

Océ Future Authors Project Expands to Kenya

The magic of writing inspires students from all walks of life

September 29, 2010 – Kayafungo, Kenya – Amos Tumaini Thoya, whose middle name means “hope,” is a 32-year old high school student in the rural Kenyan town of Kaloleni. When he was born, he went home to live with more than 90 other relatives, an ailing 76-year old father and a mother who was wife number eight. While poverty, lack of access to education and care-taking responsibilities have presented Amos with severe life challenges, he remains hopeful for the future, especially since he became a student in the *Océ Future Authors Project*. Amos was one of 50 Kenyan students, from ages 13 and above, who were able to share their stories and emotions in writing for the first time in their lives.

“I sometimes feel like giving up, but when I remember my real name, it gives me a change of mind and hope,” wrote Amos, who chronicled his life in a six-page essay describing a young man forced to give up school to care for his ailing father, support his siblings and deal with abject poverty, abuse and lost opportunities. This essay will be digitally printed and published in a book along with more than 90 writings from all of the *Océ Future Authors Project* Kenyan students.

The Océ Future Authors program was conceived five years ago as a partnership between Boca Raton-based Océ North America Production Printing Systems, a leader in digital printing solutions for the book industry, and the School District of Palm Beach County. It was created to provide middle- and high-school students with an opportunity to write creatively and learn about the process of becoming published authors, first-hand. The advent of digital book printing and publishing has transformed the way books are produced and distributed and now allows these students to benefit from the short-run and on-demand publishing trend that enables books to be printed in runs as small as one or as large as several thousand.

Extending the *Océ Future Authors Project* across the globe was the brainchild of Arianna Pattek, a junior at the Georgetown University Walsh School of Foreign Service. This summer, Arianna was an intern with ThinkImpact, a nonprofit organization that connects American college students with young adults in rural African villages as part of a long-term mission to alleviate poverty.

While working in the Kenyan schools, Arianna discovered that students were excited to write about themselves and share their prose with others. “They had never been asked to write about themselves,” she explained. “They assumed their personal stories didn’t matter.”

Touched by the impact the writing exercises had on the students, she saw an opportunity to replicate the Océ Future Authors Project program, which she had learned about in her hometown. “I witnessed what was being done in Florida,” said Pattek, “and was able to apply that same framework, with some tweaks to fit the different context, to students in Kenya with the same

dreams of expressing their feelings, sharing their personal stories and becoming real authors.”

Arianna and her ThinkImpact partner, Stephanie Parrish, a senior at the University of Michigan, traveled to two schools every day for three weeks to teach the students about writing, editing and publishing. As each student began reading his or her essay aloud, Arianna watched the program morph into “50 mini-therapy sessions,” she said. “They were never asked to share personal experiences, but they became so excited about the concept and the freedom to share. I was unprepared for how invested the kids would become in the project and how they would shape their writing assignments to fulfill personal needs that weren’t being addressed.

“Underneath, we all experience the same fundamental human emotions, such as love, loss, anger and joy,” said Arianna. “The *Océ Future Authors Project* really brought that fact to light.”

The student stories, together with photographs of the classes, which will be digitally printed and bound on the Océ VarioPrint® 6320 Ultra digital perfecting system and delivered to the Kenyan students in early 2011. The books will be available for sale around the US with the proceeds benefiting the program.

“Disrupting the cycle of poverty requires education,” said Saul Garlick, the founder and executive director of ThinkImpact. “Giving young people a chance to express themselves through writing and having their works published are incredibly valuable tools in getting them excited about learning. Programs like this transcend socio-economic and cultural barriers and tap into the power of young people, their ideas, ambitions, leadership and creativity.”

“Expanding the *Océ Future Authors Project* to a country where the need for self-expression is so great is a natural progression of a program that has been successful in Boca Raton with the School District of Palm Beach County,” said Francis, McMahon, vice president of marketing, Océ Production Printing Systems. “We are honored to be able to help leverage the magic of digital book printing and publishing to help fulfill the dreams of young people around the world.”

NOTE TO EDITORS: Photos are available. Please contact Carro Weston at carrof@earthlink.net or at 859-771-5091.

About the Océ Future Authors Project

The fifth annual *Océ Future Authors Project* book, *If Writing Were Easy, This Book Would Be Huge*, will be printed at Graph Expo from October 3rd through 6th in Océ booth # 1217. The book will be unveiled to South Florida students on November 10 at a book signing hosted by the City of Boca Raton at the Spanish River Public Library. Since the program’s inception in 2006, more than 200 students have participated in *Océ Future Authors Project* writing workshops. Each year the program features professional authors who share their successful publishing experiences with the students.

For more information about the *Océ Future Authors Project*, visit www.oceusa.com/futureauthors.

About Océ

Océ is a leading international provider of digital document management technology and services. The company's solutions are based on Océ's advanced software applications that deliver documents and data over internal networks and the Internet to printing devices and archives – locally and around the world. Supporting the workflow solutions are Océ digital printers and scanners, considered the most reliable and productive in the world. Océ also offers a wide range of display graphics, consulting and outsourcing solutions.

Océ employs around 22,000 people, with 2009 revenues of approximately \$3.7 billion, operates in around 100 countries and maintains research and manufacturing centers in the Netherlands, the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Romania and Singapore. Océ North America is headquartered in Trumbull, CT, with additional business units in Chicago, IL; New York City; Boca Raton, FL; Salt Lake City, UT and Vancouver, BC. North America represents over 37% of Océ's worldwide revenues, and employment is over 9,000. For more information about Océ, visit www.oceusa.com. Outside the U.S., consult <http://global.oce.com>.

About ThinkImpact:

Saul Garlick founded ThinkImpact in 2001 when he was just a high school junior at Denver East High School. Since then, the international non-profit organization has grown nationally with a presence on 40 college campuses and an alumni group that tops 70 people. The group, formerly known as the Student Movement for Real Change, has connected hundreds of American college students and recent graduates with rural villages in Africa to alleviate poverty. For more information, visit www.thinkimpact.org or contact Chris Murphy, 202-657-6616, chris@thinkimpact.org.

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