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Students Build Solar Lights for Liberian Pastors

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – For 10 years, Cedarville University engineering students have supported pastors in Liberia by providing them with an essential resource: light. Earlier this month, three staff members finished delivering nearly 100 solar lights to Africa for distribution to pastors in Liberia and Ghana.

Pastors living in remote areas do not have electricity and find it difficult to purchase batteries because of the high cost and the lack of access due to their location. Solar lights provide a way for these pastors to study Scripture at night after they have finished the day’s work on their farms.

The lights are designed and built through a collaborative effort with Cedarville University faculty and students in the Society of Engineers Aiding Missions (SEAM). These students meet at least once a week throughout the school year to complete this project. This includes both building the lights and often redesigning them to better meet the needs of the pastors.

Not only do SEAM students help design and build the lights, they also fund them. Each solar light costs roughly $10 to build, and the students sell T-shirts each year to cover the cost.

“It’s a dual purpose,” said Dr. Tom Thompson, professor of mechanical engineering and faculty adviser for SEAM. “We want to help the Liberian pastors, but it’s also important to develop the students. This project gives them a vision for how their engineering can help reach people for Christ.”

Laura Schroll, a senior mechanical engineering major and SEAM’s current president, has participated the last four years. This project has been an opportunity for her to develop her skills and encourage other students to do the same.

“It really has to do with people’s initiatives,” said Schroll. “Leaders help people give their best to the team, so it’s not just me coming up with ideas. The point is to let people do it for themselves.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,760 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.