

It's anybody's race—presidential candidates vie for party nominations.

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Will the Class of 2008 leave a lasting legacy, or partake in another \$30,000 gala?

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Science teacher Jim Hartmann takes a year's leave to learn—including early childhood education.

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Girls' Varsity Basketball Team eyes the Three Rivers League title and cracks the top ten in state.

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Get your tickets now! The French farce, "Imaginary Invalid," takes center stage on Feb. 15.

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Kenyans share culture, bring diversity

Calley Lathrop

Staff Reporter

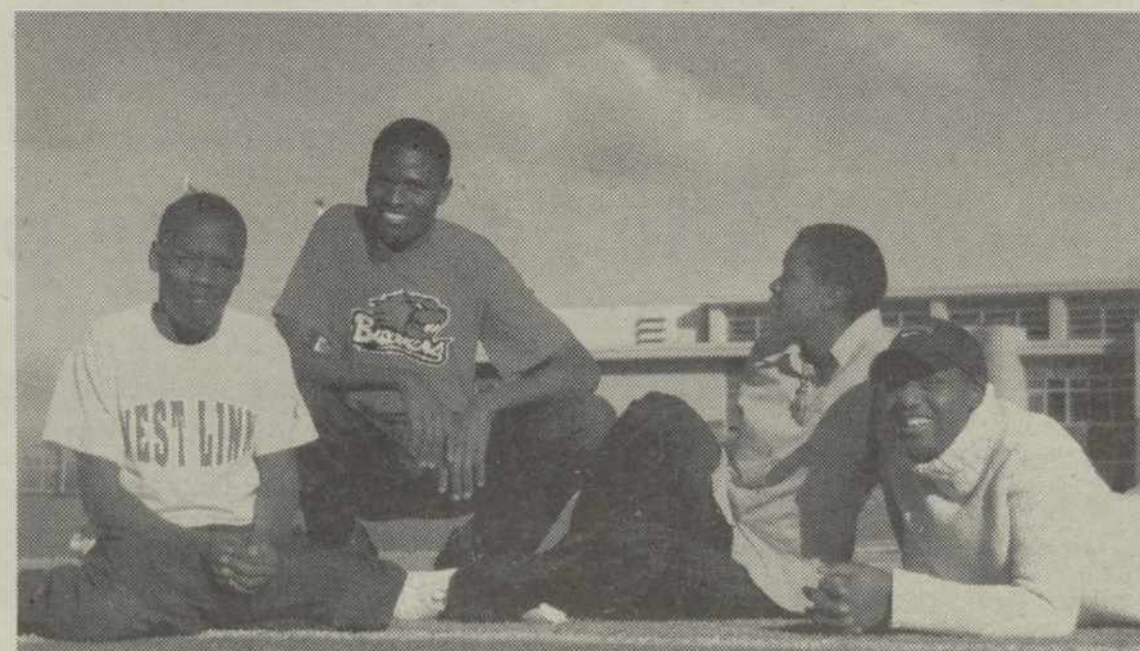
Over a month and 9,142 miles ago, four Kenyan students and their teacher embarked on a journey that took them from Namwela Secondary School in Kenya, to WLHS, their sister school of three years.

Without Global Awareness Take Action, this dream would never have become a reality. The story of GATA is that of small beginnings, powerful messages, and a growth in numbers that has helped bring global aid to those in need. The group raises funds and spreads awareness and has provided financial aid, wells and other necessities.

GATA members had been trying to make a physical connection with its sister school, and almost sent students to Kenya last year. However, the trip was cancelled due to a random act of violence in the capital city of Nairobi. GATA then decided to bring students here. After planning, applications and troubleshooting, the dream was fulfilled.

From Kenya to Dubai, Dubai to New York, New York to Los Angeles, and finally, Los Angeles to

Portland, Daisy Nafula, 17, Geoffrey Amunga, 26, Irene Wanyonyi, 16, Edwin Kemei, 17, and Madame Irene Simiyu, a teacher at Namwela, landed at 5 p.m. at Portland International Airport (PDX). They stayed with GATA members and their families, and were



Edwin Kemei, Geoffrey Amunga, Irene Wanyonyi, juniors, and Daisy Nafula, senior, from Namwela Secondary School in Kenya, visit their sister school. Irene Simiyu, teacher, and Richard Keya, principal, also visited. The group spent over a month experiencing life at WLHS by sitting in on classes, socializing with students and taking field trips.

Photo by Calley Lathrop

anxious to experience America.

Richard Keya, the head principal at Namwela, joined the group after Christmas. However, the trip was not easy for him either. "I went to the wrong Portland! Portland, Maine! It was alright, they [the airline] got me here safely," Keya said.

The group has experienced Oregon through the many field trips and events they have been on since their arrival. "I went snowboarding Saturday [Dec. 8]. It was very cold, so I didn't like it very much," Edwin Kemei, junior, said.

They also visited Oregon

and ends at 10 p.m. In those 18 hours, there are classes, meals, breaks and study halls, but the students said the long day is still difficult. The curriculum is complex and the exams are hard according to the students. The rigor is due to the belief that most Kenyans feel a good education is key in leading a happy life, and avoiding the poverty that has engulfed the country.

"In high school, there are no multiple choice questions like here. You have to remember and learn everything," Wanyonyi, junior, said.

Another big difference is that at Namwela, the campus is fenced in, as it is a boarding school. On Saturdays, they have the same schedule, but do not have evening classes, and time in the morning is spent cleaning/doing work around the campus.

One major similarity between Kenya and West Linn is that courses are taught in English. In Kenya, the official language is Swahili, but the national and more widely used language is English.

"We do not feel oppressed or anything, using English. It helps us to connect with your country," Nafula said.

Though they lead very different lives, all of the students share similar likes and hobbies with WL students. Wanyonyi is in tenth grade and enjoys bike riding, watching TV, and wants to be a broadcaster someday.

Nafula is one of six siblings, and enjoys hanging out with friends. She hopes to become a journalist, but because students aren't always able to choose what they study in college, she may be guided toward another profession such as teaching.

Kemei wants to be an engineer. "I like running, even though I'm not very good at it," he said.

Amunga is a junior, but his age sets him apart from most high schoolers because he is 26 years-old. In Kenya, students have to pay for high school. He finished elementary school, but could not afford high school. He worked for years, running small businesses and working other jobs to make enough money for tuition. He wants to continue college and study to be a neurosurgeon.

Kenyan Visitors

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Students, staff take action to help Vernonia flood victims

Kaitlyn Ragan

Staff Reporter

As the flood waters raged through Northern Oregon and parts of Washington last month, thousands of people were left without homes and their belongings. West Linn Senior Class Council members along with Curtiss Scholl, vice principal, Jonathan Peachey, spanish teacher, and Tana Dearborn, science teacher and adviser, took a trip to Vernonia on Dec. 10 to offer aid and support to the victims of the flood.

"I knew that they were a community in great need and I still know a lot of people there, so I called to see what I could do to help. The staff, students, and community are the ones that really deserve to the credit for their overwhelming response to the

e-mail that I sent," Scholl said.

Scholl lived and worked in that area before he came to West Linn, and still has friends there.

The night before the trip, students drove to Fred Meyer and bought about \$600 worth of supplies to donate, including personal hygiene supplies, linens and cleaning supplies. They also collected items from the community such as food, water, sports drinks, clothes, shoes, coats, bedding and blankets, cleaning supplies, personal care items, gloves and mops.

When they arrived in Vernonia they found the city in disarray and people in despair as they drove past the huge piles of garbage and debris that had been carried away by the flood. The students visited Vernonia



Avik Bandyopadhyay, Breonna Winfield and Destiny Schroyer, members of senior class council, unload food and cleaning supplies to donate to Vernonia flood victims. The group helped deliver supplies needed by families who lost valuable possessions to the flood.

Photo submitted by Eli Groman

High School and were amazed at the damage the water had done.

"The thing that left the

biggest impression was the gigantic trash pile that was the composition of all of the belongings of the flood

victims. The line of vehicles waiting with truck beds.

I also remember the tired, frustrated, and disheveled looks on the peoples faces," Scholl said.

"The gym floor looked like waves because it had been so waterlogged, and you could see the line on the building where the water had risen to above the first-story windows. It was really eye-opening," Destiny Schroyer, senior, said.

This trip impacted those who delivered the donations and they found it a valuable experience.

"I could not imagine losing everything that I owned. It made me even more thankful for what my wife and I have been able to provide for our family. It also made me more compassionate for those in need," Scholl said.