

THE NEWSLETTER

29 MARCH 2007

SPRING, TERM 2

'Education for Life'

March Events:

3rd- Ernest Tsala & Sophie Baiye are wed in Mamfe

6-8th University of Buea hosts workshop on Educating Children who are Disabled.
--6th --Margaret Bibum presents on the Deaf child and educational rights

8th-INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

8th- BSD says goodbye to Teacher and House Parent Sophie Tsala and Volunteer Corrine Burgler

16- 23rd TERM 2 Exams

29th-Know Your Body (Health workshop for the female staff and pupils) hosted by Intern Lena Dunning

29th- Rescheduled Co-ed football finals

30th- BSD closes for the Holidays

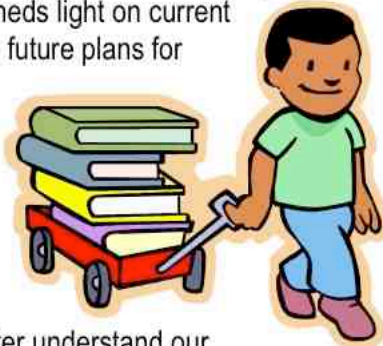
CLASSES resume 16 April

Buea School for the Deaf Founder and Director, Mr. Aloysius N'jok Bibum, is committed to his Country, his Culture and the Deaf Community.

The education that BSD is providing is enabling and empowering Deaf children to plan for their future just like any other maturing child. Bibum sat down with Intern Lena Dunning to address existing challenges and discuss possible interventions. This interview sheds light on current issues, community action, and future plans for the emerging school.

When asked about issues that BSD are currently facing Bibum responded:

Funding to operate the school is one of our most prominent challenges. To better understand our unique situation one must first acknowledge 2 facts. First, the government does not offer any specialized programs or schools for the Deaf. This fact leaves parents with two options, pay for your child's education or deprive them of any formal education. Second, 30% of the families that have a child attending BSD are farmers by trade. A steady income for families is limited and additional money to pay for a private education is inconceivable. We have developed individual school fee payment plans. In which we also accept in lieu payment in food items such as plantains, garri, cooking oil etc. A child is never turned away because a parent cannot pay the school fees in full. However due to insufficient incomes it is difficult for our staff to be paid regularly.



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Project Kickoff

SPRING, TERM 2

Head of Instruction, Mrs. Margaret Bibum is directing the Education and Empowerment Project for Families of Deaf Children sponsored by the International Deaf Children's Society (IDCS). "Our work at BSD has never been limited to the classroom. But, the implementation of this project will formally extend our teaching to parents and families of our deaf pupils," Margaret Bibum stated.

The Buea School for the Deaf (BSD) has been awarded a one-year grant by the International Deaf Children's Society in London to initiate an Education and Empowerment Project for families of deaf children attending BSD.

The project will involve training of Home Support Workers (HSW) who will work with the families of deaf children attending BSD.

"Communication is essential for self-development and social interaction. The implementation of this project will empower parents and their deaf children."

The Home Support Workers will teach Sign Language to parents and guardians of deaf children so that they will begin to be able to communicate with their deaf children. "Since the establishment of BSD we have been concerned about communication between our deaf children and their hearing families," Bibum remarked. "I have witnessed through

observation that parents can communicate, through gestures, but it is difficult and frustrating for both parties," she continued. Furthermore, deaf children do not have a solid understanding of their culture, they are left out of family matters, miss out on tribal traditions and may not even

know their siblings names. Bibum noted, "Communication is essential for self-development and social interaction. The implementation of this project will



empower families and their deaf children." Sign Language classes will be taught in 10-week increments three times a year. The project staff will produce Sign Language DVD's and teaching materials to further assist language development.

The project will also supply parents with information about deafness so that they can better understand their deaf children. Moreover, parents of deaf children will be brought together through several meetings over the course of the year to share their experiences and provide each other with support.

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-Many thanks

A Long Distance Relationship

International Children's Awareness' (ICA) Canada is a Non-profit organization that stands strong behind its mission statement:



ICA Canada is committed to working in partnership with individuals, groups and communities in order to assist people in developing nations to become

self-sufficient and achieve their fundamental rights to health and education (official website).

ICA is currently heading projects in Cameroon, Haiti, Jamaica and Romania. Their efforts are focused on health, water, education and community stabilization. Other efforts include their recent collection and shipment of supplies and equipment to various organizations in Cameroon.

Buea School for the Deaf was one of the many recipients of the container shipped from Canada to the coast of Cameroon. "We had been informed that the ship had docked and that our materials would be carried from Douala to Buea," Aloysius Bibum remarked. "The pick up process was extremely organized and well protected. I was impressed with their firm security and strategic manner," Bibum continued. Buea School for the Deaf received over 63 boxes full of clothing,



teaching materials, school supplies, books and games. Moreover, the shipment contained second hand equipment that are being used for various educational purposes: 2 projectors, 2 VCRs, a large file cabinet and a portable sand tray. Bibum also stated, "prior to this shipment BSD



received a computer from ICA that has been fully utilized since its arrival."

Shortly after the shipment arrived, the pupils and staff welcomed ICA representatives, gave them a tour of the compound and thanked them for their remarkable donation. Later in the term BSD extended its greetings to the President, Captain Smith and Captain Wayne. "We are truly blessed. It is collaborative efforts such as this that reinforce our motivation and aid in making our goals a reality," Bibum concluded.

ABOUT US:

"International Children's Awareness (ICA) Canada is committed to providing access to things that we consider fundamental rights, such as education, clean water, and health care. Our goal is to work with indigenous groups and support projects that will assist in allowing them to become self-sufficient."
(official website)

For more information regarding ICA Canada please visit: www.icacanada.org

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

SPRING, TERM 2

March 8, 2007

The women of BSD, 4 staff members and 12 pupils, headed to Buea Town for the anticipated Festivities and March. The 22nd Annual Women's Day Celebration kicked off in the early morning with the women preparing for departure and the young men organizing and planning



Lunch for the distinguished females. The morning consisted of cultural dances, orations and the long awaited March.

"The Women's Day celebration was unlike anything I had ever witnessed," commented Intern Dunning, "Every woman was dressed in her unique attire cut from this year's National design printed in orange, green and red." The decorated women gathered in the center of town and enjoyed games, drinks and music while they awaited the procession.

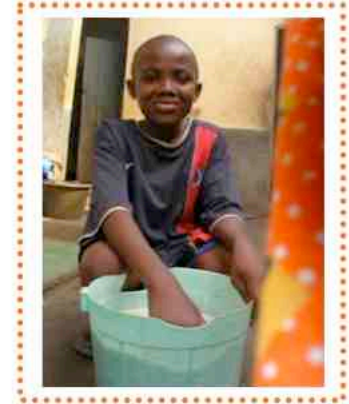
Over 100 women's ministries, organizations, social groups and agencies gathered to partake in the day.



"This is the first year that BSD has ventured to town to join in the

festivities," Head of Instruction

Margaret Bibum noted, "it was a real treat for the girls and they look forward to Marching as a cohesive unit next year." M. Bibum values educational experience outside of the classroom and equally supports



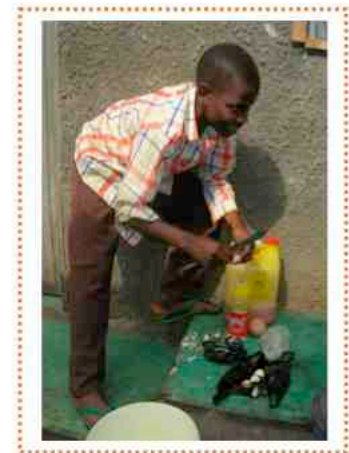
peer-teaching opportunities. Bibum noted, "the older male pupils took on the full



responsibility of preparing lunch for the first time." She continued, "They did an excellent job and I think the gentlemen enjoyed themselves just as much, if not more than the ladies!"

The day was educating and full of success.

Hugs were shared and mouths were fed. All parties involved smiled as they ate and shared their stories from their adventures.



W O R K S H O P

Theme: Understanding and Teaching Children with Special Needs in Ordinary Schools.

Hosted by:
University of BUEA

The Department of Educational Psychology and Faculty of Education teamed together to organize and host the programme in order to create awareness among participants, disseminate information on Special Needs Education and acquire knowledge and skills in dealing with learners with disabilities.

An estimated 50 participants took part in the three-day workshop and 16 presenters touched on numerous aspects, approaches, needs and functioning abilities of a child who is disabled.

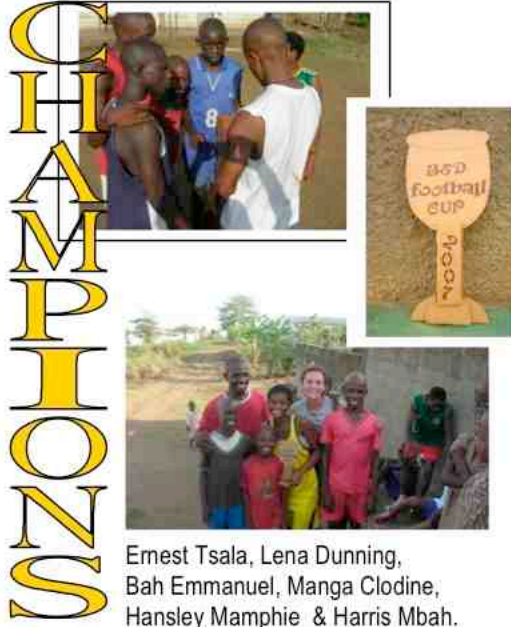
Margaret Bibum was introduced by Rev. Sister Dr. Euphrasia Yuh and wrapped up the first day with her presentation on a Deaf child's educational needs. She spoke about identity development, communication accessibility, social encouragement and teaching strategies. Madame Bibum utilizes her collegiate background in Education and Counseling to merge the developmental aspects of education and the classroom environment.

"I was impressed with the discussion topics Fellow presenters were professional and well versed. Furthermore, I applaud the University for hosting a workshop focused on education needs for the Disabled," Bibum said. Her presentation was well received and was immediately followed by a discussion led with questions from the audience directed toward her experience as the Head of Instruction at the Buea School for the Deaf. "This seminar is the first time that Deaf education needs have been addressed at the University level. Numerous connections were made and I look forward to what the future holds for our children who are disabled."



The following girls have received scholarships from AED/USAID for the past two years.
(left to right)

Linda Jar – Class 5
Miranda Ewi – Class 4
Pelagie Chuo – Class 3
Doris Mbeh - Class 6
Manga Clodine - Class 6



Ernest Tsala, Lena Dunning,
Bah Emmanuel, Manga Clodine,
Hansley Mamphie & Harris Mbah.

This afternoon the much anticipated football champions were pronounced. Director Aloysius Bibum stayed late watch the match and award the trophy. Prior to the championship game 2 matches were held to determine the final opposition. "The games were well fought, and the teams were evenly matched," Bibum stated, "Manga Clodine (captain of the first place team) lead her team to victory and did so with notable sportsmanship."

Intern Dunning is responsible for the tournament organization and creation of the Champion Trophy. "When funds are tight you have to get creative. I constructed the trophy from a cardboard delivery box and used the only glue I could find!!" Dunning said. The tournament was well received and the month of February will continue to host an annual tournament.

Cover story continued

Dunning: What percentage of parents pay their child's school fees in full and what is the primary source of funding for the school?

Bibum: An estimated 15% of parents pay their school fees fully in cash. Another 30% of our children receive full or partial sponsorship from donors. BSD receives support from various donors and sponsors internationally as well as domestically. Our foremost contributor is Friends of BSD an American based group that aggressively fundraises throughout the year. But as we expand, we are running out of space.

Dunning: Is anything being done to resolve this issue, if yes what?

Bibum: Yes; Due to the fact that 30% of our budget is allocated to renting the school buildings, we are now placing priority to buying land and constructing our own school buildings. Furthermore, when land is obtained and an architectural drawing of the school buildings are submitted to the Minister of Basu Education, our school can qualify for financial assistance from our government.

Dunning: That would certainly ameliorate the cash flow difficulties that the school is facing! How is the process coming along?

Bibum: We have located 7200 sq meters of prime land in Buea which is up for sale. We are looking for the funds to buy the land before it is grabbed up. We will welcome donations from anyone for this project.

Dunning: It appears that you have your hands full. Managing a school is more than one might assume.

Bibum: Yes there are a lot of matters to balance day in and day out, but I can identify with these children 100% and my education has shaped who I am today. I value the schooling I received from an early age. What motivates me and keeps me smiling is to witness the children's communication and social skills blossoming and flourishing.

Be a Partner in the Education and Empowerment of deaf children at the Buea School for the Deaf.

Help us raise \$75,000 to

- purchase land
- construct school buildings
- launch an agro-pastoral project

Send your donation to:

Jacob Kona
20701 Delta Drive
Laytonsville, MD 20882