Canadian Harambee Education Society

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

Spring 2016 Newsletter #61

Notice to Sponsors – CHES AGM

All CHES supporters are invited to join us for our Annual General Meeting on Saturday, September 17, 2016, from 2 – 4 pm.

The meeting will be held at the Centennial Community Centre in New Westminster. Refreshments will be served as we review the successes of the past year, present updates on our initiatives, and elect the Board of Directors.
Harambee Charity Golf Classic News

The very successful Harambee Charity Golf Classic (Year 7 of the tournament) will be hosted on Monday, July 11, 2016, at the University Golf Club in Vancouver, BC.

The Harambee Golf tournament, co-chaired by PGA of Canada golf professionals, Ginny Golding and April Stubbs, is dedicated to supporting CHES by providing funds to help CHES students with English Immersion, Life Skills, and Math workshops as well as providing first year CHES students in Kenya with necessary school and personal supplies.

To date, the Harambee golf tournaments have raised over $204,124 for CHES.

Ways you can help include:

- be a tournament sponsor
- be a hole sponsor at $100.00
- donate a silent auction item
- sponsor a girl

To donate, please visit www.harambeegolf.ca and follow the links.

Victoria CHES Supporters

You are invited to attend a production of the Gershwin classic CRAZY FOR YOU at Claremont Secondary’s RIDGE Theatre at 7 pm on May 24. This is a Fund Raiser for CHES so there are some substantial prizes to be won in addition to being able to enjoy an evening of memorable songs presented by some talented and energetic students.

Tickets are $40. Tax Receipts will be issued for $28. Contact Chris or Catriona Harker for tickets or more information.

Tel: 250 656 9229 Email: Chriscat@pacificcoast.net

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It has come to our attention that some of our supporters would welcome the opportunity to re-
mit monthly supplementary donations automatically and without having to think about it every
month. These donations would be in addition to sponsorship monies that we do need to have
sent in yearly by the end of December (school fees must be paid to the schools by CHES each
January). If you would like to follow up on this suggestion, please leave a message on our office
phone (778-565- 5261) or send us an email canadianharambee@shaw.ca Like many small
NGOs, we struggle to make ends meet so, no matter how small the amount, we can find a use
for it.

Saskatchewan News: Plants for CHES

Willie has almost finished his first transplanting. This year he has almost 20 tomato varieties as
well as 4 green pepper, several parsley, and basil varieties - sort of one-stop shopping!

As he did last year, he will be sending half of the funds earned to the Canadian Harambee
Education Society to help with the education of girls in Tanzania.
For a copy of the varieties please contact Sara Williams (sara.williams@usask.ca). The plants
themselves should be available about May 16.
Feel free to pass this information on to your friends, family, neighbours, and post-person.

By Sara Williams

RR Smith Foundation
Grant Received

CHES is pleased to announce that we have received a $750 grant from the BC
Teachers’ Federation through the RR
Smith Foundation. These monies are
targeted to providing textbooks for our
students in Kenya.

A special thank you to the BCTF for
their generous donation.

Allan the Kenyan Cow

Currently Lorrie Williams has a former CHES stu-
dent, Sarah, living with her while she attends col-
lege in Canada. Lorrie’s brother Allan had Sarah’s
dad in Kenya buy a cow for the family and, for
whatever reason, Allan wanted the cow to be called
Allan.

Recently a photo was sent to Canada of “Allan the
Cow”. The picture was then framed properly. If you
visit Allan’s house you’ll see it there along with his
“Allan” photo coffee mug.

Check Out Our Updated Website

Our website www.canadianharambee.ca has constant updates of information on its pages. There
are notices of coming events, past happenings, and new pictures from Kenya and Tanzania.
Check out the links on the website – you may even see a photo of your student or the school she
attends!

If you have any questions concerning expenses or CHES finances, please contact our office. You
may also check CHES’ T3010 filing with the Canadian Revenue Agency for the complete finan-
cial information at the following link http://bit.ly/1HmNa4V

We can’t do everything . . . but we can do something!
The 2nd annual general meeting of the Kenyan CHES Alumni Association was held on the last Saturday of December, 2015. The 98 of 435 registered members attending, were joined by members of the Kenyan board, patrons at the schools CHES students attend, and the three CHES agents. Members in attendance were thanked for their effort to attend as many had to travel considerable distances to be there. The purpose of the meeting was to elect a new executive, to review the work of the past year, and to set goals for 2016.

The constitution drafted and approved by the members and CHEBAK (CHES Beneficiary Alumni of Kenya) is now registered with the Ministry of Gender, Culture, and Social Affairs. It is an independent organization and recognized in Kenyan law. A membership and fee schedule was set. Along with a new initiative to design CHES Alumni t-shirts for sale, the Christmas card and vegetable fundraisers and the membership fees allow CHEPAK to fund the current expenses of the organization. The 2016 executive was elected and clear goals and objectives were set. Membership is open to any CHES beneficiary. Membership is increasing due to recent CHEBAK recruiting at the Form 4 graduation ceremonies and a continuing outreach to former graduates.

The table officers are: Chairperson: Mwanaida Abidi, Vice-Chair: Edith Olwande, Treasurer: Synthia Shivachi, and Secretary General: Sarah Anyika.

The main goal of the organization is to support the work of CHES Kenya and the current CHES girls. CHEPAC members are reminded that wherever they are, they are role models for success, hard work, and independence. As girls who have been sponsored, have gone through the program and succeeded, they are expected to be role models and mentors to current beneficiaries.

Specifically, they will support the CHES office and patrons. Volunteers have been selected to go into each of the CHES schools and beginning in May will go to the schools to encourage, advise, support, and where necessary, tutor CHES girls.

The self help, investment group continues to expand. Interested CHEPAC members are invited to join an investment group; a common practice of organizations and groups of friends in East Africa. With bank interest rates often topping 20%, volunteer groups get together and pay a monthly fee. In an emergency, with group approval the funds of the organization can be borrowed at a more reasonable interest rate.

The meeting ended by setting the date for the 2016 AGM, by thanking the generous Canadian donors who make the CHES program possible, and recognizing the support the alumni group gets from CHES Canada Board and agents.

The Annual General meeting, as the girls are dispersed widely following high school, is the only face to face meeting of CHEPAK. Throughout the year the girls use social media to conduct business and exchange ideas. Whatsapp, Facebook, and email groups are widely used. An administrator has been assigned to each group.

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There are 137 whatsapp users with Lucy Vugusta as administrator. There are 85 Facebook users with Edith Olwande as administrator. Virtually all members have email and Sarah Anyika administers this group. Discussions are held and decisions made after the day’s responsibilities are completed, using social media groups.

Information provided by Sarah Anyika (CHEBAC General Secretary) and compiled by Gordon Brown (CHES Canada Board member)
Success for Barbaig Girls

The area around Katesh – headquarters of the CHES programme in Tanzania – was, and to a large extent, still is, peopled by two main tribal groups: the Iraqi, who tend to be agriculturalists, and the Barbaig, who are pastoral herders. The Barbaig people traditionally, were nomadic – they moved their herds to wherever there was water and better pastures. They lived in simple temporary dwellings, practised polygamy, and for special occasions dressed in beaded skins (women) or simple robes (men). Seldom did one see a Barbaig man without a spear.

Long time sponsors and those of you who have read Chris’s book about CHES in Katesh, *White Necklace*, will know that CHES started in Tanzania as a result of the unintended marginalization of the Barbaig people by a Canadian Wheat Project in the 70s. CHES began in Katesh in 1992 and appeared to flourish. Each year the numbers of students increased. However, by early 2003, a survey of our girls showed that although we were sponsoring many needy and eligible girls, few were actually Barbaig. We wondered if the selection committee was biased though this seemed unlikely as several members were Barbaig themselves. Nevertheless, we asked “why”? The answer was quite simple. The committee selected girls who graduated from Standard (Grade) 7 with satisfactory marks. We learned that very few Barbaig girls remained in school beyond Standard 3 and any that continued to Standard 7 seldom achieved a passing mark. Simply put, we could not select girls who weren’t there or didn’t qualify.

Understanding the problem was one thing. Coming up with a workable solution was another. Catriona, because of her recent retirement from the Victoria School District, saw the great need for books in the primary system and started providing texts and story books for the schools, first supported by a Victoria based NGO called “The African Book Box Society” and later by 8 Victoria elementary schools. These books were written in Tanzania to support the local curriculum, were culturally appropriate, written in Swahili, and significantly less expensive than any far less useful books available in Canada. Together she and Chris would purchase the books in Arusha, put them in metal chests and, over time, deliver “book boxes” to more than 40 primary schools in and around Katesh.

Until these books started to arrive, schools often had no texts at all. Now the students could have or at least share the texts during the relevant lessons.

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Teachers now had the equivalent of curriculum guides. Even just after 3 years, there were more Barbaig girls lasting longer in primary school and starting to apply for secondary school. Now, 15 years later over $45,000 worth of books have found their way into children’s and teacher’s hands.

But that was only one part of the story. From 2000 until 2007 CHES was receiving CIDA grants, thanks to the very time consuming but rewarding proposal writing of Louise Paulsen, Mandy Klepic, and Bev Ford. We decided to use some of these funds to start a program which we called the “Primary Initiatives” with its purpose being to increase the Barbaig girls’ secondary school attendance even more.

On one of our visits to Katesh, Catriona formed a committee of a small group of CHES grads who were already in the work force. Together they identified the problems and issues and the grads were invited to come up with solutions. Over a period of two years, these young women visited over 30 remote Barbaig villages talking and listening to the women first (a revolutionary step) followed by the Elders and then the members of the entire village. Under the guidance of the Barbaig CHES grads, the villagers came up with many ways to support their children and send them to the village schools. They also articulated the support needed. CHES, using CIDA money, supplied uniforms, lunch programs, and stationary supplies - the lack of which had prevented children from attending school. There was a 100% increase in primary school attendance the following year. The young Barbaig CHES Grads were role models: educated, multilingual, self assured, and liberated. They inspired the villagers by their success. Those who became teachers returned to teach in their village schools.

It took a few years but now the tide has turned! Each year we can look down our lists of CHES students in Katesh and notice the large number of Barbaig girls. These girls, now graduating from primary schools are continuing on to graduate from Form 4 in numbers that often equal those from other groups. Some are entering Form 5 while others head for Teachers’ College or seek jobs in the community. Some return to their family village but, with 11 years of education now behind them, the standards they will establish for their future families will undoubtedly move this new generation from their previous lives into the 21st century while still honouring their own values and culture.

By Chris and Catriona Harker

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CHES Math Seminar held in Katesh

In early March 2016, a group of travellers from Canada visited Katesh while on a safari organized by CHES supporters and sponsors Jeanette and Robb Taylor. They stayed in a local guest house, shared a banquet at CHES house with local volunteers and CHES girls, delivered eight laptops from the Sasktel Pioneers, and had a tour of CHES house, the Sara Williams Hostel, the garden, and the dining hall/kitchen.

They came away so impressed that at the end of their safari, they presented the Taylors with funds to sponsor a CHES girl. The Taylors were fortunate enough to meet Martina Mangila, a Form I student at Dumbeta Secondary School, who is now sponsored by the group for 2016.

Bruce McKee of Regina, just finishing off a 3 month stint as a CHES agent in Kenya and sponsor of a CHES girl in Tanzania, paid CHES Hanang a visit which coincided with the Taylor group stay.

The Taylors returned to Katesh after the safari for Robb to facilitate the 3rd CHES Math Seminar for a dozen secondary school Mathematics teachers who teach at schools attended by CHES girls. These seminars have been financed by funds donated by a generous donor who had been a Math teacher as well as by fundraisers in Canada.

The seminar was a collegial discussion. The teachers discussed various difficulties arising from huge class sizes, weak basic math skills from elementary schools, language difficulties due to most students encountering textbooks and instruction in English for the first time (for some students English could be their fourth language), and even lack of electricity in schools and homes (meaning homework had to be done by candle light or lamplight if at all).

If you think English is easy, consider this sentence:
“A rough-coated, dough-faced, thoughtful plough man as he strolled through the streets of Scarborough after falling in a slough, coughed and hiccoughed.”
How many ways is “ough” pronounced in that sentence?

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The participants in the seminar realized that vocabulary was important. Definitions had to be clearly stated. Examples had to be chosen carefully.

The teachers agreed that teaching strategies should include hands-on activities. Simple ideas such as a paper number line taped to the wall could be used time and time again without the teacher having to draw it on the blackboard (if there was one) each time it was needed. The smiles on faces were incredible when it was pointed out that another number line taped perpendicular to the first established a Cartesian Plane on the wall and points and lines could be plotted easily and quickly using bits of masking tape.

Each teacher was given a multi-paged flipchart. Various topics were discussed and teachers were challenged to produce flipcharts on the topic demonstrating vocabulary, diagrams, clear statement of laws and formulae, and examples of questions. These were then posted on the walls and discussions of the various charts took place. Sharing of ideas happened spontaneously.

The discovery that these teachers could leave the seminar with a set of flip charts of their own to use and re-use with their classes brought more smiles.

It was wonderful to see the teachers in pairs using the Sasktel laptops to investigate ways to use a spreadsheet to illustrate simple or complex examples in different areas of mathematics.

The CHES Chairman, Mzee Pius Masha, attended some of the sessions and gave encouragement to the group. The Secretary-Treasurer, Naomi Saulo, dropped in, took photos and spoke to participants, encouraging them to use the suggestions discussed and to work hard for all their students. Morning tea breaks and a substantial lunch were provided each day by William the cook and Raheli the matron. As always, Office Manager & Administrator Bernadetta Basili supported the project. The seminar was endorsed by the District Education Officer.

Evaluation sheets enthusiastically thanked CHES for the seminar and requested more seminars to cover more topics and strategies and that teachers of Standard 6 and 7 (the last 2 years of elementary school) be included in future. Each participant left with a book with hints and strategies to complement his flip charts. Special thanks go to Rufina and Romana in the CHES Shop for the professional preparation and binding of the books.

By Robb Taylor

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What Does a CHES Agent Do in Kakamega.

The primary purpose of a CHES agent in Kakamega is to represent the interests of CHES Canada and its sponsors and donors.

The Canadian agent operates within a safe and secure environment with the knowledge and support of a wonderful group of local residents including a committed Kenyan board, a talented and personable office manager, guards which do a lot more than provide security, and a cleaning lady who offers assistance and advice on every subject local. All of these people offer an important knowledge and insight into the local Kenyan culture and traditions.

From within this environment the agent has many long full days but also with sufficient break times to enjoy the game parks, the beaches, and the rich cultures of East Africa.

The journey for a CHES girl begins with the selection process. Girls from all over Kakamega county gather at CHES House to vie for the few scholarships available. Space in a quality secondary school with full board, books, and basic provisions is a valued prize available to those girls who meet the CHES standards of high academic achievement and an impoverished background. Documents are checked and home visits are made to check the integrity of the information provided. The CHES agent has some oversight in the selection process both participating in the interviews and in the selection decisions. Following the selection process, text books are distributed from the CHES library and, for first year girls, basic necessities for boarding are provided.

At the end of each academic term all the CHES girls have to go to CHES House with their marks which are recorded and results sent to sponsors. Agents are involved in greeting the girls, recording marks, taking pictures, and advising and counselling girls on a variety of concerns.

During the course of their tenure in Kakamega, agents meet with the Kenyan board; oversee the expenditure of funds; make recommendations on pay adjustments; help organize and attend special functions such as the Form 4 graduation, patron meetings, and the Annual General meeting; help organize train and participate in the annual developmental workshops for CHES girls; and visit and monitor the schools where CHES girls attend.

There is much to do on a regular basis as a representative of CHES Canada in Kakamega and once in a while a special, exciting challenge is presented. At the present time, the building of a new CHES house is one of those challenges faced by the agent and the CHES Canada board. Thanks to the generosity of Ginny Golding and her 65th birthday golf event and a generous benefactor from Saskatchewan, CHES has the opportunity to build their own office and agent accommodation in Kakamega. A plot has been purchased in a decent part of town that is easily accessible to the CHES girls who have to visit at least once a term.

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The CHES Canada board has directed that the new CHES House will be an efficient but functional building which will meet the needs of CHES business and the comfort of CHES agents in Kakamega. It will consist of an office area, meeting room, library, full kitchen, secure file room with a safe, as well as a toilet, shower, and bedroom for agents. The space will serve double duty: an office by day and comfortable agent accommodation by night. The plot will be surrounded by a wall, with a gate and guard shack for security and the protection of CHES property and agent/agents.

At present the building design in underway and arrangements are being made to take the design to the county board for the variety of approvals that are needed before building can start. A search is underway for an honest, reliable, and qualified contractor in a country where the building industry is not as well regulated as we have come to expect in Canada. The first phase of the building will be the perimeter wall and guard shack so building materials can be left safely at the site. It is an exciting project that will demand agents to become familiar with the various regulations regarding building in Kakamega county and the culture of the construction industry there.

However, when the CHES House in Kakamega is completed it will free up the significant amount of money currently spent on rent and repairs; money which then can then go to providing additional scholarships to girls in Kakamega county.

It is an exciting project, which, thanks to two special donors, will serve CHES and academically talented, poor rural girls in Kakamega county for years to come. The target completion date is February 2017.

By Gordon Brown

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Thank You to Sponsors and Donors

CHES would like to thank all of the sponsors who have sent in the $600 to pay for their student for the 2016 school year. If you have not done so and are unable to continue sponsoring your student, please let us know so we can find another sponsor. Currently we have 4 girls without sponsors so if you have friends who are interested in supporting education of a girl in Africa or are willing to support another student yourself, please contact the CHES office.

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

Please remember that no director or agent of CHES receives any remuneration for his or her work with CHES. Your sponsorship only covers school fees for your student, so CHES must raise additional monies yearly for student supplies and textbooks; teacher and student workshops, tutorials, and seminars; education related capital projects designed to enhance student learning at to offset future local expenses; program management and administration in Kenya and Tanzania; and organization (CHES) management and administration in Canada.

The Call of Katesh

We still have a few copies of Chris Harker’s recent publication, THE CALL OF KATESH. Chris and Catriona have returned to Katesh at least once and often twice a year since 2001. They’ve met a lot of interesting people, attended some very special events and experienced occasions that range from the mundane to the unique.

Chris has recorded these in his inimitably light hearted style. Most of it relates to CHES and the work we do in Tanzania; it’s a good read.

Copies are $20 with ALL proceeds going to CHES. Contact the office if you’d like one.

CHES adheres to the ethical principles of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Please check out these principles on the following link:
http://www.afpnet.org/Ethics/EnforcementDetail.cfm?ItemNumber=32610

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