

September 18, 2017, 9:15 p.m.

A thousand demons, shrieking. Hurricane Maria exploded onto the island of Dominica with an unrelenting scream. Everyone felt it in their gut: this time, it would be very bad. The storm, forecast as Category 1, suddenly intensified to Category 5. One-hundred-sixty mile-per-hour winds raked the darkness with a shrapnel of tin roofs and glass shards. The wind stripped the rainforest of leaves, branches, and bark. Blasts of solid rain flooded ravines with downed trees, boulders, and mud, and sent the cargo roaring downslope into villages. The electrical grid went down. Bridges, roads, businesses, homes, churches, and schools began to come apart. There was no time, nowhere to run. People sheltered where they could. They held on and prayed.



GreatNonprofits has
recognized Hands as a
Top-Rated Nonprofit
for nine years in a row

DOMINICA UPDATE

At Jones Beupierre Primary School, teachers swept books from the shelves of the school library into a metal box, racing to protect their precious collection. The school would be heavily damaged—roofs torn off, windows blown out, flooding everywhere. But the books survived, and today the library lives on. The story was repeated at schools across Dominica. In the end, a powerful dedication to books, reading, the library, and child literacy proved stronger than the storm.

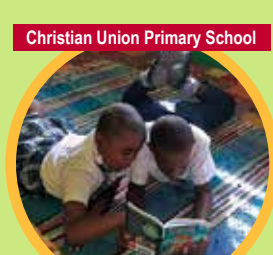
Some of the Dominica schools receiving assistance in the 2019-2020 Hands Wish Lists shipment



Recognizing and celebrating the dedication of Jones Beupierre Primary School to the advancement of child literacy, the school was awarded the 2018-2019 Hands Literacy Award for Dominica.



Sineku Primary School



Christian Union Primary School



Savanne Paille Primary School



Castle Bruce Secondary School



Atkinson Primary School

Libraries Rise Up

Giselle Laurent, the Hands Literacy Link for Dominica, reports on the island's post-disaster recovery

September 2019 marks the second anniversary of the passage of Hurricane Maria, the Category 5 monster that ravaged Dominica. Since then the nation has awkwardly moved on from emergency recovery to rebuilding for resilience and preparedness. According to the IMF, Dominica has experienced growth in the areas of construction, tourism, and agriculture. Reconstruction and rehabilitation of schools continues, although all schools on the island have been reopened since November 2017.

Based on my interactions with and visits to

the schools that will be receiving new books in the 2019-2020 school year, I believe that their libraries will be able to make great use of the books. Each school is at a different stage in their reconstruction/repair, yet the principals and their staff have succeeded in continuing the culture of reading in their schools. From designating mandatory library visit times to ensuring the regular replenishment of classroom libraries. Jones Beupierre Primary, Baroness Patricia Scotland Primary and Christian Union Primary have full rooms designated for their

libraries and have been among the earliest of this group of schools to return to their library—they have made the environments bright and comfortable for their students.

For those who have ended this school year without their libraries completed, this has not hindered the reading. They have set up small, well-stocked, regularly-rotated libraries in the classrooms and encouraged book borrowing. Even Tete Morne Primary, which was completely destroyed and is housed in temporary quarters, has made sure that the students have access to books through classroom libraries. In the end, these schools have functional libraries that will make good use of their books this September.

Baroness Patricia Scotland Primary School



Tete Morne Primary School



Clifton Primary School



Arthur Waldron SDA Academy

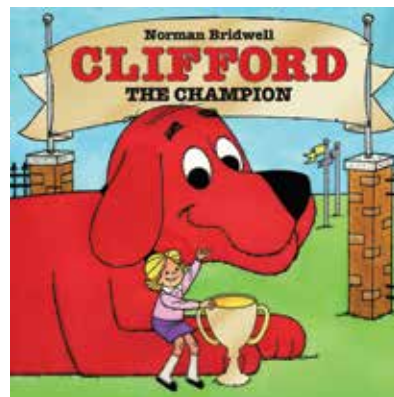
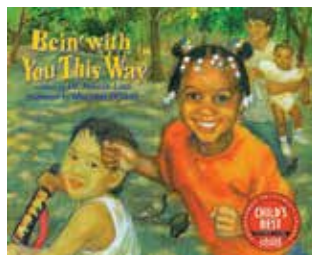
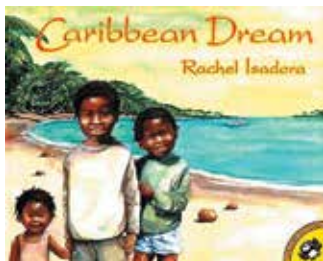
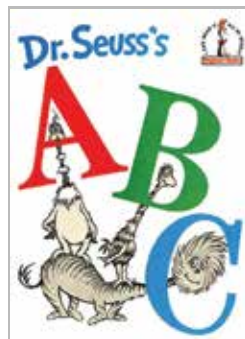
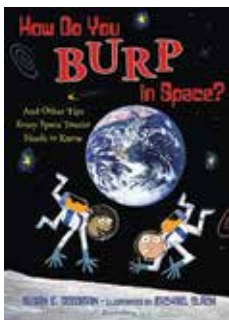
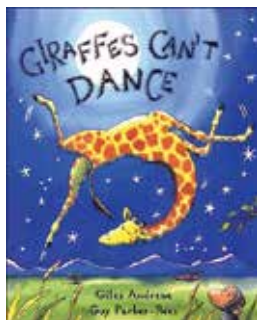


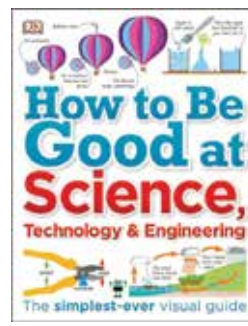
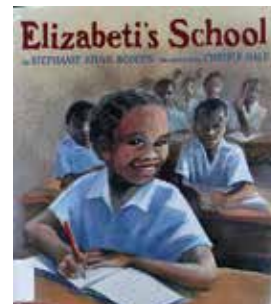
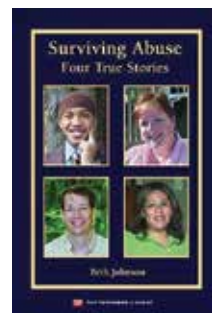
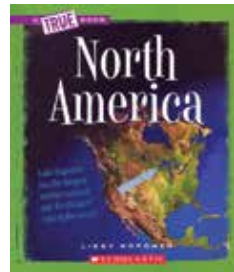
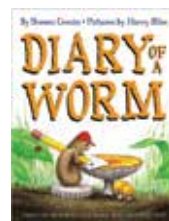
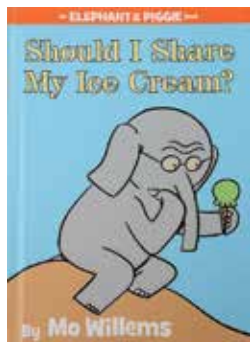
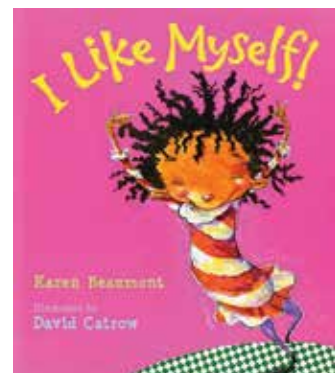
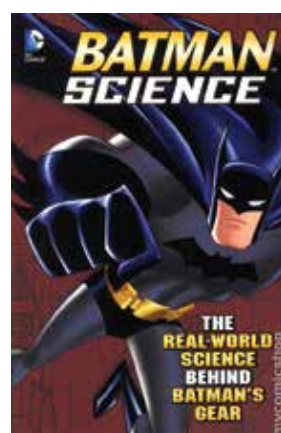
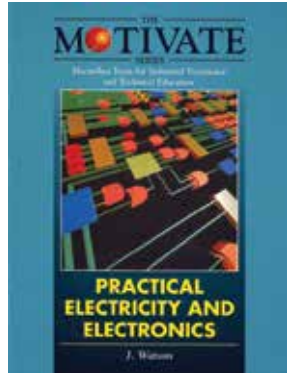
Morne Jaune Primary School



Pure Rocket Fuel

The titles in our Hands Wish Lists shipments—brand new, asked-for, age- and culturally-appropriate—fire the imagination of children from pre-school to high school





What I Learned in the Library

What do new amazing books and a school lending library mean to Caribbean children? Hands Program Director Hannah Knecht (photo, right) went to the source



I want to be a paleontologist

At Glenn's school, perched on a ridge in the rainforest, the electricity is iffy but the school library is always open. Glenn is in Grade 5 and already knows what he wants to be—because of the books he reads. He devours books that have anything to do with fossils, dinosaurs, rocks, and archaeology.

I want to be a doctor

Mary is in Grade 4 and loves to read books, especially titles from the nonfiction collection. She shared with me how her teacher had read a chapter book from the library aloud to the class each afternoon, and this got her interested in reading the series herself. Mary hopes more teachers will read chapter books aloud—it opens a door for students to connect words with meaning and reading with stories they can "watch happen in their minds."



I want to be a teacher

Amelia, Grade 4, is proud to be a Student Librarian. She helps organize and shelf books, check books in and out, and helps others find the right book. She loves to read and her favorite books have bright, colorful pictures. Amelia loves to share her love of reading with other students.



I want to be a veterinarian

Irvin is in Grade 4. He loves books on animals, and he's already read most of the ones in the school library. When I met him, he was reading about wild dogs.

I want to be an astronaut. I want to be a teacher.

These two Grade 3 girls brought me so much joy today! Alesha wants to be an astronaut and Lauren hopes to be a teacher. These girls are the future.



WHAT THE CHILDREN SAY



I want to be a teacher or a doctor

Samoya, a Grade 6 student, explained that her favorite books are the ones that she can learn from—books about the skeletal system, the nervous system, and the circulatory system. Being able to read allows her to learn about anything she wants.



I want to be a lawyer

Immana, in Grade 3, wants to help people. She knows that by becoming a lawyer one day that she can stand up for others who can't defend themselves. Immana's school was ravaged by Hurricane Maria—the roof blew off, and the school was looted in the aftermath. Immana loves reading, because she likes “watching the movie that goes on in my head” when she visualizes the characters, the setting, and the action.



I want to be a sporting hero

Julius, Grade 3, has been a reluctant reader in the past. Then he found books in his school library that interested him—books he could connect with, like this nonfiction title on soccer. Now he's “hooked on books” in a way he's never been.

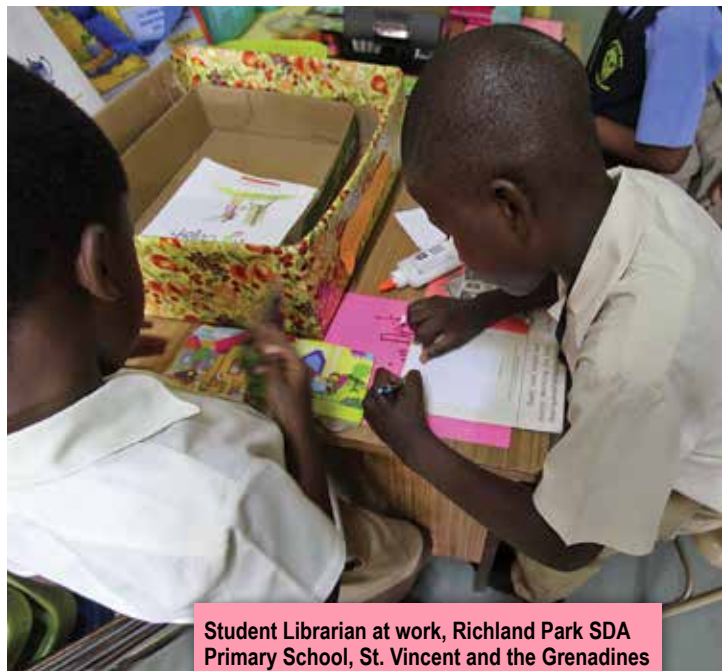
Get to Know CLASS, Our Multifaceted, Ever-Evolving Child-Literacy Builder

Here are the CLASS (Caribbean Literacy and School Support) goals—1. Send new amazing asked-for books; 2. Create/rejuvenate lending libraries in schools; and 3. Sustain the literacy gains—and how we achieve them



Hands Wish Lists

We send only new amazing books from the world's best publishers, age- and culturally-appropriate, the titles requested by educators via the online Hands Wish Lists. No used books, no donation dumping.



Student Librarian at work, Richland Park SDA Primary School, St. Vincent and the Grenadines



Hands Libraries

A wonderland of discovery and learning that lead children into a lifelong love of reading, Hands lending libraries are easily set up, easily managed, and—most of all—sustainable.



Hands Literacy Links

Our team of on-island Literacy Links (program officers) is caring, qualified, and experienced, working closely with educators and administrators to advance child literacy.



Newly-launched library, Evesham Methodist School, St. Vincent and the Grenadines



Hands Student Librarians

Trained by a Literacy Link using the *Hands Student Librarian Handbook*, students from Grade 2 through high school can run the library, spreading a love of reading across the school.



Teachers Resource Guide

Our groundbreaking 179-page, Caribbean-centric *Teachers Resource Guide to the Library (Grades K-3)* gives teachers tools and strategies for making the most of the school library, thus helping their students excel.



Remedial Reading Toolkit

The Hands Remedial Reading Toolkit, which features the designed-for-teens TERL (Teen Emergent Readers Library) and hands-on learning tools, helps high school remedial reading teachers lift up struggling readers.



Hands Literacy Award

Hands recognizes and rewards schools that are leading the way in child literacy with \$1,000 in new amazing books and/or literacy materials of their choice.

Workshopping Change to the Caribbean

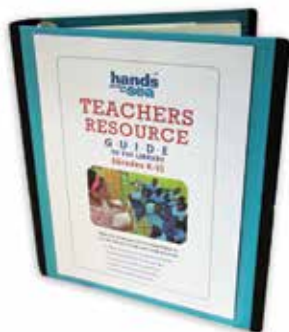
Teaming up with on-island Hands Literacy Links, Hands Program Director Hannah Knecht advances child literacy by training and inspiring teachers

HANDS TEACHERS RESOURCE GUIDE

Hands Across the Sea is reaching hundreds of Caribbean educators through teacher workshops that highlight the key components of the 179-page Hands manual, *Teachers Resource Guide to the Library (Grades K-3)*, which has been dubbed the TRG.

TRG workshops have been a huge success in changing the mindset of teachers in connecting Hands libraries to their classrooms. Teachers engage in hands-on workshop activities that familiarize them with books from the school library that they can use in their lesson plans to teach curriculum content.

Teachers learn, too, that student performance improves through reading-for-pleasure habits. The TRG workshops provide teachers with effective strategies to motivate reluctant readers and



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HANDS REMEDIAL READING TOOLKIT

Many Caribbean high school students are reading below grade level—some at Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2 levels—and the Hands Remedial Reading Toolkit (dubbed the RR Kit) equips

educators with a suite of powerful, teen-specific literacy-building materials. Hands-led RR Kit workshops, designed specifically for high school teachers working with struggling readers, address the challenges teachers face and explore ways these resources can help lift the reading levels of their students. At RR Kit workshops, teachers collaborate and develop re-

alistic lesson plans to use in the classroom. Just as important, they feel understood and supported as remedial reading teach-



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TRG WORKSHOPS, CONTINUED

protect time within their school day for students to read books from the library—the goal is to build reading stamina and encourage lifelong readers. Teachers have responded with enthusiastic participation, noting that the TRG workshops have empowered them to use books from the library in their classroom lessons.



The *Teachers Resource Guide* and the workshops equip teachers with best practices gathered from a decade of Hands Across the Sea's work in the Caribbean.

During the 2018-2019 school year, Hands TRG workshops reached over 200 educators, including principals, teachers, and Ministry of Education officials.

RR KIT WORKSHOPS, CONTINUED

ers—many for the first time in their careers. Teachers come away inspired and motivated to try a new approach using the RR Kit's designed-for-teens TERL (Teen Emergent Reader Library) system, lesson activities, and hands-on learning games and resources. Teaching teens to read is a challenging job. Hands is



committed to these teachers by following up with their use of the RR Kits and providing ongoing support. Partnering with remedial reading teachers is the key to ensuring that fewer students drop out of high school—ending their education simply because they are unable to read.

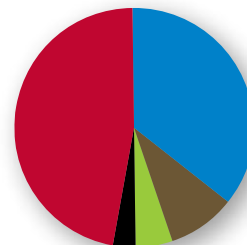
Hands Across the Sea has reached over 170 high school remedial reading teachers through RR Kit workshops.

Income & Expenses

Our 2018 financial documents are publicly available on our website. Snapshots:

We are profoundly grateful and humbled by the tremendous show of support for child literacy in 2018. You stepped up for the American Sailing Association/Hands Across the Sea Caribbean Getaway Sweepstakes, and for our matching grants campaign during #GivingTuesday. As a result,

Hands came of age in 2018—our book shipments are more targeted, our support materials are more effective, and our Literacy Links are creating, rejuvenating, and sustaining more school libraries than ever before. We owe it all to you, Hands donors, for changing the lives of Caribbean children.



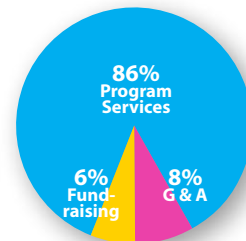
2018 Income: \$512,689

Individual \$190,915 • 37%

Foundation \$151,573 • 30%

Corporate \$59,669 • 12%

In-Kind \$110,532 • 21%



2018 Expenses

As a U.S.-registered 501(c)(3) non-profit charity, our finances, including audited financials and IRS Form 990, are publicly available for inspection and download at: www.handsacrossthessea.net/HandsCrew.htm#documents

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American Sailing Association
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Thanks to your support, Caribbean children are growing up reading.

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