

# the GLOBAL FLYER *an update from*



## INT'L BOOK PROJECT



Spring/Summer 2016

[www.intlbookproject.org](http://www.intlbookproject.org)

*In 2015-2016, IBP's Books as Bridges program served a total 2,694 students in the United States and abroad, including students from Ghana (left) and Lexington KY (below).*



## Books as Bridges

by Charla Hamilton, VISTA  
Books as Bridges Coordinator

The International Book Project launched the Books as Bridges program to meet the growing need for higher reading levels and greater cultural awareness in Kentucky. Since its founding, the program has expanded to engage students in six other states as well.

Books as Bridges pairs local classrooms with an overseas partner classroom, providing a unique opportunity for cultural exchange to occur. The students write and send three (or more) letters to each other over the course of the academic year, reaching greater depths as time passes. The increase in detail not only allows for an organic friendship to develop, but also strengthens the writing skills of the students.

The program goes beyond letter exchanges to amplify learning for students. The Books as Bridges Coordinator creates and delivers a personalized cultural literacy lesson to participating classrooms in the US. These lessons include a presentation on the history of their partner country, as well as information about modern life and culture. Lesson staples include a traditional craft lesson and a sampling of food native to the partner country.

For example, students at Edythe J. Hayes Middle School in Lexington, partnered with Ghanaian classrooms, learned to play a simple rhythm on the djembe and had the opportunity to sample fried plantains. International partner classrooms

receive small shipments of books to help grow their school libraries. Students also exchange a cultural package during the school year, including pictures and small trinkets and toys that represent life in their respective country. Local students are encouraged to act on their compassion and design a project that they can execute themselves, such as writing persuasive letters on behalf of their pen-pals to local businesses for school supply donations or organizing book drives for International Book Project shipments. These service-learning projects benefit both the international recipient and the local classroom by creating an environment for sharing and learning.

*In the 2015-16 academic year, Books as Bridges had 50 participating classrooms, ranging from 2nd to 12th grade. Forty-six (46) classrooms were in KY counties: Scott, Harlan, Knox, Fayette, and Madison, and 4 were in Pennsylvania. Our international partners included classrooms from Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, Bulgaria, Kosovo, and Taiwan. A total 2,694 students were served.*



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## 50 YEARS OF IBP

This year marks the International Book Project's 50th anniversary. There is much to celebrate – from the journey that brought us to today and forward to what lies ahead for an organization

beloved by so many people in Kentucky and around the world. International Book Project (IBP) ships more books than ever before -- expanding our partner base yet remaining committed to serving each partner's individual needs.

We maintain our steadfast commitment to our values and mission. Through the generosity of our donors and volunteers, IBP continues to ignite millions of young minds that shine a light for the future of their communities and their countries. At its International Literacy Day, UNESCO stated, "Literacy is not merely the skill to read and write. It is a transformational process that empowers individuals, broadens their critical thinking and provides them with the ability to act." At IBP, we make special efforts to ensure that everyone – regardless of their family income, where they live, their gender, their ethnicity, whether they are disabled – can benefit equally from education's transformative power.

*What does it mean for an organization to have lasted for 50 years?* The Small Business Administration says that 50% of nonprofits and small businesses die within 5 years of starting. IBP's success was a perfect storm of great ideas, commitment, and force of will. IBP's founder, Harriet Van Meter, had a clear vision (literacy) and mission (ship books) – a story that was easy to tell. This positioned IBP for success. She started small with a plan that could be used even as the organization grew: Collect and ship books specially picked for those who needed them.

In his book *The Living Company*, Arie de Geus talks about how the best organizations survive. The book is about long-lived corporations (de Geus worked at Royal Dutch/Shell for 38 years), and the lessons apply to successful non-profits. De

Geus believes that companies die because managers forget that their organizations' true nature is that of a community of humans. His research showed that the most successful, long-lived firms shared the following qualities:

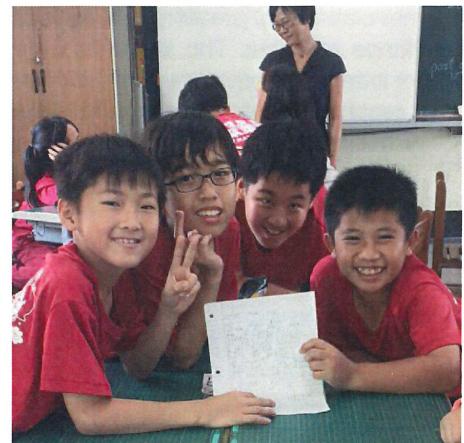
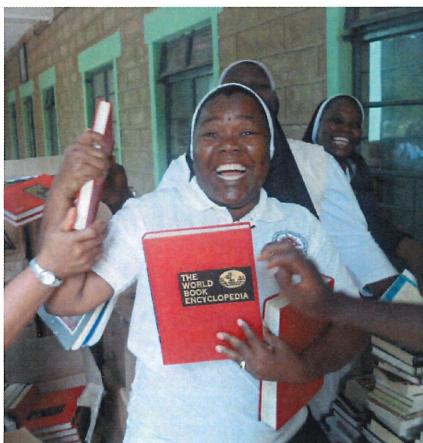
**1. Sensitivity to the environment** which represents an organization's ability to learn and adapt. IBP has changed with the times, integrating e-readers into our book-shipping options. Our wildly successful Books as Bridges program has fostered cultural exchanges between elementary and secondary schools in the United States and partners abroad.

**2. Cohesion and identity** which are key to an organization's innate ability to build a community and a persona for itself. The clarity of our mission has enabled us to build a community of volunteers and donors spanning generations. Friends of Harriet's who worked shipping books from her basement, now have grandchildren who support IBP.

**3. Tolerance and decentralization** which enhance an organization's ability to build constructive relationships with other entities, within and outside itself. IBP has built working relationships with many different organizations, from Kentucky Refugee Ministries, Habitat for Humanity, Rotary, Junior League, Peace Corps and AmeriCorps VISTA to local businesses who help sponsor events and send volunteers. Our success is largely because of them.

**4. Conservative financing** which is most important to governing growth and evolution effectively. IBP spends 92% of its operating budget on activities directly related to its book-shipping mission and our Board has wisely managed our endowment. We continue to seek ways to increase our donor base and expand our grassroots support.

We move into our next 50 years with challenges related to the growth of Harriet's dream to promote literacy one book at a time: the continued demand for books; maximizing the "bang for the buck" from our e-reader program; managing an aging, inefficient warehouse which is receiving increasing numbers of books; and expanding our donor and grant base. Our goal is to continue to be good stewards of our mission and to meet these challenges with the same vision and force of will as our founder. -- *Lisa Fiedler Fryman, Executive Director*



*Above: (Left) Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, Gusau, Nigeria, received 2 pallets of books in Summer 2015. "With these valuable books to equip our school library, students have useful materials for their studies. IBP puts songs on our lips!" –Sr. Jacinta Nwauhiri. (Center) Peace Corps Volunteers have a long history with IBP. Pictured: Kristen Perry, Angene Wilson, Kay Roberts, Debra Schweitzer, and Dan Sprague, 4 of whom are past or current IBP Board Members. (Right) 2016 pen pals from Jheng Sing Primary in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. "My students have loved getting letters from kids across the Bluegrass. Thanks IBP!" – Victoria Englehardt*



and technical publications... If you have books to recycle through their minds, IBP will tell you where and how to send them directly to those who will use them."

**1980:** IBP uses YMCA warehouse. By mid-1981, more than 1.5 million books/journals had been sent to countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. More than 100,000 books waited in the warehouse for "SOMEONE to send shipping funds."

**1983:** Present location on Delaware Avenue is purchased.

**1992:** Peace Corps recognizes IBP as one of 20 Partners for Peace. First PCV described her Kenyan students' "incredible thirst for reading" in 1972 newsletter. In a typical year, 20% of IBP small shipments go to Peace Corps Volunteers.

**2000:** Goal is changed to "promoting literacy in developing countries and in areas of need in the United States." By 2002, IBP partners include Eastern and Central Kentucky county public libraries and Habitat for Humanity.

**2004:** Books as Bridges begins, developing into a program in 2007 that links students and schools in Kentucky with students and schools in other countries.

**2012:** Legacy of Literacy renovations include IBP bookstore and offices.

*-- Compiled from the IBP archives by Board Member Angene Wilson, Professor Emeritus University of KY*

## IBP BRIEF HISTORY

**1966: After a trip to India, Harriet Van Meter writes a letter to the *Hindu Times* offering to send books to anyone who writes her. Within weeks she receives 400 letters. Her Lexington, KY home on Mentelle Park becomes a center for collecting, storing, and packaging books for shipment all over the world. International Book Project becomes a clearinghouse for requests, encouraging individuals and groups in and beyond Lexington to send books.**

**1972:** 56,548 books are sent by volunteers located throughout the US, Canada, Australia and Europe, and 47,857 books are sent from Lexington. 1970s' monthly newsletters state: "People like to help themselves and are eager for books

## LOOKING AHEAD: IBP'S FUTURE

By Dan Sprague  
President, IBP Board of Directors

Recently the IBP Board revisited International Book Project's vision, mission, and values. It is impressive what IBP, and many dedicated volunteers and donors, have accomplished over 50 years in promoting global literacy and vital cultural connections. We remain committed to promoting literacy in underserved areas of the world, domestic and abroad. We continue to believe literacy empowers individuals and communities, creating opportunities for social and economic advancement.

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IBP aims to ship a record 350,000 books this year. We have formed a task force to evaluate the efficiency of our dated warehouse. We must showcase and publicize our mission in order to increase both the volume and value of donations. These big ambitions present big challenges.

New conditions now confront IBP's Board and staff as we ponder the path forward. There are more players in the international literacy movement, and shipping costs and customs complexities have increased. As a small non-profit with four staff members and an annual operating budget of \$387,000, IBP must focus its mission and limited resources to maximize the impact of its programs.

We must grow our valued donor base significantly and showcase our mission in order to increase both the volume and value of donations. We need to dramatically upgrade our

facility and operations to maximize our limited resources. Our warehouse must be remodeled to become more efficient and safe for staff and volunteers alike. This will take some time and a major fundraising effort to accomplish. We are in the process of analyzing precisely how much it will cost and how to establish a successful capital campaign to complete the renovation. Last, we must continue to maintain and build strong partnerships with organizations at home and abroad.

The IBP Board has recently added several energetic, talented new members who understand IBP's challenges and are committed to facing them head on. We have an experienced Executive Director who embraces our goals for the next 3-5 years. We are fortunate that our Delaware Avenue location is coming alive with new enterprises which make IBP's warehouse less remote and more valuable.

The next several years will be a significant, strategic transition. IBP has a rich and resilient history of growing and improving our organization. We have many loyal, devoted volunteers and donors who have sustained IBP through difficult times and on whom we count for the critical years ahead. It's an exciting time for IBP, so please join us in making our 50th anniversary a springboard for continued success in assisting the literacy needs of our world.

**International Book Project**  
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*Please visit our website  
[www.intlbookproject.org](http://www.intlbookproject.org)  
for more information on  
IBP's 50th anniversary  
celebration throughout  
2016. Donate \$50 for 50.*

Thanks to Blake Eames Design  
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International Book Project.



## IBP: LITERACY EMPOWERS, PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY



At its January 2016 Board of Directors Meeting, IBP revised its mission and vision statements to guide our non-profit for the coming years.

**Mission:** IBP collects, sorts, and ships donated books in response to requests from around the world.

**Vision:** IBP promotes literacy in underserved areas of the world, both domestic and abroad.

**Values:** IBP believes ...

- ... Literacy empowers individuals and provides opportunity.
- ... In building relationships with local and global organizations.
- ... In a grassroots donor base.
- ... Everyone deserves access to books.
- ... Worthy books deserve a second life.

Not long after our mission, vision, and values were revised, IBP received a hand-illustrated "thank you" book from several young volunteers with the Glendover Elementary Girl Scout Troop in Lexington, KY. We loved the story so much, we are reprinting it here:

*"I am loved by a boy. From a young age he took care of me and reads and reads and reads me. Life is great, and I am loved. I was loved by a boy. Now he's grown and I'm all alone. I wait for a new child to read me. My owner was on a book project website. This might be my chance to get a new owner. Here I go! I'm now getting put in a box. IT'S NOW MY TIME! The book was puzzled and wondering what kind of a country it would go to. Would the book have a journey or take kind of a field trip? The anticipation was wonderful and he loved the thought of the nearby future. I'm in a box. I'm scared, yet full of hope. I overheard people saying I would be going to a better place. Light floated into the box. Tan worn hands picked me up and stacked me against other books. I was in a warehouse. There were hundreds of books of all different sizes, genres, new, and old, some for children or teens, others for adults and students. There were shelves upon shelves and walls of boxes of books. I was sorted too many times to count. I was put in a box. Then I was on an airplane for hours across the country to someone who will love me again. After I was shipped I arrived in an unfamiliar place with lots of other books like me. After my long journey I finally found a new home. One where I can be loved by all. Now my first person is taking me home. And now Sophie takes care of me until I am returned to my rightful home so I can be loved by all. Thank you International Book Project. The End." -- McKenzy M., Rachel D., Kate H., Emerson G., Sara W., Rose S., Abby W.S., Zoe T., and Mikayla M.*