I recently attended a Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) sponsored workshop in which each participant examined what their own NGO was doing to help within other countries. “Are we just giving aid or are we helping to foster developmental effectiveness within those that we work with?” was the question that we examined. This workshop helped me realize that many of our donors may not fully understand the long-term effects of their generosity and the resulting life-changes that occur. True, the Canadian Harambee Education Society (CHES) helps needy girls get a secondary school education in Kenya and Tanzania. But if that was the only reason CHES existed, we would only be providing students with a handout, not a hand-up.

The Canadian Harambee Education Society recognizes that one of the root causes of poverty is a lack of education and that all individuals should have a right to education. By targeting the most marginalized individuals in society and assisting them to get an education, we provide long-term outcomes and actually help to change individuals’ living conditions, the economy, family situations, and broaden their knowledge of legal rights so they can tackle the biases in their society.

Although many of the girls at the end of Form 4 government exams in both Kenya and Tanzania do not qualify to attend university, teacher’s college, or nursing schools, most have acquired the confidence and ability to stand-up for themselves, understand that further training (trades/technical) will provide them with a decent living rather than just a menial job, and start to work for justice in their own country. Even the poorest of the girls who are finished with their sponsorship try to find the funds for additional educational opportunities whether it is in the secretarial, computer, business, seamstress or other such area. They generally are very successful with these further studies and then go on to help other relatives get an education and raise the standard of living for their whole family.

This is the long-term benefit of sponsoring a girl through CHES – you change many lives for the better, not just the life of the girl you sponsored. Thank you for you continuing generosity.

by Joy Ruffeski, Executive Director, CHES Canada

NOTICE TO SPONSORS
CHES AGM

CHES supporters are welcome to join us for our annual general meeting!
September 15th from 2 – 4 p.m. at the New Westminster Public Library
(downstairs meeting room)
Light refreshments will be served as we review our successes of the past year, present new initiatives, and vote for the 2012/2013 Board of Directors.
Working With Tanzanian Teachers

In November/December I travelled to Katesh to work with seven Tanzanian teachers and train them in how to teach a totally oral-based English language program to all the CHES students in Tanzania. The training took place at the new CHES office complex and the actual English Immersion sessions for Form 2 – 4 students were held from January 2 – 14. Students were divided by Form levels into groups of less than 30 students each and immersed in English language lessons and games. Sessions for the new Form 1 and replacement students will take place during the two-week June break.

The teachers (many of whom themselves are CHES graduates) were most enthusiastic and had a great learning experience as they actually worked through each of the lessons, played games that reinforced the new vocabulary, and saw how this would translate into an understanding of not only the English language itself but also many of the grammatical concepts that students were expected to demonstrate throughout Forms 1 – 4. A special thank you goes to these teachers who willingly gave up a good part of their vacation to do the training and teach the CHES girls in January.

by Joy Ruffeski


CHES Students’ Impressions of the English Immersion Lessons

We were very happy and excited during the English Immersion course that was held from January 2 – 14. We met together with CHES girls from different schools and stayed at the Sara Williams Hostel for that time. The course was very helpful to us because it helped and continues to help us express ourselves whenever someone asks such questions as “What is your name? Where are you from? How far is your village? Who are your friends and what are they like? What subjects do you like and dislike? etc.” Before this course we were not able to answer these questions and many others by using proper English but immediately after this course we were able to speak and write good English.

Thank you very much for helping us to improve our language as we are now even able to answer the questions asked in examinations at school. We use the same knowledge and techniques of writing proper and good English language as were taught during the English Immersion course. At the hostel we are still practicing and we usually conduct debate competitions in English between different Forms (I to IV) every Saturday in order to improve more and more.

by Cecilia Philipo

Thank you for helping us in providing the English Immersion course because now we are able to understand, explain, and describe different things in English in all our subjects. In school we have nine subjects and those subjects we study by using the English language even though Kiswahili is considered the national language of Tanzania. At the Sara Williams Hostel we are trying to speak English at all times now because of the English Immersion Course and we enjoy speaking it because we know it will bring us more success in our life. That way we can achieve our goals. We want that programme to be continued in order to improve our English speaking and writing. We have different things we want to achieve in life and by learning English we know we can achieve them.

by Lucia Daudi

Are you interested in becoming an agent for CHES in Africa? For more information, please contact us at canadianharambee@shaw.ca or phone the office at 778-565-5261
Lorrie Williams and Lorrie Mukarazi are no longer guests needing introduction to the Global Connections Club at Magee Secondary in Vancouver. In January, they were more like returning friends as they again accepted an invitation to visit the club to make a presentation about CHES and the education of girls in Kenya. Lorrie and Lorrie had visited us last year for the first time and made their lunch-time presentation to a packed house of interested students. It was a pleasure to host them again.

Club members at Magee are becoming quite familiar with CHES and its work in Africa. Each September the club ramps up its activities by holding a community bottle drive, with one of the goals to raise funds to sponsor a CHES student in Kenya. The club is now in its third year of sponsorship.

On this day, the video Educating Margaret proved to be a powerful tool for the students. With much of it spoken in first person, students encounter directly the challenges faced by a young Kenyan woman who is determined to challenge traditional girl roles as she fights her way through to an education.

There was an audible gasp of surprise among the students as we announced that Margaret’s daughter, Lorrie, who is interviewed near the end of the video was here to speak to the club. Speaking from her own experience, Lorrie’s words were the powerful and honest voice of a young Kenyan woman who has faced many of the same challenges her mother Margaret faced. The fact that she is now enrolled in a post-secondary program in Vancouver serves as ultimate proof of the payoff that educating girls can bring. Listening to her, students in the club understood first-hand the power that education has in unlocking the potential of girls and young women in developing countries.

Thanks to Lorrie and Lorrie for taking the time out of their busy schedules to and share your understandings with us at Magee.

by Don Phillips, teacher in charge of the Global Connections Club

Supporters and sponsors on Vancouver Island are invited to attend a CHES FUND-RAISER on Tuesday, May 8.

Claremont Secondary drama students, well known for many outstanding past performances, will offer a special performance of “The Wizard of Oz” at the school’s impressive Ridge Theatre on Wesley Road. The evening will begin at 7 pm with a short illustrated presentation of current CHES projects. The main programme will follow. The evening will end with a series of door prizes, tickets for which can be purchased during the intermission.

Tickets are $35. Purchasers will receive a tax receipt for $25/ticket.

For tickets and further information, contact Chris or Catriona Harker at: 250 656 9229 or chriscat@pacificcoast.net
A Kenyan Student’s Life

The following is a little bit of the life of a CHES girl and why these students, in spite of what may seem like a difficult life in boarding, are extremely grateful for the generosity of sponsors. Four-thirty in the morning comes very early in any country. The peaceful sleep is broken by the clanging of a hand bell, shaken with a purpose and persistence that no girl could sleep through. Although the sun will not be up for two hours, the girls are ready for a new day. After making the bed, they take their bucket, a bar of soap and towel and head to the shower room. Some girls do not use the mosquito net provided, even though the broken windows have not been replaced giving easy access to the ever-present mosquitoes. The 15 minutes provided for making the bed, a bucket shower, and dressing does not leave time for arranging and tying the net. The bucket shower is not so bad in the hot season but during the cold rainy season requires courage so early in the morning.

After the early shower it’s off to preps; individual study time at 4:45. For a Form 4 girl the PREP classes get more and more important. Girls have done preps since Form 1 and have developed a routine but in Form 4 they will have to write the Kenyan Certificate Secondary Exam. (KCSE). The KCSE exams are what all the girls work toward from the day they start secondary school as their marks determine whether they can go to university, the program they can take there, and the scholarship money available to them. Coming from a poor rural home, without support, post secondary education is almost impossible without a scholarship. During prep they have a chance to revisit the subjects with which they are experiencing difficulty. The CHES patron has advised and counselled on the areas that need extra work. Preps are supervised to ensure none of the girls are dozing and all are concentrating on their schoolwork.

The time from 4:45 to 6:00 passes quickly and then there is an hour for a breakfast of tea and bread and completing assigned chores. Some girls are assigned to sweep the classroom blocks, some to scrub the pavements, others to clean the toilets or pick up rubbish. Everyone has a job to help keep the environment clean and tidy. Those who are being punished may be told to cut the grass using a panga, to weed the garden, or to fetch water.

Another prep occurs from 7:00 to 8:00. This is followed by “parade” two days a week and counselling, and house meetings the other three. At 8:00 the teachers have arrived to take charge of activities. At parade the girls get advice from staff, they sing the National Anthem and the school song, have prayers, and certificates are presented to those who have done well and punishments are announced for those who have failed to meet school standards. Teachers counsel and help with course and career selection twice a week and conduct house meetings the other day.

At 8:30 classes begin. Classes are scheduled in 40-minute blocks with most subjects receiving a double period. There are two double classes before tea break. At tea break, tea is available to all, but only those with money to purchase, as an extra, will have bread with their tea. Another two double classes before lunch of maize and beans then back to class until 4:00.

At 4:00 it is games time. Students are allowed 30 - 45 minutes for games; although in many schools the first 15 minutes is set aside for X-country. Following game time is clubs. All students are expected to belong to a club, either academic or non academic. After clubs, at 5:30 is time for dinner. In most schools, twice a week, the students get meat (chicken or beef) to go with the rice or ugali (thick cooked corn flour) and green vegetables.

Following dinner it is back to classes from 6:00 until 9:00. The time is used for completing homework assignments or doing individual review. After the evening study session there is time for group discussion and group revision can take place. CHES girls often work together and support each other in their studies. At 10:00, after fetching water for the morning, and preparing clothes for the next day, very tired girls go to bed.
Weekends are less structured and more time for individual choice and activities are available although students are still confined to the school grounds. On Sunday church is mandatory. Problems encountered by the girls in boarding are the quality of the food, stealing, lack of repair to accommodation, illness with minimal nursing service, and being sent home for non payment of fees.

With such seemingly harsh conditions one wonders why attendance in a decent boarding school is such a coveted prize.

To a girl they will say it opens the door for a decent future. Our girls would not go to school without CHES. In the village they would work at menial tasks; maybe roasting cobs of corn at the roadside and grabbing their pan and running every time the authorities come by as they do not have a license to sell. They might buy a branch of bananas in the morning to sell at the market or along the road, hoping to make enough each day to buy food for the evening meal. They might open, after saving for some time, a small business selling used clothes or small items which will provide for basic essentials only. Surely they will marry young, have a family and take orders from family and husband. Independence and the vision of a university education make many things worth while. Sponsorship does not just provide money for school fees, it opens the door for a girl to dream about a future that will provide some comfort, dignity, and purpose.

School, even with its strict routine offers a social life that is not available in the home. Girls get to know each other, to talk, to share dreams and plan; things that are important to teenagers everywhere. In the home there is little opportunity to socialize beyond family. On weekends there is ample time to socialize while at boarding school.

Although life at school is hard, life at home is harder. During breaks the girls go home to be with family and to help with chores. They may work in the small plot of land, digging, planting, weeding, or harvesting. They may go to the river to fetch water for the day. They will do domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, and washing as well as care for younger siblings. Even then, they will find time for revision of schoolwork.

Being a CHES girl means that you are never sent home from school to find money for fees or uniforms. Being a CHES girl means getting support from a patron and other CHES girls. Being a CHES girl means getting together with other CHES girls once a year to share experiences, to enjoy good food and company, and the opportunity to learn life skills that will make you more independent, more confident, more assertive and more knowledgeable of your rights within Kenyan society. Almost to a girl they recognize and appreciate the opportunity they have been given by their sponsor and do the very best to make their sponsor proud.

by Agents currently in Kenya

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**Plan Ahead - Golf Fundraiser**

The 4th annual Harambee Charity Golf Classic is being held on July 16, 2012!

This is the 4th year that Ginny Golding CPGA, April Stubbs, CPGA and their team have organized another successful golf tournament to raise money for CHES. To date, the three golf tournaments have raised over $93,000 to help CHES with girl sponsorships, workshops for CHES students as well as student support needs.

We are very fortunate to have JJ Bean Coffee Roasters as our presenting sponsor again this year as well as other corporate and community sponsorships.

However, more help is needed and would be very much appreciated in the following areas:
1. Participate in the tournament – fun golf, a BBQ dinner, silent auction and dinner speakers
2. Be a tournament sponsor
3. Donate a Silent Auction item or service

Information is found at [www.harambeegolf.ca](http://www.harambeegolf.ca)

We hope you can join in this very worthwhile cause!
Impressions of a Visit to Katesh

In February, I had the opportunity to travel to Katesh with Sara Williams. Each of us had taken something to share with the girls. My contribution was being a clown and in particular doing balloon sculptures. The balloons set off something approaching a riot. Everyone wanted a balloon and went to considerable length to get one. Sedate, polite young women were suddenly transformed into children at play. The evening wore on and I had begun to tire when suddenly one of the older girls, Marie, without prompting from anyone, appeared at my side, put one arm around my shoulder and with the other cleared a path. She then walked me the entire way back to my room, arm around my shoulder, concerned that I was tired and needed a rest.

That incident epitomizes so much of my experience of Tanzania; never have I felt so cared for, and yes, loved, as I did among the people in general but in particular by the staff and young women at the hostel. There is a spirit at the hostel that must be experienced; words fall short. But, of course, there is another side to the story. When you step back and look at all the problems of the country itself, of the larger world, one needs to consider the forces of disease and famine. Can these girls ever “make it”? Will Marie become a doctor? Scholastica, a nurse? Will Roziana get her PhD? Will they “make it”? Will the world let them?

While there will be disappointments and setbacks, I believe, against all odds, the great majority of these young women will make it and will achieve something of the goals they have set. But maybe there is another answer: these women have already made it. When you look at the situations from which they come -- poverty, hard work, early marriage, pregnancy -- they now have three meals a day, safe housing, and support of a loving, caring community. More important still they have choices and with choices comes a dream and a realistic chance of achieving it. It could be dashed, yes, but the dream is there and growing into signs of reality.

Coupled with the dream, under girding it, you detect a spirit, a kind of hope that is hard to pin down. It is there, in the manner of their welcome, their graciousness and warmth. It is there in their care for one another, older girls mentoring the younger. And who can forget the capacity of these women for song and dance, haunting in its beauty. Or the presence of a girl, young enough to be my granddaughter, putting her arm around my shoulder and saying enough, time to go, and walking me to my room.

Marie will make it, a doctor who already knows a good measure of what is required of her profession.

by Ron Evans

(Ron Evans first heard of CHES a few years ago and since then, with his wife Norma and other members of the small village of Shields, Saskatchewan, he has raised over $15,000 for the Katesh CHES Hostel -- through a Greek supper prepared, served, and washed up by the community. He also convinced 14 other individuals to sponsor CHES students. This was his first visit to Katesh.)