



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Webster Elementary School Supports the Botswana Project



SMMUSD Superintendent, Dr. Ben Drati, Webster Principal Lila Daruty, and district leaders, meet with Pat Cairns, Brooks Kamanakao and Webster staff

Webster Elementary School in Malibu has partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of Malibu (BGCN) in support of the Botswana School Project (BSP), a non-profit organization, focusing on bettering education in Botswana, Africa, by identifying the needs of students.

“Webster students are very enthusiastic about helping the students in Botswana,” said Lila Daruty, Webster Principal. “This project creates a wonderful opportunity for Webster students to be of service to the people in Botswana while integrating the project across their curriculum.”

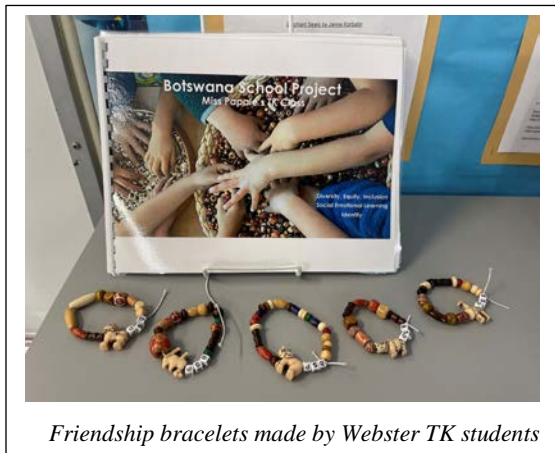
Webster’s participation in the Botswana Project, goes beyond fundraising to also incorporate project-based learning with a global perspective.

“The Botswana project provided an opportunity for our students to see the world through a broader lens,” said Maribeth Majewski, Webster Elementary School Instructional Coach.

Working closely with Majewski and Dr. Devon Smith, Learning and Innovation Coordinator for the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD), Webster teachers of all grade levels were taught the specific project-based learning (PBL) format and template to incorporate into their grade level projects.



Fifth graders and teacher, Juanae Johnson, discuss their role in the Botswana Project



Friendship bracelets made by Webster TK students

“This project integrates math, science, language arts, social studies and art,” said Dr. Smith. “Students are able to grow in their future-readiness through the six global competencies (6Cs) of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, character and citizenship.”

Student projects include: friendship bracelets from transitional kindergarten students, welcome note cards, hand sculptures of sign language gestures such as “I Love You” from first graders, books on tape from third graders, treasured favorite books

and animal paintings. Additionally, fifth graders are filming and documenting the project.

“The Botswana School Project allows students to celebrate our similarities and differences with students on a global level: Kids helping kids helping kids,” said Dee Dee Cooper, Webster third grade teacher.

While many of the items made by Webster students will be sent to Botswana students as gifts, the rest will be sold to the public, as part of the fundraising drive. Webster is set to open a pop-up store in downtown Malibu in the fall of 2022. Items for sale will include student artwork and friendship bracelets, as well as handmade items from Botswana, like jewelry and baskets. All of the proceeds will be donated to the BSP.

The Botswana School Project

Pat Cairns, retired SMMUSD administrator, is the founder of BSP. She has visited Botswana seven times since 2010 and is planning for another trip in March of 2023. During her first visit, Cairns met Brooks Kamanakao, a Botswana native and longtime safari guide, who helped Cairns develop a deeper understanding about Botswana and its people



Webster staff participants, Cairns and Kamanakao

Over the years, Malibu students have collected more than 20,000 books “gently used, but loved” to create libraries for a number of schools in Botswana. They raised money to purchase a printer for a village school so that teachers didn’t have to make handwritten copies for student usage. They also raised money for computers, student chairs, copy supplies and created a playground so that children could play in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Cairns and Kamanakao have continued to work together to connect the Malibu and Botswana communities. Kamanakao, who is the program director for BSP, recently visited Webster and talked to the students about Botswana. Additionally, as part of BSP, a teacher from Botswana was selected by his cohort to spend a month in Malibu, working with local teachers and studying their teaching techniques and creative ideas. The teacher then returned to Botswana and worked with teachers there, to implement and share what he learned during his time in Malibu.



Written by Diana Bouchaaya, Communications Specialist

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