

Music For Education

When I first heard I was going to Africa to see my family, I didn't quite think of making a fundraiser for the school.

At first, all that I thought about was finally seeing my grandpa's village, the cousins that I never met, and just having a great time visiting a new place. One day I was looking at some pictures that my family sent us and I saw the school. It looked broken down, old; it didn't seem like the best environment to learn in. Then the idea struck me: why not make a little fundraiser to improve the school? That's when I created Music For Education.

What is it? Basically, it's a show where East Bay musicians performed for anyone who wanted to come and enjoy music. It was a show made by kids (mostly), for kids. We had different types of music performed, Jazz, Pop, Classical, and some Pan-African Slam. We also had different stands where you could buy homemade crepes or drinks, and some local art, and a raffle with prizes offered buy local shops. Before the concert, I presented a slide show with brief facts about Cameroon, the history of the school, and the initial goals we wanted to achieve once we were over there.

Once we got to Cameroon and got settled in the village, we started getting to work. We started off talking to the parent representatives of the school to see what they believed the kids needed the most. We settled for repairing the roof for the school and building dry toilets for the kids (they don't have any!)

After that, we talked to different contractors to find out the quotes. After everything was figured out, we had a small party where every kid from the school was invited. We talked to them about the changes that were going to happen in their school, we showed them videos and pictures of what we did

in Berkeley to achieve what we were doing for them, we had snacks, played a bunch of games, and the kids shared with us a couple of songs they learned throughout the year. It was a great day!

The construction started a few days later. The roof reinforcement took about three days and a couple of weeks for the dry toilets, which were done by parent volunteers with material we had paid for.

Overall this was an amazing experience. I would definitely think of doing this project again if I were to go back and visit. The kids and parents were happy, and we were glad with the results it gave them.