



Media Advisory

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE April 26, 2010

The Pacific Northwest Helps Gambia, Despite Tight Times

SEATTLE – Three Seattle residents were recently able to bring good news to rural communities in Gambia West Africa despite a bad economy. The good news was in the form of donated books, clothes and school supplies all from local businesses, residents, school children and other individuals in the Pacific Northwest.

The journey took place this spring for the Gambia Health Education Liaison Project (Gambia Help), a local charitable organization that aims to alleviate poverty and support women and children. For the past 11 years the organization has carried over containers of books, computers, bicycles and educational supplies to Gambians mostly donated from locals in the central Puget Sound area.

Gambia Help Director and founder Shelby Tarutis said that despite tight budgets people in the Pacific Northwest have consistently given quality used clothing, books, medical supplies, and computers.

“I’m thankful that folks here seem to be able to still fit in charitable support while tightening their belt. I am hoping that people will still be able to continue this effort,” said Tarutis. “We are now collecting bicycles and hope to send a 40 foot container to Gambia in July.”

Tarutis said that the donations help support schools, women’s skill centers and small enterprises that can support a village community.

“For two years GambiaHELP has been building a women's skill center in the village of Dankunku. While we were there we had the thrill of witnessing the grand opening of the new building and observed women making tie dye skirts and blankets. We visited a poultry farm, cereal milling business and school gardens that were started by donations to GambiaHELP,” she said. “We also distributed 50 instamatic cameras to village school children with the aim of empowering them and teaching them how to write descriptive stories about their photographs in order to share their view of the world.”

Two Seattle photographers Marc Shor and Kevin Sharp went on the trip to Gambia this spring. They documented Gambia Help’s current projects. **To view or use images of the trip for publication, visit www.shor.smugmug.com/travel/thegambia/public and <http://www.fluidr.com/photos/ksharpphoto>.**

For more information on Gambia Help, visit www.gambiahelp.org.

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