

# LAPTOPS TO LESOTHO

## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

October 26, 2011

A meeting of the Board of Directors of Laptops to Lesotho was held on October 26, 2011 at 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time via conference call.

### **Board Members Present:**

Janissa Balcomb, President and Acting Treasurer

Sarah Gardner, Secretary

Andrew Dernovsek, Member

### **Call to Order**

Janissa Balcomb called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time and Sarah Gardner recorded the minutes. All board members were present.

### **Approval of New Board Member**

Board members unanimously agreed to invite Sherrie Howey, the president of FIPE, to join the board of directors. Board members also unanimously agreed to invite her daughter, Jennifer Selden, to join the board of directors if Sherrie declines.

### **Treasurer Report**

Andrew Dernovsek has resigned as treasurer. Janissa Balcomb is currently acting treasurer. Finding a new treasurer is high priority. Janissa reviewed our budget estimates. We have almost \$12,000 between our two accounts. We currently owe \$4000 (part to Bethel for solar power, part to Janissa for travel expenses). We have received approximately \$17,000 in donations since our meeting in March. Solon Foundation donated \$5100, Bloom Africa donated \$2750, Maseru Rotary Club donated \$1500, a church in New York donated \$1580, Pueblo West High School donated \$700, FIPE donated \$1120, Friends of Lesotho donated \$1200. We have also received some private donations. We have also received donations of laptops, spare parts, clothes, and school supplies. Recent expenditures include 10 personal solar panels, spare parts (batteries, keyboards, touchpads), flash drives, and travel expenses.

### **Financial Planning**

Board members discussed spending priorities. The three top priorities decided at the last meeting (solar power, training, and shipping) have mostly been taken care of now. Board members decided to reassess spending priorities after Janissa's trip to Lesotho in December and agreed to look at expansion possibilities. Janissa will take a couple laptops and panels to the chosen school for them to use to practice. Currently, Nohana Primary School has 86 laptops with a goal of 100

laptops. Friends of Lesotho may buy the remaining 14 laptops, so then any future laptops can go to the expansion school.

### **End of Year Reports**

Sarah Gardner will file the Annual Report. Janissa will file the required IRS documents and also attempt to compile an annual report of funding for the general public.

### **Review of Volunteers**

Janissa reviewed the activities of all Laptops to Lesotho volunteers. Fortunate Gunzo is working with Janissa on a journal article and a study to evaluate the project. She will also help with training at Nohana Primary School. Craig Balcomb is attempting to work on programming for the laptops. Hank has a source for internet access through a GSM router and wants to volunteer, but is unable to travel to Lesotho with Janissa this year. Russel Fox, with Rotary club in South Africa, has expressed interest. Janissa will meet him during her trip. Paula Burgin, Amy Balcomb, Aaron Laufman-Walker, and Diane McWethy are currently inactive volunteers. The Solon Foundation will contribute towards the travel expenses of interested volunteers.

### **Review of Current and Potential Supporters**

Janissa reviewed support we have received from various people and organizations as well as people who have expressed an interest in supporting Laptops to Lesotho in the future. The list of current and potential support is as follows:

1. Status Reports
  - a. Bethel Business & Community Development Center – technical assistance
  - b. Imperani (Ficksburg) Rotary – consultation, technical assistance, possible project expansion
  - c. FIPE – professional exchange, scholarships, publicity, donor contacts, fundraising
  - d. Jennifer Shelden’s 5<sup>th</sup> grade class – pen pals, fundraising
  - e. Kevin Freer (FOL) – journal article, evaluation proposal
  - f. Lesotho Embassy, Washington DC – support
  - g. MindSet – educational materials
  - h. OLPC staff – evaluation, technical assistance
  - i. Pueblo West High School – laptops donation(have not heard back, laptops will be phased out at end of 2011-12 school year), fundraising
  - j. Solon Foundation – network volunteer expenses
2. Pending/On Hold
  - a. African Library Project – project expansion, on hold pending an L2L volunteer
  - b. Family Literacy Center Lesotho – money-making project (printing) & graphics training, on hold pending FLCL reorganization and funding
  - c. Npower – technical network & internet assistance, pending an Npower volunteer

3. Potential – proposed meetings in Maseru & lowlands
  - a. Support
    - i. Catholic School Secretariat
    - ii. Ministry of Education's Technical and Vocational Dept
    - iii. Sentebale (registration)
    - iv. U.S. Ambassador
  - b. Technical Assistance, Training, and/or Collaboration
    - i. Lerotholi Polytechnic (technical assistance)
    - ii. Lesotho College of Education (training assistance, collaboration)
    - iii. MS School Technology Innovation Center (technical assistance, support, educational materials, hardware)
    - iv. NEPAD (technical assistance, collaboration)
    - v. NUL (technical assistance, collaboration)
    - vi. St Elizabeth Training Institute (technical assistance, training)
    - vii. SchoolNet Lesoto-Camara (technical assistance, collaboration, educational materials)
    - viii. U.S. Peace Corps (part-time volunteer for expansion and training)
    - ix. Vodacom Lesotho (technical assistance)
  - c. Funding
    - i. Lesotho Skills Agency (funding)
    - ii. National Training Fund (funding)

### **Publicity Report**

Janissa expressed concern that our websites and blogs were out of date. Sarah brought up areas of the official website that needed to be updated or revised. Sarah and Janissa decided to collaborate in January after Janissa's trip to Lesotho to determine what changes need to be made to the website. Sarah volunteered to update the blog and facebook page on a biweekly basis. Our description on Great Nonprofits will be updated after the website is revised. Janissa mentioned a need to update the brochure. 22 Laptops to Lesotho calendars have been ordered. Janissa donated them and sold them at cost this year, next year they can be used as a fundraiser. Sarah confirmed that Phylip Gardner will complete a publicity video for Laptops to Lesotho with her help after they receive video taken during Janissa's trip.

### **Planning Lesotho Visit and Teacher Training**

Janissa announced there are now 36 more laptops at Nohana Primary School and that three teachers who were really good with the laptops have left or are leaving the school. Board members discussed the need to address leadership problems at the school and agreed to buy a second internet phone for Mapesh. Board members also agreed it would be a good idea to invite the expansion school's staff to come to part of the computer training if possible. Janissa planned meetings with Peace Corps and the Education Department to ask for a volunteer assigned to our project. She will also discuss delegating Matlabe's responsibilities and meet with Matlabe and the teachers to assess problems and figure out solutions. Janissa announced that the grant writing training went well – 4 people from the school went as well as Fortunate Gunzo and thirty people

from Solon Foundation. Janissa went over her schedule for her trip: November 8-15 in Maseru, November 16 at Mohales Peak, November 17-December 12 in the village. Board members discussed plans for teacher training. Janissa will start by figuring out what has been happening, will work with teachers to define roles, tailor training to classroom needs, wire classrooms, and get community involvement from parents.

### **Future Meetings**

Board members agreed to meet again in January after Janissa's trip to Lesotho. Board members planned to review Articles of Incorporation and discuss revisions at the next meeting.

### **Meeting Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 PM Eastern Standard Time.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Gardner, Recording Secretary