

# BE A HERO

## Deb Wallace - Hero of Today

Deb Wallace is a [HERO](#) and also the Principal of Napa Valley Language Academy in Napa Valley, California, USA.



This is a school where all students are given the opportunity to acquire a second language along side their regular academic education. This Immersion model teaches both English and Spanish.

Deb's big heart and her talents have benefited the children at both her school in California and an orphanage located at Goma, DR Congo in Africa. She has given her time and expertise to arrange three very successful events raising money and finding sponsors for the orphans that live at Mamma Jeanne's Orphanage.

The orphanage in Goma, Congo was founded and is run by a woman named Mamma Jeanne and her husband, Pastor Prosper. The home cares for approximately 300 children that have been orphaned, or have become separated from their parents during ethnic conflicts and successive wars in the Congo. Mama Jeanne has a huge heart and accepts any children brought to her; as a result much help is needed.

Deb Wallace said she was inspired by the needs of the children in the Congo, and saw the projects as an opportunity for her students to be heroes and to recognize their blessings. "We chose to partner with Be A Hero and help Mamma Jeanne's Orphanage so that we could make a difference and have a relationship with the children," she said.



So far, Deb Wallace and her school have hosted 3 benefit evenings filled with entertainment by the students of NVLA as a way to raise funds for the orphanage. In April 2006, Deb led her 600 students (grades K-6) in a program with the goal of bringing safe water to the African site. The NVLA students raised their voices, and violins during that benefit concert. Working with the Be A Hero organization, NVLA's goal was to raise \$3,000 to fund a water retrieval and storage system so that the orphanage could have clean water and food. "We are singing with a purpose," Deborah Wallace, told the audience.

"It's about water tonight, Think what life would be like if you didn't have a faucet or couldn't take a bath."

The system that has been brought to the orphanage by the heroes at Napa Valley Language Academy involves a huge reservoir. This containment device collects water via down sprouts as rain runs off the building beside the tank. Without this in place the young girls need to walk three miles, three times a day, with two 50 pound jars, one on their heads and another on their backs. Often, the water they bring back has small parasites which can cause disease when ingested. With the water system in place, water can be collected on-site and filtered.



The tank is shown being constructed at the orphanage site. Concrete is put in place around the tank to prevent it from being stolen. Gutters and down drains are hung from the building to be connected to the tank in order to collect the rain water.

The concert was a success with the Napa Valley students meeting their goal. Deb told her students "Water is the most basic necessity of life ... and we can make such a dramatic difference in the orphans' lives."

At the next event in December 2006, she opened the evening by saying "Welcome...to our program with a purpose. Tonight we will be bringing light to Mamma Jeanne's orphanage in Goma, Congo. As a result of this concert by the Napa Valley Language Academy, one of the student's fathers approached the electrician's union for a donation and they voted to give \$1500 to the project. They indicated the title of bringing 'light' to the orphanage inspired them.

Including the money given by the electrical workers, the total raised from the December benefit concert was \$13,780. The amount rose to \$18,000 when local businesses and Harvest Middle School joined in to help. The money brought electricity to the orphanage and started the building of a school on the property.

Yet again in December 2007, the wonderful and giving children and staff of NVLA presented "Children of the Earth," the school's third annual concert to benefit the Mamma Jeanne Orphanage. Kindergarteners through sixth-graders performed songs in English, Spanish, French, Japanese, Swahili and the Maori language of New Zealand. Instrumental music included the NVLA band and Suzuki strings.

When Deb had asked Mamma Jeanne how the school could help, she was told that their greatest need was for safety from guerilla warfare in the area. What they really needed was a high rock wall around the property. "The fighting is very close to the orphanage," said Wallace. "It's really, really dangerous."

When describing the situation in Goma Congo, Deb was heard to say "it's like something out of Hotel Rwanda, but movies are movies. This is real." The orphans' stories are heartbreaking and have touched the hearts of the Napa Valley students. They are excited to know that they can change the lives of children on the other side of the globe.

In total, the school met their goal and raised \$3,200 to help build a rock wall around the orphanage to provide safety for the children in the midst of the ethnic and tribal wars. A team from Canada left in January to begin construction of the wall, and deliver letters and photos from the NVLA children.

In addition to funds raised at the concert, local families chose to sponsor 25 children from Mamma Jeanne's, providing food, clothing, medicine and school supplies. By introducing her students to what is happening in the rest of the world Deb Wallace is creating change in the world. She said "It shows them that they can make a difference, even as a child. They really understand that the orphans need help, and they want to help, and they can. Children can help."

## Deb Wallace and the students of Napa Valley Language Academy are HEROES!



100% of all funds donated for these projects are applied directly to the project. Be A HERO does not keep anything for administration. Be A HERO is able to do this because the Hero Partnership and Pillar Program participants designate their donations specifically for administration.

For information on current Be A HERO projects, click the following link:

<http://beahero.org/ginvolved/projects/bahprojects.html>

If you wish to sponsor a child, click the following link:

<http://beahero.org/ginvolved/chldspnship.html>