



WATER IS LIFE!

An inspirational visit from an ASP alumna has mobilized students from all three divisions to help change the lives of children in a remote, drought-ridden and forgotten corner of Africa.



Ariane brought her vision to ASP

ASP graduate Ariane Alzhara Kirtley is the founder and director of the NGO Amman Imman: Water is Life, whose mission is to bring water to the people of the Azawak area in Niger where every year hundreds of people die of thirst and disease. Earlier this month she spent a full day presenting to captive audiences in the Lower, Middle and Upper School about her work and how empowered children can be to help other children. Ariane, graduated from ASP in 1996, attended Yale University majoring in Medical Anthropology and went onto receive her Masters from the Yale School of Public Health.

Astonished by dire conditions

She said: "After I graduated, I obtained a Fulbright Scholarship and spent a year traveling across Niger studying the variations among different ethnic groups concerning health behavior, knowledge and resources. "I had a research assistant who was a native of a region called the Azawak, and he proposed that we visit this area. I had already visited some of the poorest parts of Niger (which is the poorest country in the world), but I was astonished by the dire conditions I witnessed there. "I saw children traveling up to 30 kilometers a day in temperatures as high as 125F searching for water. The children would return with cups of mud, and my visit fell during the rainy season! I returned a few months later to witness for myself how such a



The first bore-hole finishing construction.

terrible situation could worsen. I saw a population of over 500,000 people suffering from a sheer lack of water." And she explained that the rainy season in this area, such as it was with a few minutes of rainfall each day, has reduced from five months to just 30 days over the last 10 years. But she also brought a message of hope and empowerment. Since 2005 Ariane has established the NGO Amman Imman which means "Water is Life" in the language of the Azawak people, and is raising funds to build bore-hole wells, drilling nearly 1000meters to reach the clean and plentiful water below the desert. The first completed in 2007 is now providing clean water to nearly 25,000 people and their livestock and they are on schedule to begin drilling a second borehole this month. She said: 'Our long term goal is to drill 70-100 boreholes in the next ten years along with providing proper training,

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years along with providing proper training, maintenance, and follow-up. With water everything else will come. The Azawaks are beginning to experience that. Water allows you to grow your own food, build an adobe home and allows a family to stay clean and avoid disease. It also means children can spend their day at school rather than skimming through muddy marshes and the presence of water attracts other NGOs to invest in the region – to build schools and health centers, set-up food relief programs, and combat the environmental degradation of the region.”

At the end of her day at ASP, Ariane said: “I had a fabulous time presenting to



all the students, seeing my old teachers, and meeting new teachers. Presenting to students is what I love doing the most. Just seeing the light in those kids’ eyes when they learn they can help my friends in the Azawak makes me want to cry!”

ASP shaped my future

And she revealed how her time at ASP had helped shape her future: “I remember as a student at ASP, I attended two school assemblies with speakers from humanitarian groups, which made a particularly important impact on me and helped shape my commitment to help others less fortunate than myself.” Projects are currently being discussed and developed by faculty and students, but you can learn more at our

Thanksgiving Fair on Tuesday November 24 when Upper School Students from the Green Action Team will be holding water taste tests (bottles versus tap) and collecting for Amman Imman. For more information about Ariane’s work see the four-page special feature in the Summer 09 edition of the WorldWide ASPECT currently posted under Alumni Publications in the Alumni area of the website.

ASP’S RECORD BREAKING CONFERENCE



Early next month, the Paris Model United Nations will once again convene at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. This annual conference organized by the American School of Paris will this year break all records welcoming 900 participants from 65 schools, 25 countries and 4 continents. Some participants of notice will come from Singapore and Cambodia, from Jerusalem, from Venezuela, Mexico and North Africa. The USA, as well as from closer in Europe, Russia and North Africa. The Executive Team under the leadership of Zohreen Badruddin has been busy since March, preparing the conference, which will feature this year two new committees: the Organization of American States and the Union for the Mediterranean.



Issues on the agenda include recommendations on the use of bio-fuels, workers’ rights in Less Economically Developed

Countries, accountability of UN officials, regulation of financial institutions worldwide and examination of the application of Kosovo to join the UN, among others.

The General Assembly on Sunday will address the question of preventing the outbreak of pandemics. PAMUN is one of the only Model UN conferences which runs crisis in all its committees. We are proud that this feature of PAMUN has often been at the forefront of events. In past years, PAMUN delegates had thus the opportunity to be challenged by a crisis regarding the Ouygours of China, or piracy in Somalia, or conflict over coltran in Congo, before events in the real world caught up with our imagination and enacted it dramatically!

What will it be this year? See December’s edition of the ASPECT for a full report.