



California High School Students Donate Books to Pacific Islanders

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A group of students at Covina High School in California are mailing off an early Christmas Gift to fellow students in Central Pacific nation of Micronesia. The gift, a collection of lightly-used text books, has been assembled as a donation for a public school on the remote Atoll of Ulithi, located 360 miles southwest of the American territory of Guam.

”The service club Interact worked with our campus library to compile the donation from books that we no longer had any use for” explained Mr. Sean Fox, the Covina High teacher who helped to coordinate the donation.

“I was familiar with the islands, once part of the United State’s Trust Territory, as the result of stories I heard from one of my own former teachers, Jim Boykin.”

The more than one dozen boxes full of books are now enroute to the remote Outer Islands High School (OIHS) which is attended by students from the islands of Falalop, Mogmog, Federai, Asor and Fais in the state of Yap. This donation, and other similar projects, is part of the effort of the Hablele Outer Island Education Fund to promote educational opportunity and advancement in Micronesia.

“I came across Hablele on the Internet when researching stories about my former mentor Jim Boykin,” Fox explains, “I was really impressed that a group of former Peace Corps volunteers had set up a charity to serve these tiny and often-overlooked islands. I thought about how I might be able to pitch in and remembered that our school always seemed to have stacks of old textbooks lying around.”

Hablele, a nonprofit incorporated in the State of South Carolina, awards performance-based scholarships to high school students in Micronesia in addition to marshalling donations of books and school supplies.

“This is a great chance for students in the US to connect with and help out their under-resourced peers in the Federated States of Micronesia” said Tom Lutte, Hablele’s Treasurer and a former Peace Corps Volunteer who served in Micronesia. “The OIHS teachers and students make do with very limited materials, often with a single book for three or four students to share. These full classroom sets of texts will make a big impact.

Anyone interested in helping to pay for the cost of shipping the books to Micronesia is encouraged to visit www.habele.org and make a donation.

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