



The sixth grade students at Wallace Elementary have been studying about the culture, history, and geography of Africa.

Recently, they listened to Harun Gatobu tell about Kenya. He is also a pastor and resides in Wallace. Little did he know that just down the road from Madrid lives Chris who is from Nigeria.

With the assistance from her dad, Emily Kennicutt invited Chris to come to her geography class on Friday, Sept. 14. Both men were very excited to meet each other and continued to visit with the students for about 90 minutes about the culture, geography, history, and languages from two distinct places in Africa.

Chris grew up in Cape Harcourt, Nigeria which is a coastal city. To the students' surprise, he also told them about the rain forest in that area. Chris came from a small village and had traveled to many countries in Africa as his father was a head master in the schools. He can speak at least five languages with English being the dominant language in Nigeria.

Both men could understand each other quite easily because of their English proficiency. However, they cannot speak the native tongue from each other's country, because there are over 3,000 languages in Africa.

Harun grew up in a small village in Kenya which is mostly savannah or grasslands. He did not have a pair of shoes until the seventh grade and also speaks about four languages.

They both had to walk more than four miles to attend their primary schools. Both men were very excited to know that just a short distance down the road from each other, a new friendship can grow!

Chris is also an avid Huskers fan as he attended the University of Nebraska and is currently the bio-chemist at the ethanol plant in Madrid.

Chris and Harun both enjoy Nebraska as this farming, rural area makes it seem like home for

them. Both also stated that Nebraska rates close to the top five in the nation amongst international students for education and employment opportunities.

The students closed out their learning session with music and videos about Afro Rock, the “Jambo” greeting song from Kenya, and of course, the Lion King theme song, “Hakuna Matata.” Harun smiled and stated that the Disney movie did not happen first. The film makers studied the culture and Swahili language before the movie. Hakuna matata really does mean “no worries” in Swahili.

The fifth and sixth grade students, along with their teacher Mrs. Kelly Smith, want to say a very big “ASANTE” to Harun and Chris. That is the Swahili word for thank you!