

Students Raise \$6,000 to Build Library in Indonesia

Student Chapter of World Is Just A Book Away Organizes First "We Run, We Read" 5K Race
May 23, 2011



From the very beginning, The World is Just a Book Away (WIJABA), an organization that is dedicated to building libraries and spreading literacy to the developing world, has been aided by a steady USC and Marshall presence. The newest library was made possible through a 5k race held at USC on April 10 with the help of WIJABA's first student chapter at Marshall.

Started by Marshall Associate Professor of Clinical Management Communication James Owens with the help of Andru Subowo, a Marshall IBEAR MBA alumnus and Bali resident, as well as support from USC alumni clubs across the world, WIJABA has donated thousands of books and built 47 physical libraries and two mobile libraries.

The April race at USC had a clear impact. With guidance from Jonathan Schwartz, a Marshall alumnus and president of Splits59, William Buffington '12 and Alex Schaffhausen '11 - Owens' former students who founded the WIJABA's first student chapter-- took to their mission to raise funds for WIJABA with zeal. They organized the "We Run (5K), We Read" race, which took place at USC's University Park Campus and included approximately 160 runners.

"I was just so impressed with the speed in which they got it done," said Owens, adding that it typically takes at least three to six months to prep for such an event. The students, with Schwartz's help, got it done in a mere five weeks.

A total of \$6,000 was raised, and the money went toward founding The World is Just a Book Away (5K) 2011 Library in Padang, Indonesia, an area hit hard by earthquakes in the last several years. A photo of participants taken the morning of the race in front of Tommy Trojan, the university's collegiate symbol, will hang in a place of honor in the new library.

"Just seeing all these people run for the children was an incredible experience," said Owens. "It was a great day and the beginning of something that's going to be a much bigger project in the future." Owens expects that races will be held in several different countries and cities next year."

For more on WIJABA see:

www.marshall.usc.edu/news/releases/2011/all-marshall-family.

www.justabookaway.org