

Students at Howells Community Catholic School may never get to visit the St. Dennis Mission School in the Nkumba Village of Uganda, Africa. Nonetheless, they feel closely connected to the children of the mission school, which they have adopted as a special Mission project. HCCS students were visited on October 29 by Diane Leffler of West Point, who shared pictures and experiences of her summer visit to the St. Dennis Mission School.

Diane, together with her son Brady and friend Deb, travelled to Uganda from May 31st to June 16. They brought with them over 800 pounds of clothing, backpacks, blankets, and personal care items in 16 large military duffel bags. Upon arriving at the Mission School, they were welcomed with a parade, complete with singing, bongo drums, and whistles.

Local volunteers donated around a 1000 pillowcase dresses, 500 drawstring backpack bags, and several t-shirts, including Nebraska t-shirts. Over 350 pillowcase dresses were donated to schools for the deaf and visually impaired. The pillowcase dresses were sewn by local volunteers.

Diane thanked everyone for their part in helping collect money and items for the Missions. She said that “it wasn’t merely a financial or material contribution; it was a gift of love from your heart.” The value of contributions from the United States “is multiplied many times over in Uganda, both materially and spiritually”, Diane stated.

Father Francis expressed his gratitude to all students and people of Howells for their generosity. Diane said that “he feels like it’s a small miracle that his path ever crossed with the people of this little Northeast Nebraska community; he knows that it’s simply an act of God.”

Diane stressed that Brady, Deb, and herself were simply ambassadors to Uganda on behalf of all the people in Nebraska who contributed in any way, financially or spiritually. Contributions can still be made to the St. Dennis Mission School; one of their next projects is purchasing new stoves and refrigerators for the school kitchen. Students are served a daily meal at the school, ensuring that they receive one nutritious meal each day. HCCS Students will again use the Advent season for giving to the St. Dennis Mission School.

Father Francis is expected to visit West Point around December 17. He will include a visit to the students at HCCS. If you wish to know more about the St. Dennis Mission, please visit their website at <http://www.stdennismissions.com>.