

SET & TOGETHER

FALL 2014

Volume 2, Number 2 SET Newsletter

SETting The Future

SET's past: founded in summer, 2011, **SET's** present: seven schools built. But what of **SET's** future?

In early May, 2014, the four Directors of **SET** left for Lomé, Togo to gather information to answer that question. Accompanied by family members with expertise in education and social work, the group of eight visited each of the schools where they held meetings with teachers, principals and family council members. Walking around the schools and villages they met and talked with parents and students.

They witnessed an impressive use of donor dollars. Concrete block schools of three classrooms as well as concrete storage locker and separate principal's office dominated in the villages of clay huts and palm-leaved shelters. Such solidity and permanence places education at the centre of people's lives. So much so that in some cases villages adjacent to **SET**-school villages send their children the extra distance to attend.

Inside classrooms, sturdy **SET**-donated desks made of teak, a wood found in abundance in Togo, have replaced work-space at rickety tables or even on the ground. Concrete floors, steel roofs, cross-draft designs keep children clean, dry, safe every day of the school year.

Anne Carette, one of the four **SET** Directors says, "When I try to put myself in these parents' places I feel that when they see more structure, more safety, more school materials, more teachers, more reliability, they will do their very best to ensure that their children get to school regularly and stay."

Providing more materials, more teachers, and more reliability has become a major focus for **SET** along with the continuation of building more schools and delivering more furnishings.

Materials: The Directors heard that although the Togo government commits to paying for school supplies, schools receive inconsistent support. **SET** decided to buy school supplies and teaching equipment such as notebooks, chalk, globes, and dictionaries for **SET** schools. They believe that as **SET** encourages robustness in the schools they support, the government will take note and back this success.

Teachers: For lycée graduates (the equivalent of Canadian high school) an opportunity exists to work as intern teachers. All Togolese schools depend on these interns who, typically, earn \$20 a month. Understandably, if they receive a better offer from another school, they can move there, thus leaving a vacancy that may not be filled. **SET** will supplement interns' salaries to recognize their contribution and to reduce transferring.

Reliability: **SET** not only undertakes repairs and needed improvements in its schools, it continues to partner with Ryan's Well. This partnership ensures a reliable source of water as well as healthy sanitation for students. In the case of villages' supply of potable water, all can benefit from the development of a well or rain-harvesting system.

SET Directors promise to have different members visit Togo once a year to review, reassess and renew their direction. They express this direction in their 2014 Vision Statement: To have as many Togolese children as possible complete primary school with the assistance of **SET** schools.



*On the Avedze building site
with old school in the background*

Join with us at SET

Your contribution can be made to SET. Mail your cheque to Robert Barclay, 1423 Tecumseh Park Drive Mississauga, Ont. L5H 3P1

OR Donate online at www.supportededucationtogo.org
Where you can also see how your donations are making an impact

OR Telephone: 1-905-891-5031

The third annual SET Dinner Gala and Auction will be held at the Lambton Golf and Country Club on November 1, 2014, beginning at 6 pm.

SET Surprises

The one constant about SET surprises is their recurrence.

Every month SET receives unexpected contributions to help Togolese children attend primary school. Contributors' reasons for giving vary as much as the contributors themselves, but all gifts, no matter the size, are given without fanfare.

Many donors prefer to remain anonymous but in SET Together an opportunity exists to acknowledge these donors' concern for children thousands of miles away living in an impoverished country. People like

- A World War II veteran who read about the SET team's visit to Togo in a London, Ontario newspaper. Within a day of publication he had telephoned to confirm SET's address for his generous contribution.
- An Ontario business woman who talked to SET Director, Don Barclay about his interest in Togo. This occurred during a break in the seminar Don led. A week later she mailed her substantial donation.
- Friends and friends of friends send their gifts, such as the friend of Director Bob Barclay's golfing buddy.
- Family, close or distant, hear about the importance of schools for Togo, and like a relative of Director Anne Carette, send money convinced of the significance of the work. Anne's relative is an advocate for education in West Africa, a knowledgeable individual who could see long-term value in the building of SET schools.

Not all offers relate to money. Some, from youth to seniors, ask what they can do to help. Often they take a suggestion and creatively respond to it, like a community choir in London, Ontario who gathered school supplies and toys to go with the group who travelled to Togo in May.

*Simon Carette
chatting with students*

Pace SETters Toronto to Togo...with Love

Sophie Carette's grade 4/5 French Immersion class at Rawlinson Community School in Toronto, Ontario makes things happen. Told about Sophie's upcoming trip to southern Togo to meet students at SET schools they jumped at the chance to contribute to the children in several ways.



SET supporters at Rawlinson Community School

A delegation of students approached Sophie to inform her of their upcoming bake sale. Without her knowledge they had already asked the principal for permission, had created posters and organized donations for sale. One student copied the Togo flag to be the design basis for hand-beaded key chains sold at school for 50 cents each. Another student stapled the SET pamphlet to a paper bag to collect donations from her friends and family. By herself she raised more than one hundred dollars.

As a class they decided together to create a book about themselves to be shown and read to the students in Togo. Divided into three sections the book tells about the children themselves, what they like to do, to eat, to play. The second section describes their classroom, what subjects they take, what sports they play and the final section explains their neighbourhood and city. Each child chose a topic, wrote about it, illustrated it, then Sophie compiled the writings into a book.

Sophie explained her objectives in teaching about Togo as wanting to "help my students develop a global outlook, that the way we live in one country is not the epitomé of life on earth, that there is so much more to the world."

Sophie's own travel to Togo modelled a kind of caring that her class chose to share. When she returned from Togo to describe her experiences and to show photographs, "you could have heard a pin drop, they were so quiet." The students saw that the Togolese students are so much like themselves, but so different with regard to opportunities and privileges.



Sophie Carette in Togo classroom



SET Partnerships

Honourary Chief of Yoto District: SET President Bob Barclay

If the group of SET visitors to Togo could have read the stars they may have discovered that May 8, 2014 would prove auspicious. As it turned out none of the eight members of the group anticipated any of the amazing events that would inaugurate the sixth SET school and Ryan's Well water services at Amétonou Kondji.

The night before the inauguration a call came through that Togo television would be there to do a news clip. Nothing else was mentioned. Not the motor cavalcade including dignitaries, some with military body-guards. Not the hundreds of people waiting spilling out from the shade of the palm-leaved shelters into the large school-yard. Not the dancers performing a traditional welcome. Not the program of speakers including the Chief of the Amoussime Township, Yoto District, where the Amétonou Kondji school is situated. And certainly not the surprise appointment of SET President, Bob Barclay as Honourary Chief of Yoto District, perhaps Canada's only lifetime Togo chieftain.

Togolese partner, President of Action Enfance et Développement, Laurent Dekalikan explains:

"In Togo customs and traditions, it is the Chief and his Chiefs who are responsible for the happiness and well-being of their people. A leader who recognizes the needs of people and who works with them toward that happiness is a person deserving respect, honour and obedience.

"The only hope for families dreaming of a better future for their children lies in education. SET, headed by Bob, works to fulfil those aspirations that children can go to school. To recognize SET, the highest honour possible has been given to SET's President.

"The respect is forever. You cannot imagine the joy and satisfaction of people headed by Chiefs who now count Bob as one of them."

Honourary Chief Bob Barclay expresses his delight at this appointment. He stresses that he accepts it on behalf of the other three Directors as well as the partners, volunteers and the numerous generous SET donors.



Bob Barclay crowned as Honourary Chief

SET Together is published twice a year
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can be sent to haasbarclay@hotmail.com.

Avedze, SET School Number Seven

The building of Avedze School began on June 26, 2014. By July 17, workers completed the foundation and by October 6, when the school term began, Avedze was up and running. Avedze is the first SET school to implement SET Directors' decision to provide financing for supplies as well as for an increase in teacher intern salaries (See SETting the Future, page 1).

Speech by Crespin Leguede at Amétonou Kondji, May 8, 2014

Crespin Yacé Leguede is the Director-General of Five Stars Oil and Gas. He spoke at the Amétonou Kondji School and Water Services opening on behalf of the Executives Organization of Yoto Region. He is Secretary-General of this organization.

After the opening salutation to dignitaries, SET visitors and community members, Crespin Leguede proceeded with his stirring speech:

- "What is it that compels a person and pushes them to feed someone who is hungry?"*
- "What is it that can encourage a person to give someone who is thirsty something to drink?"*
- "What is it that leads a person to lean into the hurts and misfortune of other people with a strong will to find solutions to these problems?"*
- "What is it that opens the heart of a person to the problems of his neighbour?"*
- "What could have pushed men and women to come thousands of kilometers from a place as far away as Canada to bring help to the need of an African Togolese community?"*
- "It is human solidarity, it is universal solidarity; and it is in the name of this solidarity that I would like to thank our distinguished donors who have brought light, life and joy to this community of Amétonou Kondji."*



"They have brought light that will always illumine this area.

"They have brought knowledge and learning to our children.

"They have brought life to this community because water is life, contributing also to the efforts that our President and his government have brought to health, education, and the social well-being of the working populations of Togo and particularly to those of this locale.

"Ladies and Gentlemen of SET Togo-Canada, you have established something in this area, something of which the echoes will be heard in a few years, because from this school there will be doctors, lawyers, judges, ministers...and why not? Future ambassadors from Togo to give credit to Canada.

"If you have been able to take account of the work we are inaugurating today, if we have been able to unite here in this moment around these works and in this atmosphere of celebration, it is because these conditions occurred in a state of peace, peace which our Chief of State has been determined to build and consolidate for nearly ten years in a climate of mutual respect and national solidarity.

"If we are joined here today, it is because SET Canada has given with a good heart, and we, the executives of this region receive with humility and gratitude.

"The Organization of Executives of Yoto Region thanks you for these gifts and promises to aid this community to take the greatest care of these treasures in maintaining them in a state of cleanliness and functionality so that our children can gain the greatest good from them.

"In the name of the President and all the members of our organization I thank you and wish you a pleasant stay in the Togolese land as well as a safe return to your homes in Canada."

Crespin Leguede

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