simon are now focussed on ensuring Kenyan schools can re-open, after closing due to the global pandemic.

“Like Australian schools, the Kenyan schools closed down and lessons had to be conducted over the radio, but many families don’t own a radio because they can’t afford one,” Simon said.

“To re-open, the Kenyan schools urgently need hand sanitisers; soap, forehead thermometers; face masks; and extra desks and chairs for social distancing in the classrooms. They simply can’t re-open without these measures in place.

“Such measures would cost approximately \$1500 per school and it would enable each of the 27 schools to re-open and allow the teaching staff and children to return. This sum of money is completely out of reach for our Kenyan schools and we urgently need help.”

However, even with the pandemic’s safety measures in place, returning to school is not always an option for older Kenyan girls because they cannot afford sanitary products.

“Menstruation is often taboo in Kenya due to a lack of education and access to sanitary products. This leads to many weeks of school lost each year which affects the girls’ life chances,” Jann explained.

“The girls usually can’t afford sanitary products, so they miss a week of school every month to avoid embarrassment. It’s very important that a girl gets an education for many reasons including, but not only, because it prevents her from being married off or put to work while still a child.”

Thanks to Global School Partners, Kenyan female ex-prisoners are employed to sew reusable, washable sanitary pads which make up Dignity Packs for the schoolgirls. Since the Dignity Packs were distributed, school absenteeism among girls has fallen dramatically, by 88 per cent. However, more support is needed to continue the initiative and Jann and Simon are seeking a sponsor for the program.

Jann said, “The Kenyan children absolutely love going to school and their teachers do so much good. The impact from educating just one child is phenomenal and leads to job and income creation and improved health and life expectancy.”

“We warmly invite other Australian schools to join the program.

“It’s truly a privilege to be a teacher but it’s an even bigger privilege to help teach the world”.

Global School Partners’ aims for recipient schools to become independent, by helping the schools ultimately ‘graduate’ from the program. To date three schools have graduated and are self-sustaining.

Australian schools interested in becoming a partner can visit: www.globalschoolpartners.org.au

Media contact: liz.drew@acu.edu.au, phone 0419 506 690.