It used to be a lot easier running CHES when African school fees were lower and the Canadian dollar was strong. It was then we could afford to do extra projects for the girls and provide workshops, extra textbooks, and the like. But the world economic situation has hit CHES as well as Africa. Because of the serious inflation in Africa, the school fees have risen. Because the Canadian dollar has been devalued, we get fewer shillings on the exchange.

This has proven to be a struggle. We initially prided ourselves that 100% of moneys collected went to Africa. Our substantial reserves took care of the sliding dollar, but eventually we realized that without a change, we would not cover expenses. We started by taking 5% for administration costs. This we have kept to the minimum. It soon became clear to us that we had to have projects specifically to raise administration money. Hence, the variety show for International Women’s Day; it was a lot of work but yielded over $4,400. In addition, some sponsors have added an additional amount of money specifically for administration. Bless you for understanding. We will continue to raise money separately, and kudos to Chris and Catriona Harker for sponsoring a production of “42nd Street” on May 13 to add to the pot.

CHES has an incredible executive whose members have been so creative in raising extra funds through book sales and jewellery sales, which we hope will yield some money for the maintenance of CHES. Ultimately, the question we always ask ourselves is, “Are the girls in school?” The answer is yes and so we carry on. If the spirit moves you and the pocketbook allows, we would welcome any additional funds. Thank you all for remaining our loyal supporters.

by Lorrie Williams

Thank You to Sponsors and Donors

CHES would like to thank all of the sponsors who have sent in $600 to pay for their student for the 2014 school year. If you are unable to sponsor your student in 2014, please let us know so we can find another sponsor.

We would also like to thank everyone who sent in extra donations for the CHES program. If you have questions about tax receipts or payments for sponsor fees or donations please contact the CHES office. Note that any donations made through Canada Helps have a 3.9% fee deducted by Canada Helps for its administration.

New sponsors are always welcome so more girls in Africa can be educated.
A Very Special Gala

The annual gala fundraiser of the UBC International Relations Students’ Association (IRSA) is their hallmark event of the year. This year, the IRSA decided to donate the profits of the gala to CHES as they were interested in our organization’s work in raising awareness about the importance of providing women in Kenya and Tanzania with the resources and support to receive an adequate education.

The event on Wednesday, January 8, was a very special evening attended by many CHES supporters and directors. A PowerPoint showing the need for the work done by CHES was shown. Remarks by Imbenzi George, Kenyan Foreign Public Policy Analyst, and Lorrie Mukirazi, CHES program recipient, currently studying in Canada, demonstrated the value of what CHES does.

We thank the IRSA for their thoughtfulness in supporting girls’ education.

by Joy Ruffeski

Kelsey Brooks and Brenda Nguyen present a cheque from the IRSA Winter Gala to CHES directors, Penny Lyle and Joy Ruffeski.

IWD Fundraiser

It was a dark and stormy night for the CHES Variety Show held on International Women’s Day (always March 8). The CHES Board of Directors worked hard to get the Sapperton Pensioners’ Hall ready. Over 100 supporters attended this event in New Westminster.

It was a wonderful evening full of performances. The Melodious Mandolins provided a selection of songs. Bob Robertson and Linda Cullen of CBC’s “Double Exposure” fame guided the evening as our MCs. A group of young students from the local dance studio, Dance Matrix, gave a sassy, contemporary routine. The Sound Eclectic choir gave us haunting harmonies and led the audience in the singing of “Bread and Roses” which they did as a flash mob. Dana Radivojevic, from the New Westminster Secondary School Honour Society, performed a piano solo. Candice James, Poet Laureate of New Westminster, read a stirring poem on the theme of bread and roses. She emphasized the idea that “hearts starve as well as bodies.” Juno Award singer Charlotte Diamond kept our toes tapping.

The silent auction was a great success, with a wide price range so that everyone could participate. Throughout the evening, door prizes were drawn. Light refreshments were served in addition to a no-host bar.

We realized over $4,400 in addition to three new scholarships. The money raised will be used for much-needed administration money.

All in all, it was worth the effort as people had a good time. We recognize and appreciate the volunteers from the Honour Society of New Westminster Secondary School. To all who supported us and turned out on such a blustery evening, our heartfelt thanks.

by Lorrie Williams

Bread and Roses

We are the women of the world
Blessed with the sacrament of the womb.
We are life and we give life
In the catch of bread and roses.

We are the keepers of the birthright.
We give sustenance and love,
Bread and roses
To the seed that grows within us,
Then softly release the newborn
Into our atmosphere of coveted shelter.
We are the blood flowing through you.
We are the flesh that sustains you.
Give us bread and nourishment.
Give us roses and love:
Alms for the breath we give;
Salve for the wounds we endure.
We are the bread and roses,
The sanctuary of life,
The women of the world.

© 2014 Candice James, Poet Laureate
One Swing at a Time

On June 23rd, 2014, Ginny Golding, PGA of Canada, will play golf for CHES.

June 23rd marks Ginny’s 65th birthday and on that day Ginny will play 65 holes to raise $65000 for CHES! Ginny is BC’s first female member of the PGA of BC and is the co-chair of the annual Harambee Charity Golf Classic that has over five events raised $157,000 for CHES.

“IT just makes sense to give back to girls less privileged,” comments Ginny.

Hole sponsorships are available at $1000 per hole. With only 2 months to tee time, we are over half sold. Individuals, corporations, and groups of all sizes are encouraged to sponsor a hole.

One Swing at a Time takes place at University Golf Club. Ginny’s son and daughter will drive her cart and sponsors are invited to follow Ginny on their sponsored hole. University Golf Club will host a reception in the 66th HOLE for volunteers and sponsors.

All sponsors will be recognized by signage at the event, and tax receipts will be issued on request for all donated amounts.

How to donate:
- Visit www.ginnygolding.com/charity and follow the Canada Helps link.
- Contact Ginny directly if you prefer to pay by cheque: ginny@ginnygolding.com or by phone @ 604-562-5450

Our Treasurer in Tanzania

It would be no exaggeration to say that CHES in Katesh would not operate as smoothly as it does without the frequent and efficient ministrations of Naomi Saulo, our treasurer in Tanzania. Together with the wise counsel of chairman Pius Mwasha and the “get-things-done” ability of office administrator Bernadetta Basili, Naomi’s overseeing eye and attention to detail move the CHES operation along.

Naomi was born in 1968 in the then-tiny village of Balangdala’lu, where her father was a teacher. She is one of seven children. The family later moved to Singida, a much larger town where she enjoyed her primary and secondary education. At the age of 18 she travelled to Mwanza to study agriculture for the next three years. After graduating, she was required to spend a year in uniform for her National Service. She is one of the few who admits to enjoying that experience as she claims that the learning opportunities and discipline have benefitted her in later life.

At the age of 21 Naomi was posted to the District Agricultural Office in Katesh where much of her work involved activities related to the famous – perhaps now infamous – Canadian Wheat Project. Shortly thereafter she married Isaya, a childhood friend.

For four years, life was idyllic until Isaya died suddenly from meningitis. Naomi moved into the house her parents had by then built in Katesh and where she and her parents remain to this day.

She continued to work for the agricultural office until 1999, when she quit to run her own business and to develop her extensive family shamba (farm). It was shortly after this that she was asked by Samwell Mwasha, who was then the office administrator of CHES in Tanzania, to help out with one of our early workshops. I met Naomi in 2001 and got to know her better in 2003 when my wife and I were agents for several months. She continued to volunteer her help and to advise our students on an ad hoc basis, and she was “always there.” As her qualities and abilities became evident, it was not a difficult decision ask Naomi to become our treasurer in 2005, when Pius moved from treasurer into the chairman’s position. How smart – or perhaps lucky – we were.

Naomi too claims to be the lucky one as she loves the job, revels in helping our girls reach their potential, and is dedicated to developing the work of CHES. She receives no salary, only expenses, for her almost daily commitment to CHES. She manages this despite her other important commitment, raising her adorable son Rayan, born in 2011.

Naomi is a person who works well with communities and enjoys seeing the fruits of her success. She is one of life’s positive people but admits to being put off by anyone who doesn’t value women. This is a strong position to take in Tanzania – even now. But then Naomi Saulo is a strong woman.

by Chris Harker
Form 4 Students’ Farewell

CHES House in Kenya held a meeting on March 8 for the students who had finished Form 4 in 2013. The turn-up of “leavers” was good. The nine board members were also present as well as some previous CHES graduates who had been invited to speak.

The first speaker was Trizah Mutuli of Mukumu, (CHES graduate, 2008) and has completed law studies. At university she got the highest mark and now has a scholarship to go for her master’s degree at Columbia. Trizah talked about the importance of remaining focused and aiming high throughout your studies at the next level. The second speaker was Cynthia Shivachi from Shikunga (CHES graduate, 2010). She is currently studying Medicine at university. Cynthia talked about avenues of getting funds in the right ways while at university and also about higher education loans. Edith and Metrine are both are still at university. They talked to the students about the importance of forming an alumni of CHES students.

The Form 4 girls entertained with singing and some poems.

All the board members had responsibilities. They registered the students as they arrived, took the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) marks, and led the students through the day’s program. When we gave out the CHES certificates, the students felt that was the peak of the whole event. It was a special day for our girls.

by Rebecca Odhiambo, office manager, CHES Kenya

Special Needs Students

Three years ago a young mother came down the driveway at CHES House in Kenya accompanied by a young girl using a white cane. The woman explained that she was a single mother caring for four children. She was sending her daughter, in Form 1 at the time, to the Salvation Army’s Thika School for the Blind, but she could not afford to continue to pay her daughter’s school fees. She wondered if CHES could help. CHES gave the girl a replacement scholarship to continue her studies. Today this student is doing well in Form 4 (Grade 12) and is hoping to become a special needs teacher when she graduates from secondary school.

The following year a young CHES beneficiary, Edith Olwande, who was studying Special Needs Education at Maseno University in Kenya, was volunteering at Kakamega School for the Deaf, a primary school a short distance from CHES House. Edith asked CHES if there could be a scholarship for a girl who could not hear or speak. Last year the CHES Board of Directors approved four scholarships for hearing-impaired girls. This year three more students were awarded scholarships to the Kakamega School for the Deaf.

Selection of special needs students is much more difficult than the selection of other students. Aside from the obvious difficulty in communication, hearing-impaired students are often older than their sisters in regular schools and are usually far behind their counterparts academically. Their schooling is often delayed through community ignorance and superstition, and it is not unusual to find a 16-year old student in Standard 6 or 7. For the hearing-impaired girls, CHES has set a temporary selection standard of about 150 points (out of a possible 500) on the national exam results with class positions of 1, 2, or 3. This compares to students being selected for the regular high schools requiring a minimum of 330 points and positions 1, 2, or 3 in the national exams.

The hearing-impaired students are a delight to work with, eager to participate in most activities and always willing to teach signing. At the CHES annual workshops this year our four hearing-impaired students blended in with the rest of the students, participating in all of the activities. Much to the delight of the student assembly they signed poetry and performed dances for their part in the evening entertainment.

by Norm Filipenko, Agent in Kenya

Notice to Sponsors – CHES AGM

All CHES supporters are invited to join us for our annual general meeting which will be held Saturday, September 13, 2014, from 2 – 4 pm at the Centennial Community Centre in New Westminster. Light refreshments will be served as we review successes of the past year, present new initiatives, and elect the 2014/2015 Board of Directors.
Overcoming the Language Barrier

Our Tanzanian students have many barriers to overcome in their pursuit of education. Often they are breaking the family and societal mold in even wanting an education. They often come from backgrounds where education is virtually non-existent. Once at school, they have large classes and a lack of teachers. But the greatest barrier of all is simply that the girls are taught and examined in 11 academic subjects in a language very few of them can understand. English instruction begins in Standard (grade) 4 but some students can do little more than count the numbers and express greetings by the time they transfer to secondary school. Many others, like Canadian students in the same situation, have a decent vocabulary on paper but cannot understand the spoken word.

Three years ago, our executive director, Dr. Joy Ruffeski, a retired educator, took steps to alter this situation. At her own expense she has travelled to Katesh twice a year to present new interactive language learning concepts to a core group of teachers. These teachers give up their holiday time to attend and then present the program. They also work with CHES students at their tutorials and with all students in their regular classrooms. Joy will return yet again in June to expand this program.

How much does it help?

On my own recent visits to Katesh, I have noticed that the CHES girls, particularly those in Forms III and IV, are much more willing to engage in conversation and are better able to understand what is said. This informal observation has been validated with the recent exam cycle. For the last decade, between 5 and 15 CHES students in Tanzania have achieved a mark high enough to entitle them to continue on to Form V in high school. This year we had 29 girls achieve this level. English marks in particular were higher, thus increasing a student’s overall average. There is little doubt that each student’s greater facility in English has helped her gain these higher marks.

The dedication and hard work involved in this initiative are paying off as we see the success of our CHES students in Tanzania.

by Chris Harker

Harambee Charity Golf Classic

The very popular 6th Annual Harambee Charity Golf Classic tournament will be held on Monday, July 14, 2014, at the Musqueam Golf and Learning Academy in Vancouver.

This highly successful golf tournament is co-chaired by PGA of Canada golf professionals, Ginny Golding and April Stubbs. It is dedicated to supporting the education of poor young African girls through CHES. Since its inception, the Harambee Charity Golf Classic tournaments have raised a net total of $157,000! This year, CHES asked our golf committee to fulfill an urgent need by committing the tournament proceeds to help their students with additional English language assistance and to provide the students with necessary school and personal supplies.

We are seeking support in various ways:
• Be a tournament sponsor
• Be a hole sponsor at $100 per hole
• Donate an item for the silent auction

If you would like to be a supporter of the golf tournament please visit www.harambeegolf.ca and follow the links.

by Carol Gilchrist
Our CHES girls in Tanzania struggle with math. One very obvious explanation is the lack of teachers to cover those periods; another is the common worldwide phenomenon that many girls feel they cannot do math. Often they feel detached from the teaching, easy to do in a large class. This may have been addressed in Canada but not so in most of the Third World. But the most overwhelming reason in Tanzania is that the girls don't understand their texts or what their teachers say because their English skills are often not up to the task of understanding what is asked.

Here’s an example:
Teacher: I have five mangoes and give three to Jumma. How many are left?
Student: I don’t know how many were right mangoes and how many were left mangoes so I can’t answer this question.

Before she died last year, retired math teacher Sue Harbinger generously donated $20,000 to CHES for the purpose of helping our Tanzanian girls improve their math scores. After much consideration, the CHES Board decided to emulate the successful English immersion program and to introduce a cadre of successful Tanzanian math teachers to skills and techniques targeted to help the girls.

CHES approached math guru Robb Taylor from Lumsden, Saskatchewan. After 35 years of teaching math in five countries on three continents and as a past CHES agent and current sponsor, he was well qualified to do the job. He accepted immediately and began preparing in May 2013. In March this year he and his wife, Jeanette, arrived in Katesh ready to face the challenge.

Twelve experienced math teachers were released from their classroom duties by the District Education Officer, who manifested his strong support for this initiative by officially opening the seminar himself. It was held in the dining hall of Sara Williams Hostel at our CHES House in Katesh.

Robb began his seminar by showing the teachers a Grade 7 Math book in Swahili. He told them that although he was a math expert and that he understood the diagrams and numbers in the book, he didn’t understand any of the explanations or know what he was supposed to do to solve the problems. Heads nodded and eyes lit up in understanding.

For five solid days, from March 17 to 21, Robb worked with this group using a seminar format. Questions were raised and answers sought through discussion. Participants generated solutions to the language questions. The seminar introduced and developed ideas to improve basic skills and strategies to involve students and turn them on to math. Robb left each teacher with a huge handbook of information and sample activities (including dice and playing cards) relating to the important points in the curriculum. He gave them diagnostic and exam tools. As the week progressed, teachers added their own notes to these resources.

At the end of the week the teachers endorsed Robb’s effort by writing comments such as “I am fully committed to this programme now,” “This was a very exciting week,” and “I found every day stimulating.” They presented Robb with a beautifully embroidered Barbaig blanket as an indication of their appreciation.

In July these teachers will meet our CHES students for a week of math immersion. It remains to be seen if such new and imaginative approaches are successful but we have every reason to suspect that math scores, like those after two years of the English immersion program, will increase in the years to come.

by Chris Harker
Fun and Learning at Workshops

In November 2013, Kenyan CHES girls in Forms 1, 3, and 4 attended a weekend of workshops provided by CHES to enhance the students’ academic and personal skills. Since 2011 these workshops have been funded by special donations from the Harambee Charity Golf Classic.

Students began registering at Bishop Sulumeti Girls Secondary School on Friday morning, November 22. They were given a bright red CHES T-shirt with the words “umoja pamoja” stenciled on the back. Umoja pamoja is the Kiswahili phrase for “unity together,” which has been the theme of the workshops for the past several years.

After registering, the girls gathered in an open field where they were introduced to one another, and then sang and danced. By 1:00 p.m. most of the 243 girls had arrived and it was time for lunch. Florence Iminza, CHES Kenya Board member, welcomed everyone and asked the blessing. After lunch, Anthony Napali, Chairperson, introduced Board members and CHES agents. After a few words of welcome from all, the fun began!

Form 1 girls joined in an activity to experience the theme of umoja pamoja. The girls were divided into random groups of five, and each group was given a box of materials and asked to create either something from “junk” or a picture mosaic from different colored foodstuffs. The main purpose of this activity was to have the Form 1 girls interact from different schools interact in an enjoyable, creative way. The results were amazing!

Form 3 girls gathered in another part of the school to watch and discuss a movie entitled “Study Habits of Smart Students.”

Form 4 girls met on the soccer pitch to participate in cooperative games. Unfortunately, about halfway through, the heavens opened and we experienced a torrential downpour. The games were toned down, and continued in a classroom.

Before dinner the girls were given mattresses and wash pails and assigned a place in the dormitory. Florence Iminza was housemother while Christine Murunga (a registered nurse and former CHES student) looked after the aches and pains.

After a traditional meal of beef stew, ugali, and greens the girls entertained each other with traditional dances, songs, and poems. The deaf girls especially enjoyed participating in their own way, signing poems and dancing.

On Saturday, November 23, after breakfast, classes began at 8 a.m. according to the following schedules:

**Form 1:**
- Course choices
  - Assertiveness 1
  - Math tricks
  - Reproductive health

**Form 3:**
- Financial literacy
  - Study skills
  - Career options
  - Stress management

**Form 4:**
- Critical thinking
  - Finance and income generation
  - Way forward after Form 4
  - Assertiveness 2

There were two plenary sessions presented by lawyer Flora Bidali. Form 1 students learned about children’s rights and child abuse. Forms 3 and 4 covered women’s rights under the new constitution.

After dinner, the girls watched the movie “Whale Rider,” which they rated as a “Wow” movie. Many of the schools study this book and seeing the film enhanced the girls’ interest.

Sunday morning, November 24, started with a hearty breakfast at 7 a.m. followed by closing ceremonies complete with speeches and singing. After students tidied up, they went home for the Christmas holidays.

When the girls were asked their response to the workshops, the most common reaction was “Wow!” It was a very motivating way to end the term and gave the girls much to build on for the future.

by Norm Filipenko, Agent in Kenya
Meeting My CHES Student

My newest CHES student, Adelaide Shichetselo, goes to school at Shikunga Secondary School near Kakamega, Kenya. I’ve always wondered about my sponsored students, what are their lives like, their schools, and their families. I have sponsored CHES students since the 1990s and I also know something of the country as I had taught in Kenya for one term in 1980.

While I was on a trip to Kenya in November 2013, a friend in the Ministry of Education in Kenya and the CHES office helped make it possible for me to visit Adelaide at her school. Adelaide is in Form 1, the equivalent of Grade 9 in Canada, the first year of secondary school. She lives only about 15 km from the school but most secondary schools in Kenya are boarding schools and a school bus is a rarity. So Adelaide, like most students, boards at school and goes home on weekends and school breaks.

Adelaide was quiet at first, and it helped that the deputy head teacher took us on a tour of the school. Few mzungus (white people) visit these parts of Kenya and I was a diversion for the students. Adelaide soon lost her shyness and we had a great visit. I had brought an atlas of Canada so we used that as an icebreaker.

Adelaide is a good student and a prefect. Prefects in the Kenya secondary boarding schools are part of the school discipline. They monitor the students in their group to ensure that rules and regulations are being followed. It can be a difficult role and requires maturity.

Adelaide comes from a family of six children. She has three older brothers who are shepherds. Adelaide is 16. She has a 12-year-old brother who attends primary school. The family is poor and lives in a semi-permanent house made of iron sheets, including the roof, with mud and cow dung mixed to make the floor. When she is home, one of Adelaide’s jobs is to gather small sticks to make the fire and also to bring water from the river, carrying the water on her head.

Adelaide has big dreams to be a lawyer because she sees a lot of injustice in the world. For most young rural Kenyan women, just finishing high school is a huge accomplishment, but perhaps she’ll be one of the few who goes on. And even if she doesn’t fulfill those big dreams, an education will make Adelaide more able to earn a living and increase the likelihood that her family has a higher level of literacy and education. An education is a win for the family and community as well as the student.

by Connie Gerwing, CHES sponsor

Please Consider This

As many of our sponsors and supporters are aware, there is a worldwide trend to save our forests by reducing paper use by sending out newsletters by email. In CHES we feel it is important to be a bit more focussed in following this trend.

We would appreciate it very much if those of you who have email addresses could help us by accepting your newsletters by email and if necessary informing us at canadianharambee@shaw.ca if your email address is new or has changed. For those of you who receive newsletters by email and delete them inadvertently and wish to look up a back copy, you will also find them on our website (www.canadianharambee.ca). It is also important for you to know that at CHES we consider email addresses as confidential and do not divulge them to any other organization.

We are sensitive to the fact that some of you may not have email addresses and so we will continue to send you printed copies.