

## CITW, ZAMBEZI SCHOOLBOOK PROJECT DELIVER 33,000 BOOKS TO RURAL ZIMBABWEAN SCHOOLS



represented by *Claude and Barbara Mayfield* in the USA, first partnered with **Children in the Wilderness (CITW)** in September 2014 as the **Zambezi Schoolbook Project**, which reaches out to children in the isolated rural areas of Zimbabwe providing much needed leisure and educational books to both Primary and Secondary Schools. Prior to delivery, a full analysis and audit is carried out at all participating schools to assess requirements, this assists the donors in compiling a selection of books specifically suited to each school's needs. **Books for Africa** generously provide the books, Claude and Barbara fund-raise for transportation costs, enlist assistance from Peace Corp workers to categorise and pack these books into boxes, then pallets fulfilling each schools requirements. The **Zambezi Schoolbook Project** is connected with a number of organisations throughout Zimbabwe ensuring that numerous schools benefit from the project; these include CITW in Matabeleland North, CESVI (Tuli-Limpopo Area); African Wildlife Conservation Fund (Save Conservancy); Rotary Club of Harare West (Harare); ECOED Trust (Mutorashanga); The Tashinga Initiative Kariba and HHK; The Mana Pools Ranger Community to name a few.

Impressed with the success of the first deliveries, Zambezi Schoolbook Project immediately started preparing for the complex process of collecting, collating, categorizing and shipping additional containers filled with much needed leisure readers and text books. September 2016 announced the arrival of this year's CITW bound container, which travelled by ship from America to Beira in Mozambique; from there the container was transported to Zimbabwe for delivery to CITW in Matabeleland North, ably assisted by **Rotary Club of Harare West**, who were able to obtain duty exemption, and **Speedlink Cargo** who helped with ground transport. CITW w received the shipment of 33,000 books and these were divided up for distribution by CITW to 14 schools. Deliveries to these remote schools involved a variety of transportation modes including the CITW Vehicle, rail and even donkey carts



This incredible donation includes a diverse range of books including high interest leisure readers - which complement the **CITW** literacy programme goals - English Reading Skills, Science, Health, Social Studies, History and Geography (Primary School readers); English Literature; Science, Health, Social Studies, History and Geography, Vocation, Hobbies, Art and Sport (Secondary School readers).



The schools that benefit from these donations either have a dedicated library or individual class libraries with metal lock-up cupboards, these help protect the books from destructive white ants and ensure they are safe.

**Children in the Wilderness** assist teaching staff at all the schools with library set up, this includes instruction on organisation and grouping of books, and inventories to aid in the security of these precious gifts. Teachers are encouraged to keep a register for their library and to urge children to borrow books to take home, read and return; this is a totally new concept for these schools as many have never had access to an abundance of reading materials and, being so scarce, books of any description are often heavily guarded and seldom allowed to leave the school premises.



An unfortunate reality is that there is little or no electricity in these remote rural areas which have benefitted from these incredible books. The majority of people live “off grid”, which means that the day ends when the sun sets and children have little opportunity to read or do homework after hours. With grateful thanks to the **Bourke Family Foundation** and their **Lights for Literacy** project, the 2016 **Zambezi Schoolbook Project** included the addition of 1000 solar powered reading lights. Children living off grid need immediate and sustainable solutions, during exam times in particular, students and teachers really struggle to complete the required curriculum during daylight hours; these solar powered lights will dramatically change their lives allowing them to read and study at night. The lights were gifted to Grade 7 students who sign a pledge promising to look after their respective lights and to use it for its intended purpose of *study*

*after hours*. As solar lighting is a highly sought after commodity in these remote areas, the importance of access to light for study purposes after hours was also stressed to each child’s family in the hopes that this would be the priority in the home too.

The ability to read and understand is one of the greatest gifts a person can receive and **Children in the Wilderness** believe this donation of books and lights promises to be a winning combination. Grateful thanks are extended to everyone who contributed to the success of this incredibly far reaching project

“The journey of a lifetime starts with the turning of a page” - Rachel Anders