



Canadian Harambee Education Society

We can't do everything...but we can do something!

SPRING 2007 NEWSLETTER

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President's Message

On April 19, I will be paying my own way to Kenya to accompany a CBC reporter, Erica Johnson. Erica will be doing a documentary on the history and work of CHES through the progress of the very first girl to be sponsored. We will trace Margaret Maywaka from her humble beginnings - eldest daughter of a single parent family eking out a living on a small shamba (farm/compound). She was at Ekambuli Secondary School when I first met her and she was about to be suspended from school for non-payment of fees. Today, she is a registered nurse in Nairobi. To hear the story in between, you'll have to check with our website www.canadianharambee.ca to find out when the documentary will be aired.

After over twenty years in the Kakamega area, we are looking at other areas in Kenya which require some assistance. AIDS is producing a tremendous number of orphans who are straining the resources of poor extended families - many of whom are struggling to educate their own children. During my upcoming stay in Kenya, I will see what arrangements can be

made to begin shifting some resources to other areas. We are fortunate to have the assistance of a Kenyan Member of Parliament, Raphael Tuju, and the former Canadian High Commissioner, Peter Ogego, who is now the Kenyan Ambassador in Washington, DC.

I watched, with pride, a presentation of the opening of the girls' dorm in Tanzania. The Harkers have worked a miracle and provided another opportunity for girls to advance. (That old laptop you no longer want because you wish to upgrade would be welcomed in Tanzania.)

So many girls with so much better prospects - this is the whole reason for CHES. Despite some awkward and difficult times, we intend to go on and are formulating a three-year plan which will be presented at our next AGM on September 15 and will be reported in the November newsletter. Asante Sana,

Lorrie Williams

CHES Annual General Meeting

As a scholarship program designed to help poor, bright girls obtain their high school diplomas, CHES would like to take the opportunity to thank each supporter in person at the AGM. Open to the public, we encourage all CHES supporters to make it out to the meeting. Learn all about the work CHES has been doing in Kenya, Tanzania, and the operations here in Canada

Run by a Board of volunteers, CHES currently provides scholarships to over 400 girls in Africa.

WHERE: New Westminster Public Library
716 6th Avenue, New Westminster BC, V3M 2B3 (604) 527-4660

WHEN: Saturday, September 15th, 2007
2 - 4pm

A NEW YEAR



It has been a very busy and exciting six months in Kakamega – and also wet. The normally dry season has seen rain almost every day for short periods. Less dust is good!

49 new Form 1 girls have embraced the CHES organization and all have settled in well in their new schools. Their delight and enthusiasm was fun to behold. There are 432 CHES girls in 13 schools. We are very proud of them all.



TEEN-AGE PREGNANCY in KENYA

The sad news within the past week was that two of our girls left school due to being pregnant. Both were in Form 3, successfully halfway through their studies. One denied it until she was shown her ultrasound.

The good news is that, thanks to CHES' policy, two other of our girls returned to classes this past January, having given birth, and are doing well.

More than 13,000 girls drop out of school every year in Kenya due to pregnancy. In Kenya one out of two girls becomes a mother before the age of 20.

At least 40% of documented school girl pregnancies are terminated through abortions, most self inflicted. Most girls only learn about contraception AFTER they have conceived their first baby. CHES steps in by providing workshops on HIV/AIDS, contraception, and the hazards of early and unprotected sex. Both Marie Mackay (from North Vancouver) and Kenyan Dr. Ruby Sokwala have been invaluable in facilitating these workshops.

EDUCATION WORKS

The low percentage of pregnancy among our 432 CHES girls reflects this, considering the national level. Teenage pregnancy undermines the progress made in other areas of women's empowerment.

And CHES is all about women's empowerment, is it not? Let us never think of abandoning these girls.

Nancy Carson

DORM'S DOORS OPEN



It actually happened! On the afternoon of Saturday, February 24, the girl's dormitory at Nangwa technical School near Katesh, Tanzania, that so many CHES members have supported so generously, was officially opened, enabling girls to receive a technical education

The opening ceremony was organized cooperatively by CHES Hanang members and the staff of the technical school. On hand from Canada were Catriona and Chris Harker who have headed the funding drive, Lamont Brooks from Victoria and Fiona Newlands (from London, England) who were the Dorm's most generous contributors. Also present were Douglas and

Tracy Shaw and Joy Ruffeski who donated time, expertise and dollars towards the dorm's construction. Karen Holland and Julia Roberts, safariers from Courtenay, completed the party.

Realizing the vital need for technical education for young women, Catriona and Chris were inspired to raise funds for the dorm several years ago by Father Daniel Noud, who subsequently fell ill and had to return to Ireland for medical treatment. This project obviously meant a great deal to him, for he too managed to return to Katesh just in time to attend the opening.

Catriona, Chris, Lamont and Fiona were asked to cut the ribbon on the main gate which, when opened, led the group of officials and singing students into a courtyard, on each side of which opened five large rooms. Some of these are designated as dormitory space while others are at present to be used as classrooms. One of the largest rooms is the Sharon Eagles Library and Reading room - in essence, a study hall - while a similar room provides accommodation for two resident staff members.

A corridor leads to another courtyard, also of formidable proportions. Here there are toilets, showers and wash basins, as well as a laundry area. Two enormous water reservoirs ensure a constant water supply.

Speeches and student singing followed the tour of inspection. Local officials thanked all those in Canada who had contributed to building the dormitory which, incidentally, was constructed in an amazingly brief 23 months and cost a total of \$120,000. Female students already enrolled, some of them supported by CHES, sang and presented members of our party with garlands of appreciation. Assurances were offered that the school will make every effort to attract even more girls in time for the next school year. The formalities ended with a wonderful meal.

Catriona and Chris will be returning to Katesh in June. All future funds donated to the "Dorm Project" will be used to purchase desperately needed equipment for this technical school in order to support and implement the girls' courses. **Laptop computers** in working order are particularly needed. If anyone reading this has access to an unneeded laptop and can get it to a CHES director before June 1, the Harkers will deliver it to Katesh by month's end.

Chris Harker





Every year after the AGM, CHES Executive Board members meet for an all day strategic planning session for the upcoming year. The highlight from the last meeting was the beginning of a three-year plan, which will be touched on at this year's AGM in September.

Kenya Fast Facts



Source: National Geographic Online

- Population** 33,830,000
- Capital and Population** Nairobi; 2,818,000
- Area** 580,367 square kilometers
- Language** English, Kiswahili, numerous indigenous languages
- Religion** Protestant, Roman Catholic, indigenous beliefs, Muslim
- Currency** Kenyan shilling
- Life Expectancy** 46
- GDP Per Capita** U.S. \$1,100

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