

**ZIMLA MATABELELAND
BRANCH CELEBRATES**



2010 THEME

DIVERSITY CHALLENGE RESILIENCE: SCHOOL

LIBRARIES HAVE IT ALL!

REPORT ON THE JUST ENDED INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL LIBRARY MONTH CELEBRATIONS HELD AT EVELINE GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL.

INTRODUCTION

In tandem with many other library associations and school, libraries around the globe the Zimbabwe Library Association (ZimLA) Matabeleland Branch joined the rest of the world in commemorating and celebrating the International School Library Month in style. The celebrations were held on Friday 15 October 2010 at the Eveline Girls' High School auditorium on Friday 15 October 2010. There was pomp and ceremony as school librarians, teacher librarians, librarians, teachers and students converged at the above institution. This enabled librarians from all walks of life to congregate, share aspirations and network.

The celebrations were unique in that they were being held for the first time in Bulawayo and Zimbabwe since the International School Library Day (ISLD) was proclaimed by the then International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) President Blanche Woolls in 1999 and reaffirmed in 2005 by the then President of IASL Peter Genco. IASL first celebrated ISLD in 1999. ISLD has been changed from a day to a month (ISLM).

The motive behind this special month of October is to draw attention to the significance of having school libraries in the education of our children. It is a time to highlight what school libraries have done and can do for students. It is a period to bring further attention to school libraries. ISLM is a time to create awareness of the achievements and potential of school libraries.

The theme for this year's celebration was Diversity Challenge Resilience: School libraries have it all! As Zimbabweans we also felt that there was need to adopt the following sub - theme one school, one library, one librarian in our endeavour to advocate and lobby for better equipped and fully functional libraries through the relevant Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture.

SCHOOLS THAT ATTENDED

The response from primary and secondary, formal and informal, private and government schools in and around Bulawayo was encouraging and the following schools attended the event,

Primary schools

St Thomas Aquinas, Fairview, and SOS Herman Gmeiner.

Secondary/High schools

Masiyephambili College, Eveline Girls' High, Hamilton Boys' High, Gifford Boys' High, Entumbane High, Sobukhazi High, Sizane High and Foundation Technical College.

The association had invited more than forty schools. Eleven responded positively to the call. This translates to a numerical attendance rate of 27.5%.

MARCH

A march was organized from the Bulawayo Public Library, which is located in the city centre to Eveline Girls' High School in the periphery of the city.

All school library media specialists, librarians in other sectors of industry, library school lecturers, teacher librarians and students joined in the march through the city centre along Eighth Avenue into Samuel Parirenyatwa Street carrying posters, placards, banners, and flags of different countries of the world. To add flavour to the colourful procession was the rural libraries donkey drawn mobile library cart. Unfortunately, we did not get the donkeys in time to pull the cart, so a vehicle drew it. This cart was a hit and popular with the children and the general populace that we interacted with during the course of the march.

The march was successful save for the delay we experienced before the commencement of the march. This was caused by the police details that arrived two hours after the scheduled starting time for the march had elapsed. The police were paid US\$ 20.90 for the services rendered notwithstanding their being late.

EQUIPMENT AND DECORATIONS

The Eveline Girls' High school authorities provided us with a public address system and were responsible for the decorations of the hall, stage and the high table. They even made colourful badges for our VIPs. They also assisted in ushering guests and in the provision of other ancillary services to ZimLA. The Head Department of Library and Information Science, Bulawayo Polytechnic Mr. Tariro Dube provided a camera and covered the event. Various reporters from the local print media also covered the event. The most notable and conspicuous was from 'The Chronicle', a Ms Nobukhosi.

THE EVENT

The event was attended by his Worship the Mayor of the City of Bulawayo Councillor Thaba Moyo and several high-ranking officials from the religious, library and information and educational sectors of society and it was marked by solidarity speeches from various learned speakers.

Mr. Jerry Mathema Vice – Chairperson ZimLA Matabeleland Branch and Chairperson ISLM sub-committee was the director of ceremonies.

The Head Eveline High School, Mrs. Moyo, gave a welcoming speech to the dignitaries and participants present and she further gave a brief summary of what the situation is at the

school library. The library is manned by a Lady librarian but did not furnish us with her credentials and qualifications. Stock is composed of outdated library materials and there is an urgent need for restocking with new and relevant library texts to support the school's curriculum.

Devotions by Rev. Cletus Nkomo from Masiyephambili College, kept the audience in stitches when he narrated a story of a young girl who was visiting a library for the first time. This young girl was asking her mother why there were books everywhere and no chocolates and marshmallows. As if that was not enough, he reminded the audience that the first book to be written was the Holy Bible and that when a person is born, getting married, dies or buys anything from a shop there is a record that is kept and that record is done in a book. He also encouraged pupils to read many secular and religious materials to enrich themselves both educationally and spiritually.

The National Vice-Chairperson of ZimLA and Lecturer Library and Information Science Department at the National University of Science and Technology, Mr. Lantern Rangarirai Fusire, spoke on the importance of having library associations and the need for librarians to network, do research and share aspirations in librarianship. He also gave a detailed account of the modus operandi of ZimLA and the projects that the association has embarked on and the need for librarians to be members of the national association. Unfortunately, the time allocated to him was not enough to allow him to read the proclamation that was made by the International Library Associations (IASL, ENSIL, IFLA) on the need for employing qualified school librarians and the development of vibrant library programs supported by functional school libraries. He delivered a summarized version.

The Dean of the Faculty of Communication and Information Science at the National University of Science and Technology, and National Libraries and Documentation Services Councilor Dr. Lawton Hikwa, delivered a speech on the activities of the National Libraries and Documentation Services (NLDS) in advocating for functional school libraries manned by qualified librarians and the need for the creation of a school librarian's post. He also spoke on the changes and shift from the traditional library with printed materials to a virtual one. The advent of the new media technologies in libraries and the urgent need to train school library media specialists of the highest calibre who are conversant in information science and able to adapt and meet the challenges brought by their introduction. He also made it public that NUST is working towards introducing a postgraduate diploma for teacher librarians and other interested parties working in school libraries. He urged the association to continue developing school library programs and reach out to rural communities.

The Deputy Provincial Director Education for Bulawayo, Mr. D.G. Moyo lamented the sorry state at which government school libraries were in and he assured us that since the

economic woes are slowly disappearing the government is committed to resuscitating dilapidated school libraries and restock them with relevant materials needed to meet the school's curriculum. From his speech, it also became apparent that most schools in the western suburbs of Bulawayo did not have a functional library and qualified librarians. He was optimistic that developing synergies and working in partnership with the association would alleviate the current problems faced by the ministry and the respective schools. Rural schools are hardest hit and most students are introduced to libraries at tertiary level. He commended the association for taking this stance of advocating and raising awareness for better and well equipped library facilities and pledged his support in making this event an annual one starting from this October.

The Mayor refused to give a speech during the event, opting for an interview with the reporter at his Mayoral Chambers and spent the whole proceedings with us. He said that he was supportive of the initiatives of school and public libraries as they are a platform for learning.

I quote,

'We appreciate this day and hope we would be able to celebrate it every year so as to raise awareness among people on the importance of school libraries'

'I also believe that qualified librarians should be placed in our schools so as to ensure that our archives adhere to international trends'

Close quote.

The Minister of Education Sports and Culture Senator David Coltart who was supposed to be the guest speaker did not attend due to other commitments elsewhere. He sent his apologies.

The Governor Bulawayo Metropolitan Province and Resident Minister Mr. Cain Ndabazekaya Ginyilitshe Mathema was invited to grace the event but he was conspicuous by his absence and no official response was received from his office regarding this matter.

The Director of the City Council Libraries did not attend and he sent his apologies.

The day was characterized with song, dance and theatre.

- Natalie Mbulo an Ordinary level Cambridge student from Masiyephambili College recited a poem in both English and French on the importance of school libraries.**
- Zwelithini Xaba a student from Gifford Boys' High school recited a poem that gave praise to the services rendered by his school library entitled 'HINC ORIOR.'**
- Vusumuzi Moyo a Giffordian recited a poem entitled 'Unknown.'**

- **Dino Ndlovu also from Gifford recited a poem entitled ‘I hail from Gifford.’**
- **St Thomas Aquinas junior school grade ones showed their theatrical prowess when they staged a drama on the importance of care and preservation of school libraries books. This play is aims at raising awareness on the need to carefully look after our school library stocks and in the process inculcating a culture of responsibility in the toddlers.**
- **Eveline High capped it all by performing a scintillating musical drama that depicts the diverse communities that we hail from and the challenges that we face in accessing better educational opportunities and accessing the right information.**
- **Mr. Jerry Mathema also spoke briefly on the role of the school librarian and urged fellow School Librarians irrespective of qualifications to be proactive and be visible in their respective institutions.**
- **Mr. Njabulo Tazibona gave the vote of thanks and the closing prayer from Rev. Cletus Nkomo followed this.**

After all had been said and done the curtain came down and the students had the opportunity to visit and marvel at the donkey drawn cart that was parked in the driveway. They managed to chat with Mr. Dlamini the librarian in charge of the mobile library. No refreshments were served.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of the ZimLA Matabeleland Branch and the ISLM sub-committee, I would like to extend our profound gratitude to all ZimLA NEC and branch members, the Police Force and Schools that supported us before, during and after the event. We are highly indebted to you and wish you all the best in your professional and academic endeavours.

This report has been compiled by,

Mr. Jerry Mathema BA Media Studies, HND Library and Information Science

School Librarian

Masiyephambili College

P.O.Box 6048

Morningside

Bulawayo