



June 24, 2009

Contact: Julie Du Brow
310-821-2463 tel
julie@dubrowworks.com

NON-PROFIT *THE WORLD IS JUST A BOOK AWAY* PARTNERS WITH 'LITTLE DOLPHINS BY THE SEA' PRESCHOOLERS AND PARENTS TO SEND BOOKS, BUILD A LIBRARY HALF A WORLD AWAY

'Change for Change' Is Planned as Model for Non-Profit

Santa Monica, CA (June 2010) – Children and parents from multi-cultural preschool, Little Dolphins by the Sea, raised over \$3000 this month for Santa Monica-based non-profit organization, *The World Is Just A Book Away* (TWIJABA). The preschoolers took all the change they either earned over the previous month for doing chores or found on the sidewalk, and donated this total of \$413.96 so that other children like themselves—but seemingly a world away—could read and enjoy books just as they do. Through a school auction event, the parents additionally raised over \$3000 for the non-profit.

"When *The World is Just a Book Away* 'Change for Change' program was launched at Little Dolphins by the Sea preschool, I was very excited, because I love the idea of children helping children," says TWIJABA Founder and Santa Monica resident, James J. Owens, assistant professor of clinical management communication at the USC Marshall School of Business Center for Management Communication. His son Alexander attends Little Dolphins, along with Mila, daughter of the organization's current Chairman Emilio Diez-Barroso, Chairman and Founder of NALA Investments, LLC.

Launched in October 2008, the mission of *The World Is Just A Book Away* is to bring hope—in the form of books, libraries, and schools—to thousands of children in developing countries. The building program was launched in Sidoarjo, Indonesia, site of the mudflow disaster that displaced more than 60,000 people and destroyed many schools. The organization far exceeded its original 2009 expectations of five libraries. Instead, that year it built 22 libraries and one mobile library, providing 20,000+ books to over 10,000 children. These libraries introduce the idea of loaning non-classroom books for recreational reading for grades one through six. Many libraries are named in honor of key TWIJABA supporters, including Natasha Richardson, Dr. Jane Goodall, Yo-Yo Ma, Cher, Miep Gies, Muhammad Yunus, Desmond Tutu, Buzz Aldrin, and Queen Noor Al-Hussein of Jordan (to name a few).

A library in Sumatra will now be named 'The World is Just a Book Away Little Dolphins By The Sea Library', which will always connect the children of Little Dolphins to the children at the school.

"I know what this means to the children in Indonesia, because they have no books, every dollar we raise buys a book, and they are so grateful they can read through our libraries," continues Owens. "What really moved me about the Little Dolphins experience was the enthusiasm with which the entire community embraced this project: the children, the parents, the teachers, and the administration. Having the children come up to me to describe the chores they did to earn change for the program and watching their little hands put the money into the jar and the pride on their faces as they did is something I will never forget."

According to the Little Dolphins children, they more often cleaned their rooms, set the table, walked the dog, and picked up toys for extra change. Owens' son Alexander pulled his father to a halt one day on the sidewalk to pick up a penny, saying, "Dada, we have to get the penny for the children who have no books." For a month they kept placing the change into cardboard boxes at school that they had

decorated. The children in Indonesia are writing letters back to the Little Dolphins children.

Owens hopes to expand the “Change for Change” program to other schools, especially through use of the college-aged Ambassadors that volunteer with *TWIJABA*, through Board members, and by spreading the concept via Facebook and the website.

TWIJABA has attracted a strong and varied list of people to its cause, from Board members to general supporters. The first person to commit to the organization’s Board of Advisors was Jenny Ming, former President of Old Navy and one of *Fortune* magazine’s “50 Most Powerful Women in American Business.” Rounding out the Board of Advisors are Jim Ellis, Dean of the USC Marshall School of Business, and Tim Monich, highly-respected dialect coach of Hollywood. Prominent people in the worlds of business, entertainment and academia have signed on to the Board as well, inspired by Owens’ enthusiasm, drive, mission, and their own love of the written word.

Owens is also working on a book featuring submissions from more than 70 of the world’s most prominent people—across the arts and sciences, politics, business, and philanthropy—about their love of reading and books that inspired them. He plans to donate all the profits from the future book sales to non-profits, including *TWIJABA*.

Images of the building or renovation progress on the libraries can be viewed online at www.justabookaway.com.

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Little Dolphin preschoolers



Alexander and Mila