

Caribbean Encounters, Inc.
507 Borden Road
Lexington VA 24450

May 20, 2009

Dear Friends,

The reason you are receiving this letter is we think you may have an interest in the people of the Caribbean. Whether that comes by your past involvement with Caribbean Encounters, by your studies, by your community involvement, or by birth, we hope you share the vision of building relationships and meeting needs in Eastern Caribbean countries.

Though we have run volleyball tournaments, held raffles, collected donations through word-of-mouth, and even provided "cookie inducements", this is only the second letter Caribbean Encounters has sent in our three years of existence to raise funds. We recognize this is a bold venture given the current economic climate, but we desire to do more and hope you will join us.

Our board of directors (Susan and Scott Dittman, Todd and Amy Goetz, Sharon Humphreys, and Ruth Kitchen) has discussed and is in the process of implementing a policy that all of our volunteers who work on site in the Caribbean will provide for their own food, lodging, and transportation. Therefore, other than the money necessary to ensure sound legal and accounting compliance, all donated funds directly serve the needs of people in the Caribbean.

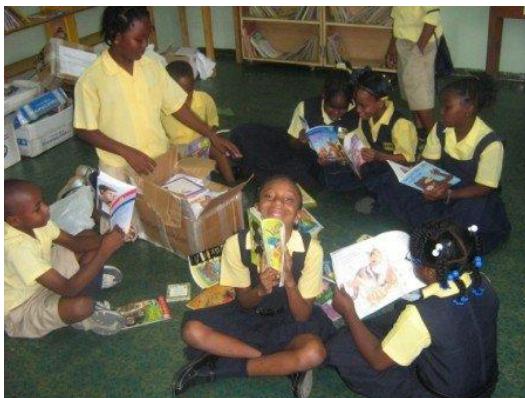
Since 2006, volunteers working in cooperation with Caribbean Encounters have

- taught vacation Bible school to approximately 375 children in three churches;
- established a church library and a public school library, and donated books to another remote public library;
- built a significant portion of a church addition; and
- provided meals, sports equipment, crafts, and toys to needy children.

The pictures you see here represent, in part, some of these efforts.



The public school library was established through a joint project with Washington and Lee University's International Development course and was set up at Lodge Primary School in Kingstown, St. Vincent. Three of the students who participated were able to visit the school library during a subsequent W&L Spring-term course ("Slavery, Race Relations, and Society in the Caribbean"). The W&L Generals Christian Fellowship also co-sponsored a group of 10 students and local residents to Bequia in spring 2008 to build an addition on Paget Farm Evangelical Church. In summer 2008, Todd and Amy Goetz and their two children also worked on the addition and led vacation Bible schools at Paget Farm and at the Port Elizabeth Evangelical Church. To view the video they put together of their time in Bequia, click on http://www.youtube.com:80/watch?v=AxBY_aMLpcs. The Goetzes are returning this summer to do more of the same.



The people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines are not the only ones who have benefited from these contacts. Those of us who have had the privilege of participating in the trips and projects have also been changed. Two examples: Kaitlin Kitchen, summer '06 CE volunteer, who also has summer international experiences in Oxford and Spain, said in a recent email, that though her times abroad were hard to compare, the aspect of her Caribbean Encounters experience "that stands out and was most enjoyable was the service. It was definitely the most meaningful and emotionally/spiritually satisfying trip. I appreciated the opportunity to interact, not just visit, people in another country and from a different culture; not only did it help me understand another part of the world a little better, but it also gave me another perspective through which to view American society and myself." Another college student, after returning from her time in St. Vincent said her attitude toward black people had changed from one of indifference to one of eager engagement.



Also, our Vincentian friend, Sterlin Russell, affirmed our methods of building relationships and understanding between people of different cultures. He said, "It meant so much more to have people come and get to know us, giving themselves and their time instead of just sending money."

Our current goal is to raise \$5,000 for construction costs, educational materials, and other yet-to-be-determined projects. Will you join us by sending a tax-deductible gift to the address above? Would you like to join us on a future trip? Please let us know how you would like to be involved.

Sincerely yours,

Susan H. Dittman, President
(on behalf of the Board of Directors)
shdittman@comcast.net
540-463-3488

