

**Groundbreaking Children’s Authors Donate Time and Books
to Inspire Students at a Local Middle School
By Mark Zeiler**

ORLANDO - Everyone knows the economy is hurting. Consumers are spending less. Businesses are closing. Unemployment is increasing. Houses are foreclosing. Property taxes are going unpaid. Among the helpless, schools are glaring victims, facing mounting budget pitfalls which lead to devastating results. Academic and athletic programs are getting slashed. Teachers and support staff are losing jobs. Fundraising sources are drying up. Any extracurricular activities – field trips, curriculum events, guest speaker assemblies – have become rare occurrences and, in many cases, nonexistent. However, for students and teachers at Corner Lake Middle School, these challenges made a recent author visit a special memory that will never be forgotten.

Travels with Gannon and Wyatt is a fictional adventure series geared toward young readers. Inspired by the historic journals kept by explorers such as Lewis and Clark, Dr. David Livingstone and Captain James Cook, the stories follow charismatic teenage twins Gannon and Wyatt as they travel to all corners of the globe, from Africa to the South Pacific.

Along with these dynamic young explorers, co-authors Patti Wheeler and Keith Hemstreet visited Corner Lake Middle School on Thursday, October 21st. They presented to over 300 students to teach them about world cultures, geography, wildlife, and environmental conservation. They also informed students about the Youth Exploration Society (YES), which educates youth and encourages them to get involved with improving the well being of the planet. Ms. Wheeler shared her passion for instilling in youth a love of travel and passion for learning. Mr. Hemstreet shared anecdotes and interesting facts as he showed students a slideshow of fascinating pictures documenting the team’s extensive travels. Gannon and Wyatt took turns reading adventurous passages out of their book as students in the audience followed along with interest and enthusiasm.

The authors brought enormous smiles to the faces of students when they announced that they would give every student in attendance a free copy of *Travels with Gannon and Wyatt: Botswana*. For many students, this was the first time they held in their hands a brand new hardcover book that they could call their own. Students beamed with pride and waited patiently at the end of the session for the authors to sign their books. It is also noteworthy that while many reputable authors are charging schools upwards of \$1500-\$2000 per day plus expenses to make speaking appearances, the *Travels with Gannon and Wyatt* team donated their time at absolutely no charge to the school. In addition to making an unforgettable and informative presentation, these actions proved that the authors have enormous hearts for inspiring kids to read and learn more about the wide world outside of the classroom. About the visit, Patti Wheeler said, “We feel like we are doing God’s work. This is what we were meant to do.”

The principal of Corner Lake Middle School, Doug Loftus, thanked the TWGW team for sharing their passion, books and time with students. He called the author visit “the greatest event that has ever taken place at this school.”

Travels with Gannon and Wyatt: Botswana is available at Amazon and Barnes and Noble.com. An educational DVD is included in the back of the book which

supplements the stories with videos and slideshows. To watch the short book trailer and to learn more about the TWGW team visit www.travelswithgannonandwyatt.com.