

Remarks
Ambassador D. Brent Hardt
Enterprise Primary School Donation
October 19, 2012, 10:00a.m.
Enterprise Primary School, D'Urban Backlands, Georgetown

Head Teacher Faye Agnes Williams
Literacy Education Mr. Vincent Phillips
Teachers and Students of Enterprise Primary

Good Morning.

I am very happy to be here with you today together with Mrs. Hardt and members of our Embassy team. A few months ago, the Embassy received a letter from Mr. Phillips, the Enterprise School's Literacy Educator conveying the school's desire to continue the special relationship that our Embassy had forged with Enterprise under a former Chief of Mission. We are only too pleased to be able to rekindle these sparks of friendship.

From the time of our arrival, Mrs. Hardt and I, as well as members of our Embassy team, have enjoyed the opportunities we have had to visit schools around Guyana, to meet and talk with students, teachers, and parents, to read with them, and to encourage them to keep the

environment clean and to study hard. In fact, we have several programs and activities to reach out to young people around the country. We have been to schools to give presentations on the harmful effects of littering, under our Guyana Shines project. We have also selected some very bright secondary school students to participate in exchange programs such as Youth Ambassadors from Guyana, which allowed a dozen Guyanese students to visit Washington, D.C. and Wyoming for three weeks in September. Our Embassy has arranged performances at a number of schools by one of our U.S. military bands – which, I understand Enterprise would like to be a part of the next time around. As all of this I think highlights, the U.S. Embassy is always eager to meet with and talk to students, and we always welcome opportunities to do so.

Today I am here for a very special reason. We are going to be donating some items to the Enterprise Primary School as part of a special project. Thanks to the efforts of some of the adult leaders in this room, Enterprise Primary School will receive a brand new, 6-burner

stove. What does a new stove have to do with education? The school requested this new stove for two main purposes. First of all, the stove will support the school's Home Economics class. Some of the older students here at the school, who will be moving on to sixth grade soon, will also be able learn some of the home economics basics. These students can get a head start on life skills when they move on to secondary school and enroll in home economics courses. In addition, the Enterprise Parent Teacher Association will also offer home economics classes to parents and teachers who are eager to learn or refine their general cooking skills, which will be paired with nutrition and diet education.

Secondly, the stove given to Enterprise today will complement and improve the School Feeding Program that is already in place at Enterprise. The School Feeding Program, which is administered by the Ministry of Education, focuses on maximizing learning capacity through relief of short term hunger and improved attendance. Alleviating short-term hunger is vital for students to be able to boost their achievement,

improve classroom behavior, and enhance their attention span. Too many children arrive at school hungry, after a long walk with little or no breakfast before leaving home. If a snack is not provided soon after the start of the school day, the hungry student will not benefit fully from the lessons and instruction.

The Ministry of Education currently supplies milk and biscuits to children attending public nursery and primary schools, as well as hot meals in the hinterland for primary school children. This is an excellent initiative. Despite this program, I understand there remain some challenges with the School Feeding Program; for instance, many schools lack access to safe water, devices to heat the water to mix the milk, and general kitchen facilities and utensils. A variety of donors, and in many cases the schools themselves, have stepped up to address these challenges. I know that the Ministry of Education encourages “community alliances” that can join together to find solutions to problems that the schools and communities are facing. These alliances can help with the expansion of school programs, better infrastructure and

buildings, better management of educational assets in the community, and other joint efforts in the pursuit of quality education.

Enterprise currently participates in the School Feeding Program. Right now, about 30 children in first and second grade receive milk and biscuits. With the new stove, the staff, teachers, and parents of Enterprise will be able to heat the water to mix the milk and, more importantly, they will be able to provide nutritional, hot meals to students of all ages in the school who are in need. We invite and support other initiatives from schools for sustainable activities directed to the provision of hot meals. We are pleased that your school's Parent Teacher Association took the initiative to reach out to us in seeking creative ways to get resources for students that need them. I would like to congratulate the Enterprise Primary PTA for working hard to build a better learning environment.

In addition to the 6-burner stove to be handed over today, the U.S. Embassy is delighted to be able to provide Enterprise Primary School

with materials to support its literacy program. The United States has long been a champion of early literacy both in the United States and abroad. Only people who are literate will be able to fulfill their God-given potential, to meet their families' needs, and to contribute to the social, political, and economic life of their country. Literacy and numeracy are fundamental to informed decision-making, personal empowerment, self-esteem, creativity, a healthy lifestyle, and raising a family.

To this end, we are pleased to provide Enterprise Primary School with some fun and challenging books, including books that speak to the importance of being a good citizen, of keeping the environment clean, and books that describe aspects of the United States. We also specifically identified books relating to Home Economics, so that students and teachers can learn how to cook some new dishes using the new stove. Lastly, we brought some school supplies for the children – pens, pencils and sharpeners, and coloring books. We hope that these items provided to the school today will improve the school environment

for the students of Enterprise, and contribute to building an even better environment for learning for the wonderful young people of Guyana.

Thank you.