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## **NON-PROFIT 'THE WORLD IS JUST A BOOK AWAY' ESTABLISHES 25 NEW SCHOOL LIBRARY PROJECTS PLUS CRITICAL MOBILE LIBRARY SERVING 15,000+ CHILDREN IN EARTHQUAKE-PRONE REGION**

### **ONE LIBRARY CONNECTS CHILDREN HALF A WORLD APART**

Los Angeles, CA, USA (December 2010) – Santa Monica-based non-profit *The World Is Just A Book Away (WIJABA)* expanded into its second region for building school libraries. On October 27-28, the first ten libraries were opened in Padang, Sumatra, Indonesia, following the organization's success to date in Sidoarjo, Indonesia. *WIJABA* Founder/President James Owens was on hand for the openings, and proceeded to attend and speak the next day at the Alumni of USC in Indonesia's Charity Gala in Jakarta—with more than 600 people in attendance—which benefited *WIJABA*.

With more library projects being established in December, *WIJABA* will end 2010 with 25 libraries (finished or in process) and one mobile library serving 15,000+ children with 25,000+ books, just in Padang, Indonesia.

The mobile library is of special significance to the children of this region. Lower Padang is the "Red" (or high danger) zone of tsunamis, which means that being portable is even more helpful and consistent to reaching children in the area.

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. Padang was selected due to the devastation caused by multiple earthquakes in the past decade (7.5 quake hit within 150m. the same week in Oct. as the libraries opened), as well as the fact that there were no libraries at the schools the organization is serving in the region prior to now. These first 10 libraries are serving approximately 2000 children with 5000 books. It is estimated that over 100 schools in the area need help.

The Padang venture follows that of the organization's success in 2009 creating 22 school libraries and one mobile library in Sidoarjo that serve over 50 schools and 10,000 children in the area with over 20,000 books.

Additionally, *The World Is Just A Book Away* has instituted a process by which each community develops an internal committee and their support covers 10% of the library's costs—either through materials, labor or money. The communities form committees comprised of school administrators, parents and teachers, thereby investing the local people in the library and process. These committees partner with the organization to decide what the library will encompass.

While the schools in Sidoarjo were named for a number of high profile international personages / early supporters of *WIJABA*—inc. Queen Noor Al-Hussein, Desmond Tutu, Jane Goodall, Yo-Yo Ma, Muhammad Yunus, Natasha Richardson—the Padang libraries are named for a variety of non-celebrity individuals or groups who have specifically donated to build a whole library. One exception is a library named for the beloved Indonesian Raden Adjeng Kartini (d. 1904). A Javanese writer and early feminist, she promoted Western-style education for women. She is an official ‘hero’ of the Indonesian Republic, and Kartini Day is a national day named in her honor.

Connecting children half a world away through the magic of books, another of the Padang libraries will be named for ‘Little Dolphins by the Sea’ multi-cultural preschool in Santa Monica, CA, which raised over \$3,000 for *WIJABA*. Recently the preschoolers created their own books through ‘make your own book’ store Scribble Press that are being delivered by James Owens to the school libraries.

Owens, who is assistant professor of clinical management communication at the USC Marshall School of Business Center for Management Communication in Los Angeles, was also invited to speak at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Charity Ball for Alumni USC Indonesia. “The unique connection with James as a professor at USC and also someone engaged in socially responsible business in our country is a topic of great interest for our alumni and for the general public,” writes Vanessa Hendriadi, Event Chair, AUSCI Charity Ball. The event benefited *WIJABA* for a second year in a row, raising USD\$30,000 in 2009.

#### ADDITIONAL *WIJABA* NEWS:

- The organization has launched increased social networking presence:
  - BLOG: <http://www.justabookaway.org/blog>
  - FACEBOOK: TheWorldIsJustABookAway
  - TWITTER: @justabookaway
- A Kuwait Chapter of the *WIJABA* has been established and has donated funds that were used for multiple projects in Padang, Indonesia.
- January 2011 will bring the announcement of a new office in a new country

The World Is Just A Book Away:  
[www.justabookaway.com](http://www.justabookaway.com).

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