President's Message

The year is well underway and I would like to thank all of you for your continued support of the Canadian Harambee Education Society. We have much going on this year in Kenya and in Tanzania. Our recent workshops for CHES students in Kenya proved a tremendous success, thanks to the hard work of our Kenyan Board, our organizers here at our Canadian office, all the facilitators, many of whom are former CHES students, and to all the CHES students who attended. There are many more projects on the go as well, and it seems we do not plan to slow down any time soon! Read through our spring issue and catch up on all the wonderful projects CHES is undertaking this year.

I have planned to visit Africa in July 2004 and will be traveling with my two nephews, Christopher and Clayton. While I am in Kakamega and Katesh, I will be attending assemblies and handing out certificates to last year’s Form Four leavers. I hope to come back with some new photos and videos and would welcome the chance to make presentations to show our work in Africa and how it is making a difference. If you would like information on these presentations, please contact our CHES office here at 604-521-3416, or e-mail us at canadianharambee@shaw.ca. If anyone would like to send a small gift to their student(s), please drop it off at our office in a small ziplock bag, with a note with the student’s name and school visible. Please do not wrap any gift. Suggestions for gifts include, school supplies, hygiene products, and toiletries.

To everyone, have a wonderful summer.
Lorrie Williams

CHES DIRECTOR HONOURED

Mr. John Katumanga, a director of the CHES Kenyan Board and the CHES Canadian Board, was recently honoured by the Government of Kenya. He received the prestigious award of Order of the Grand Warrior which was conferred upon him by President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya.

Just last year, John retired from a lifelong career in Education during which he was a teacher and headmaster of note. As well, he was Chairman of Kenyan National Teachers’ Union for 15 years. Although retired, John is still active on the Constitutional Review Committee of Kenya. He has done much to promote the cause of education in Kenya.

It’s about time!

The new government in Kenya is making a difference! There is now free public school education for standards 1 - 8 (Grades 1-8). The result? Just don’t be surprised to see a 60 year old and a 14 years old in the same standard.

Interesting of all is an 80 year old man in标准1 who could replicate the current school uniform where he is attending. Just goes to show, no one is ever too old to learn.

OUT OF AMERICA by Keith Richberg

An illuminating look at how one Black American views Africa. Keith Richberg was the Washington Post’s Africa bureau chief from 1991 to 1994, during which time he covered the civil wars in Somalia and Rwanda, among other stories. He witnessed the killings, the repression, the false promises and the horror. As for all of us, we despair for Africa and the seemingly hopeless situation but something keeps us going back and not doing everything but doing something. Read this book to get a glimpse of the dark side of humanity while finding the glimmers of optimism and hope.

SHAKE HANDS WITH THE DEVIL
By Romeo Dallaire

I have not yet read this book but watched an interview with this outstanding man who tried and failed to get help from the United Nations in order to avert the tragedy in Rwanda. He feels that the United States and the United Nations did not give the same consideration to this looming conflict as we did in the Balkans. He states that the world simply does not care what happens in Africa and we have to make sure that people change their attitudes.

I look forward to reading the book and am Number 17 on the reserve list at my local library.

Thank you

Many Thanks to Katha Pollitt

In late December, CHES began to receive donations from all over the United States. We found out that Katha Pollitt, who has been a sponsor for several years, had written an article in an American publication “The Nation” suggesting that you could help needy people in various parts of the world instead of giving Christmas gifts. She stated that you could give a gift to a charity in a relative or friend’s name. CHES was fortunate to be one of the featured charities. The following is a quote from her article:

Remember Africa! In Kenya and Tanzania high school tuition is more than some families earn in a year, and parents often prefer to educate sons. The Canadian Harambee Education Society, a secular humanitarian project, pays tuition for poor girls who have done well on the entrance exams and provides the help they need to succeed in school.

The organization’s slogan, “We can’t do everything... but we can do something!” is apparently quite a motivator. In 1985, they underwrote twenty-five students; last year it was nearly 400. You can fund one girl’s education for $400 Canadian or $305 US, but any amount will be gratefully accepted.

As a result of these two paragraphs CHES was fortunate to receive donations of up to $15,000 CDN. Many people sent money to sponsor a girl in a Kenyan or Tanzanian secondary school. Soon, these new sponsors will be receiving a letter and photo of the girl(s) they are helping to educate.

Thank you very much, Katha, for telling your readers about CHES. We would like to thank all of your readers who have now become CHES supporters and are helping to educate girls in Africa. We hope to purchase new text books with part of the donations. We loan the books to the girls so they can do better in their studies. Every donation will be used in Africa to help educate CHES students.

CHES would like to thank you all for your generous “Christmas Gift” for the girls that CHES assists in Africa.

If you would like to donate, please please send your contribution to Canadian Harambee Education Society, 446 Kelly Street, New Westminster, BC V3L 3T9.

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About a girl

Chris and Catriona Harker recently came back from Katesh, Tanzania, and brought with them the story of a girl who is well known and loved by many people in her community, and by CHES. Her name is Mucho.

Mucho is a girl that works in the CHES office. Lovely, sensitive, friendly, and hard working, she is 27 and the office manager at the CHES office in Katesh. As part of her work at CHES, Mucho was called upon to accompany the manager of the CHES office to the area where Mucho was born. Part of her task was to help the Manager with the children whose parents were leaving for the Maasai Mara to visit relatives. A few days later, on September 17, 2003, she was to have a baby girl, and the Manager had to return to the office.

On September 16, 2003, Mucho and her friends were visiting the ranch near Katesh where her family lives. The ranch is surrounded by thorn bushes and thorny acacia trees. Mucho lived in this area all her life. While the family was visiting the ranch, she was joined by three friends. They were sitting in the shade of the acacia trees when suddenly a lion appeared. Mucho and the three friends tried to run away, but were caught by the lion. Mucho was twisted around and thrown to the ground. A friend of hers, a 13-year-old girl, was also killed by the lion. Mucho was bitten several times, and her body was torn to pieces. Her blood was everywhere.

The Manager heard the noise of the lion and rushed to the ranch. She saw the bodies of Mucho and her friend, and the blood on the ground. She tried to save Mucho, but it was too late. Mucho passed away, and left behind three children, the oldest of whom was 9, and a husband that was pretty much non-existent.

Going...going...gone!

Three CHES representatives will be going to Kenya and Tanzania this summer. For anyone who would like to send anything to their students, please contact our office at 604-521-3416.

Want information on CHES?
Want your colleagues to know more about us? Have us come in for a presentation. Call us for more information.

Student Support Fund
To make a donation, please contact 604-521-3416 or visit our website at www.canadianharambee.ca.

Gifts for students

Thank you to all sponsors who have sent gifts to their students. CHES will continue to accept small gifts to carry to Africa for students. For sponsors and supporters who would like to make a monetary donation, we ask that you contribute to the Student Support Fund rather than give individual money gifts to their students. The goal of this fund is to make sure all CHES students receive a similar gift and that the special needs of some students can be met. CHES helps supplement this fund through fundraising and was able, with the help of CHES supporters, to provide each girl at this year’s workshop with a gift bag containing hygienic products, a toothbrush, toothpaste and school supplies such as pens, pencils, and erasers. It was a fantastic way to end the workshops and bring some extra happiness into the lives of all the CHES girls.

If you are interested in donating to the Student Support Fund, please contact the CHES office at canadianharambee@shaw.ca or by phone at 604-521-3416. CHES president, Lorrie Williams, will be visiting Kenya and Tanzania this summer and will be able to carry a limited number of small gifts over to Africa. Please contact the CHES office for more information.