



Canadian Harambee Education Society

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

Spring 2013 Newsletter #55

Founder's Message

I started cleaning under the steps and came across some old newsletters (bedsheets, we called them) and, as most declutterers do, I stopped to read them. It was heartening to read the uplifting messages and enthusiasm that prevailed during the early years. Certainly slog, red tape and sheer volume have somewhat dampened the scene, but when I compare them to the messages in today's newsletters, I realize that we have grown not only in numbers, but also in sophistication.

We have learned a great deal about running a society. We realize that the amount of paperwork needed to complete a grant request is sometimes not worth the effort. We have learned that good agents are the backbone of the operation and vital to our survival. We have learned that sponsors really care about their girls. We often lament the fact that we have not

kept track of our graduates so that we can know the full extent of our contribution. With just a handful of volunteers, we have kept CHES going.

One such volunteer is Louise Paulsen, who has been treasurer FOREVER. Her hard work, dedication and integrity satisfied Revenue Canada for over 20 years. We shudder every time she hints at retiring. The CHES girls in Africa owe her a big debt of gratitude. I was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for the work of CHES, but I think Louise would have been the more deserving recipient.

My hat is off to all the executive and sponsors. Remember to keep Africa on your bucket list and go to meet your student if you are able. That can be one of life's sweet moments!

by Lorrie Williams

NOTICE TO SPONSORS CHES AGM

All CHES supporters are invited to join us for our annual general meeting which will be held September 14, 2013, from 2 - 4 p.m.

in the downstairs meeting room of the New Westminster Public Library. Light refreshments will be served as we review successes of the past year, present new initiatives, and elect the 2013/2014 Board of Directors.

Success!

The English Immersion workshops in Tanzania have been most successful and the final year-end marks for Forms 1, 2, and 3 are up markedly in all subjects except Math from previous years after just one year of the program. Only 7 girls did not meet the required government standard to be allowed to continue into Form 3: a significant number less than the 27 from the previous year before this program started.



In Tanzania all classes in secondary schools are in English and student success depends heavily on their understanding of that language.

Ten Tanzanian teachers (all former CHES students) have been instructed in how to teach oral language skills and develop a facility in English within their students. These teachers have given up their vacation time to be instructed on how to "immerse" the CHES students in English understanding and speaking for two weeks. The teachers do not receive any remuneration for their time and their teaching. The CHES Canada board member who has developed the program donates her expertise and pays her own way to Tanzania each year to work with these teachers and help the CHES students in Tanzania to be more successful. The plan is to have four levels of lessons, each equating to English understanding and facility expected at that Form level. Each level builds on the previous one.

Funds for these ongoing workshops have been provided by the Harambee Golf Classic.

by Joy Ruffeski

A Special Invitation

Dear Fellow CHES Members,
I am so grateful to be a part of this organization! I have just started sponsoring my second student and enjoy the letters I get updating me on their progress. I think the work that CHES does is admirable and is making a difference on such a personal level for these students.

I have recently become involved with a Canadian company called Steeped Tea Inc., which sells loose-leaf teas and accessories. I thought it would be great to combine my passion for both of these organizations by having a fundraiser. Of course I normally make a commission when I sell tea products; however, during the fundraiser I would be donating all my commission back to CHES. This is just another way to give back and to get others involved.

It's very easy to take part. Simply visit my website from May 15 to June 15:

www.mysteepedtea.com/NATALIEWALKER/

Click on "My events" tab and find the event titled CHES fundraiser. Then start your shopping and have an "on-line tea party" with other CHES supporters and friends. All orders will be shipped directly to you. In addition to a variety of teas, there are many beautiful items to choose from that can be used for upcoming summer weddings, for backyard barbecue parties, or just for yourself.

Send the link to family and friends so they can take part too. What a great way to bring some attention to CHES and the amazing work that it does to educate girls in Africa. Just remember that all my commission will be going directly back to CHES.

Happy sipping, and thank you for your continued support of CHES.

Natalie Walker
CHES Sponsor
Ontario, Canada



Interviewing Applicants

Sarah, a Form 4 CHES graduate, sat at the front desk on the lawn and did an initial screening of all applicants. About 160 girls were turned away at the gate as their marks were too low.

The 400 or so applicants who made it past Sarah were interviewed by one of three CHES graduates, who noted each candidate's family history and marks for Grades 6-8 in primary school. The CHES graduates also asked the composition of each student's family, how much schooling any siblings had, and who helped with the cost of this schooling. The girls then drew maps to their homes while waiting for their interviews with CHES agents Cheryl or Norm Filipenko or with me. All interviews took place outside under shade trees.



At the start of every interview we asked the girls to read aloud and to explain in their own words: "If any information on this application is found to be false the interview will not be considered."

We asked questions that might confirm the accuracy of the previous interview and help with the follow-up field interviews. Did you repeat any grades in primary school? How many times did you write the final exam? What activities did you do outside of the classroom? What do you grow on your shamba? Is there a fence around your shamba? Is there any livestock? What are the roof and the walls of your house made of?

Cheryl, Norm, and I each averaged 10 to 12 interviews a day, and then we would spend time together deciding which of the day's interviews

should be verified, which to put in the "maybe" pile, and which to reject. If there were too many discrepancies between the first and second interviews or if the standing in each grade was too low, or if we learned that a family member could pay for the education, then we would direct the interview to the "no" pile. We had to turn down some girls as there are only 60 scholarships available.

The third phase of this process was to send more CHES graduates out into the field to check on the accuracy of the information. Such is the pressure to land a desk in high school that families will exaggerate and even submit doctored school records. The verifiers make the trek each day to the countryside to see if indeed the house does have a thatched roof and mud walls and just two rooms for 6 siblings. They inquire of the driver of the boda-boda (a bicycle taxi), the school principal, the children in the school yard, the neighbour digging in her shamba, and family members to check on accuracy. It is important to verify the interview information as the scholarships are based on need and academic achievement.

by Tony Dawson

Tony Dawson was one of the agents in Kenya from January to March, 2013. He is a volunteer from British Columbia who took part in the interviews for selecting new students for Form 1 in Kakamega, Kenya. This is taken from Tony's blog posted on February 17, 2013, and edited for this newsletter by permission.

Newsletters are in colour on copies sent by email or viewed on our website www.canadianharambee.ca

but mailed copies are in black and white. Please let us know your email address if you would like to receive your newsletter in colour. This saves CHES substantial printing and postage costs. If we have your email address, you will get important notices by email and not have to wait until your student's letter, photo, or marks are mailed out. CHES does not share your email address with others.

Mshikamano Opens

Planning the opening of the largest store and secretarial service in a town where there is no culture of promotion, advertising, or “specials” presents an interesting challenge, but this was our goal when Catriona and I arrived at Katesh in November 2012.



Mshikamano means “solidarity” and is the name chosen for the CHES enterprise that will provide a forum where some of our CHES grads can learn computer skills and how to serve the public in a work experience environment. In addition, we hope that Mshikamano will provide an additional source of income to support the program in Katesh.

The grand opening was on Saturday, November 17. Thanks to a certain amount of encouragement from “mama Catriona and baba Chris,” the community had been flooded with flyers. Signs both outside and inside the gates had been erected, and posters advertising hours of operation, regular prices and opening-day specials adorned the wall of our duka (store), a large room of approximately 50 feet x 30 feet on our hostel grounds.

Shelving both of wood and glass had been constructed to provide maximum display visibility. Some of our senior boarding students were on hand to assist behind the counter where they helped manager Rufina and apprentice Theresa, who are our permanent staff members. On offer was a vast selection of goods ranging from make-

up, soaps, sodas, candy, reams of paper, and other stationary supplies, plus school sweaters and uniforms made by CHES grads to be sold on consignment. All prices were marked lower than in town, and yet another poster on the wall pointed out that a purchase here helped to educate a local girl.

An enthusiastic group of about 60 hostel students entertained opening day customers with some delightful songs, all presented in marvelous harmony. While members of the community from every walk in life looked on, Pius Masha, CHES chairman in Katesh, spoke in Swahili and English to thank those responsible for providing the funding for their generosity and those attending today for their support. Pius, Chris, and Catriona then cut the ribbon and Mshikamano was open for business.

Opening day sales were healthy but the real purpose of the event was to let everyone know that Mshikamano is open for business. As we are next to the only bank in town, we feel well positioned. We anticipate that in addition to serving the general public and the more than 80 girls who board at the hostel, we will provide a good deal of the paper and stationary supplies for the 30 schools our girls attend.



All funding for this building, its furnishings, the initial stock, and salaries came from many generous donors and not from sponsorship monies.

by Chris Harker

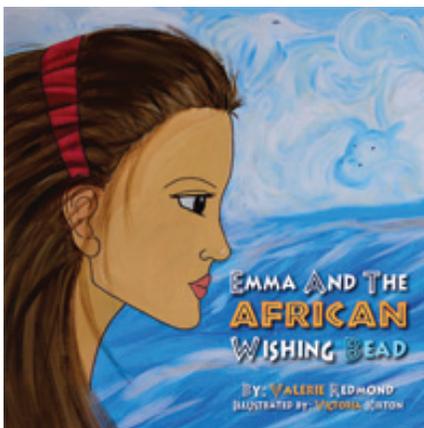
Children's Book Fundraiser

A CHES supporter and teacher, Valerie Redmond, has written a children's picture book called **Emma and the African Wishing Bead**. Half the profits from the sale of the book are going to CHES. Valerie was inspired to write this story during a year spent working with women and girls in Kenya.

The book is about two girls, one in Kenya and one in Canada, who are separated by an ocean but united by their dreams. It is about the power of education and the beauty we all have to offer the world when we are given the opportunity to follow our dreams and unleash our potential. This is an inspirational tale for children of all ages. There are discussion questions at the back that encourage dialogue between adults and children. The story of Margaret (the first CHES graduate) is also included.

Children can also go to the website, www.wishingbead.com. Here they can learn how to make their own wishing bead, or parents can purchase a wishing bead handmade at the Kazuri Bead Factory in Kenya. Kazuri employs over 350 disadvantaged women and pays them three times the national average wage. The factory is a member of the Fair Trade Act.

Emma and the African Wishing Bead is for sale on amazon.ca, amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, halopublishing.com, and wishingbead.com. You



can obtain the book from a CHES board member for \$15 but this must be done in person as we are not able to mail out books from the CHES office. African wishing beads, handmade at the Kazuri

bead factory in Kenya, are also available for \$6 from board members.

by Valerie Redmond and Penny Lyle

A Magical Visit

On November 17, 2012, Ginny Golding, April Stubbs, Joanne Thorpe, and a few other golfers had the opportunity to fly to Kakamega to visit with 24 of the CHES girls who are presently being educated by the Canadian Harambee Education Society.

This was one of the most exciting and heart-warming experiences of our collective lives. We were able to witness the accomplishments of all the hard work and generous hearts of the volunteers and donors of this incredible society. The charity Lorrie Williams put into place so many years ago continues to be a beacon of hope for so many young girls in Kenya and Tanzania.

These girls demonstrated their poise, confidence, and their ability to present themselves in poetry, stories, and song. They described the happiness and good fortune they felt for being chosen to join the CHES education program.

by Joanne Thorpe



Many thanks to all sponsors who submitted their \$500 for 2013 scholarships - you should have already received your tax receipts. If you have not sent in your sponsor fees (\$500) for the 2013 school year, please send in these funds as soon as possible.

Important Message to our Generous Sponsors

CHES would like to thank all sponsors who sent in donations over the \$500 sponsor fee. Such extra donations are always greatly appreciated and help provide CHES girls with needed materials and support as well as help to cover our administrative costs and the increasing costs of food and school fees.

If you are not able to pay the 2013 sponsorship fee, please let us know and we will reassign your student to another sponsor. In such cases, we would gladly receive any smaller amount you are able to donate to help with student welfare and other costs.

2014 fees: Inflation has seriously impacted the cost of food and school fees in both Kenya and Tanzania to the point that \$500 no longer covers our costs of sponsoring a girl. In order to meet expenses we find it necessary to **increase sponsorship fees to \$600**. We realize this is a major increase and sincerely thank in advance those of you who will retain your sponsorships.

If this increase is more than you are comfortable with but you would still like to support CHES, many options are available. Sharing a sponsorship is one way to feel connected to students as both parties would receive letters and photos. We can match two donors who are only able to pay part of the fees. Also CHES always needs donations to such areas not covered by sponsorship funds, such as workshops, mosquito nets, student welfare, textbooks and office expenses (newsletters, mailing, stationary, computers, insurance, audits). We very much appreciate every donation.

An Amazing Feat

The CHES mandate is limited to improving the quality of life of women and their communities in Kenya and Tanzania by providing secondary education scholarships for girls. However, thanks to the efforts of Lorrie Williams, Lorrie Rowena Mukirazi, a Kenyan CHES graduate and daughter of Margaret, CHES' first student, came to Vancouver to study with Sprott-Shaw Degree College. Her

tuition and books were paid by the college but she worked at a variety of jobs during her stay in BC in order to pay her living expenses. She also volunteered her time and spoke to many groups about the work of CHES and how a Kenyan girl getting an education changes not just the life of that girl but positively impacts her extended family and community.

Lorrie Rowena started her studies in October 2010 and completed her BBA in just over two years in March 2013 with GPA

(grade point average) of 4.0. She would like to gain accounting experience here in Canada and hopes to obtain another scholarship so she can get her Masters degree before going home to Kenya. Upon returning to



Africa, she plans to work in microfinance to help women who lack access to regular banking services to be able to set up small businesses to provide for their families.

Her graduation ceremony will be held at the Vancouver Centre for Performing Arts on Wednesday, May 22, 2013, at 7 p.m. All CHES supporters are welcome to attend to honour the achievements of this wonderful young woman and become her "family" for that event. We are very proud of Lorrie Rowena as we are of all our CHES students.

by Penny Lyle

The Shillings Go Round and Round

Our Tanzanian executive in Katesh never ceases to impress us with their successful efforts to save CHES money and for self-sufficiency. They have even discovered how to recycle money!

At the beginning of each term, all CHES girls receive pocket money for purchasing the school supplies and toiletries they will need for the upcoming term. Until recently, the girls spent their money in the shops of Katesh. Now that CHES has Mshikamano – our own store with prices just a tad lower than in town – virtually all the girls purchase their supplies there. Thus the funds CHES disbursed return to CHES. The profits not only will cover the salary of the store manager and the work experience students in training but will also support the training program for CHES grads who want develop some computer skills.



Mshikamano is on the grounds of the Sara Williams Hostel complex, which this year provides accommodation for over 80 CHES students in Katesh. A portion of every girl's sponsorship amount is paid to the hostel to cover her room and board. These fees must also cover the cost of a cook and askari (watchman) and must pay for wood for cooking and for electricity. The hostel receives additional funds during holiday periods when the complex is rented out to groups for conferences and workshops. Generally these groups are CHES-organized events such as workshops, tutorial sessions, or our new initiative, the English Immersion classes.

With the modest profits that have accumulated over the last year, the local CHES executive has found the funds to construct a larger reservoir

– a much needed “extra” as 80 girls require a lot of water and the piped supply from town is sporadic and, at various times of the year, totally cut off for as many as six days out of seven.

CHES Canada congratulates our Tanzanian executive, as we always appreciate not receiving a bill for a new service CHES has provided!

by Chris Harker

Plan Ahead

The 5th annual Harambee Charity Golf Classic, is being held on July 15, 2013, at the Musqueam golf course.

This is the fifth year that CPGA professionals, Ginny Golding and April Stubbs, and their team will organize another successful golf tournament to raise money for CHES.

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.

You can help this endeavour in the following areas:

1. Participate in the tournament – relaxing golf, a barbecue dinner, silent auction and a special video of Kenyan CHES students.
2. Be a tournament sponsor.
3. Donate a Silent Auction item or service. Gift baskets are especially appreciated.

Information is found at www.harambeegolf.ca

by Carol Gilchrist



Bernadette Basili

Berni is the office administrator in Katesh. As such, she is a key member of the trio that enables CHES to function in Tanzania, the others being Pius Masha, our chairman, and Naomi Saulo, our treasurer. Although there are occasional visits from Canadian agents who offer counsel, the day-to-day running of our program that now supports nearly 300 girls is almost entirely in their hands.



Berni was born near the tiny community of Endasiwold in March 1982. She was the sixth in a family of nine children; her parents were and remain subsistence farmers. As a small child she was given chores to do almost as soon as she was able to walk. Household tasks remained a responsibility even after she began attending the local primary school. Berni enjoyed school and did well. When she completed Standard (grade) 7, although her marks were well above average, she knew that her parents would not be able to afford to send her to secondary school. However, Berni had seen a CHES flyer while in Standard 7.

Berni applied to CHES and much to her delight and that of her parents, she was accepted as a student at Endasak secondary school. During her four years there, she particularly enjoyed biology, chemistry and agriculture. Her sponsor throughout this period was Elizabeth de Beck from Kamloops, who sadly

died last year, having sponsored at least a dozen CHES girls.

Berni graduated in 2001 and the next year signed up for a CHES-sponsored course in keyboarding. She enrolled in a more advanced course the following year but as she found no employment opportunities, she returned to her family home and made herself useful in and around the family compound.

In 2006 Berni applied for the office administrator job she holds to this day. Her many tasks include helping to select CHES applicants, collecting and coordinating the photographs and letters that are sent to sponsors, and recording the complex monthly accounts. She also organizes the accommodation, meals and presenters at the annual tutorial and workshop sessions and deals with the maintenance of numerous buildings, computers, generators and plumbing. In addition to these many tasks, there are a multitude of other things that keep her busy well past quitting time almost every evening. Apart from a night watchman, Berni is the only person in Tanzania whose salary comes from CHES Canada.

Like many of the CHES graduates we have come to know over the years, Berni provides generous support to her family as she is one of the few in it who earns a monthly salary. Thanks to Berni, her parents have been helped with house repairs, a brother is acquiring a diploma in history, a sister is attending a private teacher's college, and another sibling has his Form III school fees paid. She, meanwhile, lives modestly in a couple of rooms near CHES House, where daily, except Sunday, she enables CHES to function.

Berni's commitment and work ethic are enviable and admirable. She exemplifies the high standards that those of us in Canada hope that CHES girls will aspire to. Thank you, Berni; you are the greatest of role models.

by Chris Harker

Check out the new video links on our website www.canadianharambee.ca Three Tanzanian teachers, all former CHES students, share how being a CHES student changed their lives.