

Student: Elijah Smith

Grade: 6

Teacher: Miss Lexi Salisbury

School: Light of the World Academy

ESP: Global Psychological Services

Authorizer: Grand Valley State University

How I'm Impacting My Community

In spring of 2018 my school decided to hatch chicken eggs for science class. As the chickens were growing up in my classroom I began to realize how much everyone loved them! This gave me a brilliant idea: I should start a chicken coop at my school.

I decided to go to Miss Kathy, the director at LOTWA, with this idea. After getting her approval, she helped me to get in contact with Mama Sarah, a woman from Uganda that takes in orphaned children and runs a chicken farm. Occasionally Mama Sarah comes all the way from Africa to visit our school. On these visits she tells us how she is helping the many orphaned children she has taken in. This inspired me to help her with her 50 Children Project. We could sell the eggs from the chicken coop to earn money for Mama Sarah!

If we sold the eggs in our monthly student-led cafés, I could help her get more money to support her mission. However, there was one slight problem, we currently were not approved to have chickens or a coop at our school. As a result, I needed to go before the Village Council and

request permission to build the coop and keep the chickens. In front of a room of people staring at me, I found the courage to explain my idea. To my surprise they allowed me to start building!

At first we looked at already built chickens coops; however, they looked more like they were built for a family of hamsters rather than chickens. I had a vision of a “Cluckingham Palace,” a place where the chickens would have a lot of room to live and grow. I went to my dad and we began researching how to build a coop. We knew it would be expensive so I wrote and applied for a grant through EAS Accounting Firm and was awarded \$1,500 to build our coop.

I began to do the math on how much we could profit from selling the eggs. It became clear that in order to maximize our profits for Mama Sarah, we would need more chickens than the four that our village allowed us to have. So I petitioned the council again, this time asking for six chickens. When they agreed, I had actually changed a local law that impacted the entire community!

One of the greatest things about this project is I can teach community service to my whole school. I have started a Chicken Committee, which is a group of my peers that help take care of the chickens and things related to them. Our chickens are very popular with the school community. The Chicken Committee has taken on the role of teaching the students how to hold and pet the chickens in a humane way.

Overall, my favorite part of this entire project had been helping fundraise for Mama Sarah’s 50 Children Project. She has a goal to send 50 children to school in Uganda. Although the eggs alone can’t send 50 children to school, it has inspired people to make a difference in our community and the world.