

The OCHO Project: Read for a Need
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During the 2008-2009 school year, Northwest Elementary participated in a project called OCHO Project: Read for a Need. The OCHO Project first began as simply a free book fair for students. We were in Kindergarten that year and can remember pledging to read 8 books with our family so that we could earn our way to a free book fair. We also collected \$8 pledge money from friends and family so that money could be used to purchase books for the book fair. A lot of kids don't have books at home or access to a library over the summer. Some kids during the summer their reading skill decreases because they don't have their own books at home so they don't really read much over the summer. So the school began the OCHO project and all students took home 4-5 books for free that they could read over the summer!

When we returned to school for first grade, we were given a chance to "Pay it Forward". Our School Counselor, Mrs. Peart was contacted by the creator of the OCHO Project, Mrs. Perlyn who said she was going to be visiting Tanzania, Africa and wanted to know if Northwest students would like to "Pay it Forward" and donate the books they had finished reading over the summer. We were grateful for the free books and the people who donated the money to buy the books. A good deed had been done for us so we should do a good deed for someone else. The response was overwhelming and over 100 books were donated and sent to Africa.



After Mrs. Perlyn's trip she sent us pictures and stories about the kids in Africa we had helped. They had no books at their school or even desks to sit at, instead they sat on stones.



Every May we had an OCHO free book fair and every fall Mrs. Peart would ask us to then "Pay it Forward" and send some of the books to students in another country. In 2010-2011

the school sent almost 500 books to India. This is good for the kids in India because it can help them learn English.



In 2011-2012 the Northwest sent books to a school in Vietnam that was just rebuilt after being washed away during a landslide in 2007. The books we sent went to their newly built library. As third graders that year we were able to take a more active role in the OCHO Project as student council members. We helped in promoting the "Pay it Forward" book drive, counting, sorting, and packing up books and later in the year we presented the powerpoint of Vietnam to our classes. By sending books to the other countries we are helping kids less fortunate than us but we also receive something back- we get to learn about life and school in another country halfway around the world!



In the 2012-2013 school year the school sent books to Papua New Guinea. There is a nick-name for this country it is that a land of great beauty that is rich in tradition and culture. It was interesting to learn about Papua New Guinea and help with a problem in that country. They have a 56% literacy rate which means almost half the people cannot read or write. Another problem in learning to read is that there are over 700 spoken languages in the country and

English and Pidgin English are their national languages. Hopefully the books we sent will help more kids learn how to read!



In 2013-2014 the school sent books to Namibia. Namibia is the green country at the bottom left side of Africa. Some homes are small and there is no room for them to hang their clothing. The children speak a local language and are trying to learn English. They were so excited about the books! We have not shown the power point to our classes yet but are looking forward to sharing about this country.



As fifth graders we are fortunate to have had the OCHO Project at our school every year since Kindergarten. We have learned many valuable lessons such as kindness, trustworthiness and to be appreciative for what we all have.

