

# Our Outbound Exchange to South Africa and Project to Benefit the Children of Chatsworth AME Primary School

March 2010

Twenty-one Friendship Force member ambassadors on an exchange to visit the Mispah Club in Cape Town, South Africa, spent a wonderful week living with the Mispah members who graciously arranged a week of activities and sightseeing for us.

We share meals with them, attended church with them, partied with them and visited all the traditional sightseeing sites including Robben Island, Table Mountain, District 6 Apartheid Museum, Cape Peninsula, Lion Sanctuary, lush wineland along the Garden Route and we toured wineries.

By far our very best day was spent at Chatsworth AME Primary School to present a gift of nine tablet computers, DVD and ancillary equipment, books and school supplies purchased with almost \$4,000 donated by members and friends of the Florida Suncoast chapter. We received a spirited and heart-warming welcome from the 230 students and the joyful thanks of teachers and students alike.



The effects of these gifts reached much further than anyone imagined at the time. The humanitarian project inspired both official and volunteer efforts to further the school's improvement in 2010, including two new portable classrooms and the creation of a Friendship Force Florida Computer Lab in a dedicated, air-conditioned classroom. More recently, in 2011 and early 2012, a vegetable garden has been added to supplement school lunches, new shelves and tables now constitute a library classroom, walls have been repainted, floors retiled, two additional mobile classrooms have been added, security increased and some concrete walkways have been added. The curriculum has been enhanced and a choir, talent competition and organized sports teams are now being formed. These are all significant improvements secured by the dedicated teachers and the inspired headmaster at Chatsworth AME Primary to help the school cope with its growing enrollment.

In 2012 members of our club spearheaded a second fundraising project that ultimately provided shoes and school uniforms for every child at Chatsworth School plus sports equipment, TVs, VCRs, white boards, heaters and a data projector for multimedia educational use.

For most of us, our exchange to South Africa was one of the most meaningful travel experiences of our lives.

