

Canadian Harambee Education Society

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

Fall 2023 Newsletter #80



Lorrie Williams Recognized with Service Award



Congratulations to Lorrie Williams on receiving the George Doering Service Award on August 5, 2023. The award was presented by MP Peter Julian and MLA Raj Chouhan. Lorrie was delighted to receive the award recognizing her contributions to her local community and for her work internationally.

As the founder of CHES in 1985, Lorrie has continued as a Board member for 38 years. In that time thousands of girls have been supported to complete secondary school in Kenya and Tanzania.

Lorrie was a city councillor in New Westminister for over 16 years. Her progressive policies helped to move New Westminister to be a leader in several social programs, such as

childcare and supportive housing. She quite often took on the role of acting mayor and she received the Citizen of the Year Award in 2019. We are very proud of Lorrie's recognition as a community activist. It is an award that is well deserved.

Congratulations, Lorrie!

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Tutorial Sessions in Tanzania

Think back to when you went to school. How would you feel about entering Grade 8 and having to cope with 9 out of 10 subjects in your third language? Imagine, too, attempting to learn some pretty sophisticated math without the assistance of a regular math teacher. These daunting challenges face virtually all our students in Tanzania.

Primary school classes in rural Tanzania often have 60 or more students in each class and formal English lessons don't begin until standard (grade) 3. Also, English is not widely used in Tanzania. In everyday conversations people speak either their own mother tongue or Swahili. Learning the days of the week or the numbers up to 100 plus vocabulary and verb tenses in English certainly helps, but many students find themselves initially lost in secondary school having to listen to teachers lecture in English on topics such as the implications of the 1885 Berlin Conference or how bees pollinate a flower. Math is taught well in primary school but students are expected to listen and learn; there is seldom time for questions and clarification.

To help our girls succeed, CHES provides a one-month tutorial session during the school holidays in June and July each year. Two weeks are dedicated to Math and another two to English. In 2023 eighteen teachers (many of whom were CHES grads) were hired to work with the 237 (out of 244) girls who attended. Smaller classes, focused study and a variety of teaching methods combined to assist the students prepare for their year-end exams. In their final week, students wrote "mock" exams similar to those they will sit for in November. The success of this program has been proven by the increase in the number of girls graduating from Form IV with marks entitling them to continue on to Form V and VI, known in Tanzania as high school.

The tutorial report, prepared by our office staff in Katesh for 2023, stated, "The support that our girls get through these programmes is very valuable and all of us here in Tanzania appreciate and treasure it. The help the girls are getting makes a big change in our girls' lives. We appreciate and thank one and all for this huge support."

The students are accommodated at the Sara Williams Hostel. As our girls attend 29 different schools during regular term time, it is a wonderful opportunity for them to meet and work with each other. Often lifetime friendships begin here.

The cost for all this is covered by the sponsorship fee of \$650. This annual event cost \$19,500 last year. This included all the necessary food, security, teacher fees and classroom rentals. It worked out to a bit more than \$4 per day per girl.

As this programme has proven to be instrumental in improving the marks--and therefore the futures--of virtually every girl, it is, indeed, a bargain.





Why don't we do this in Kenya?

There are three reasons that CHES does not offer the same tutorial sessions in Kenya:

Much more English is spoken in Kenya than in Tanzania, and Kenyan students are taught English as their second language from Standard 1. This means that most students are relatively fluent in English when they enter secondary school.

CHES students in Kenya all attend prestigious schools that have a far lower student-teacher

ratio than the schools in Tanzania. Hence there is really little need for this extra tuition.

The costs involved in attending these schools in Kenya are much higher than in Tanzania. There is money from sponsors' fees to pay for the tutorials for their Tanzanian students.

However, when the need arises, CHES is able to divert necessary funds from other budgets for students in Kenya.

Examples:

- When schools were closed during COVID, CHES organized special tuition classes for our Kenyan students in the Kakamega CHES compound.
- CHES did the same last year when contaminated water forced the closure of one of the schools our students attend.

Thus the opportunities for higher education are relatively equal for Kenyan and Tanzanian students.

by Chris and Catriona Harker



If You Donate Through Canada Helps

CHES is always looking for ways to save money as doing so enables us to sponsor more girls.

Canada Helps is an easy and convenient way for sponsors and donors to contribute to CHES. And, rest assured, we welcome every donation that comes to us through this business. But keep in mind, it is a business, and Canada Helps takes over 3% of every payment. It may not seem much for a single donation but it adds up. Last year \$3,048 worth of sponsors' dollars went to Canada Helps, enough to pay the annual sponsorship for almost five girls.

Some donors are able to get matching funds from their employer or pension provider when they make a charitable donation. For at least one company, those donations must be made through Canada Helps, and the double donation is obviously worth the 3% fee.

If sending in your sponsorship fees through Canada Helps is the way that works best for you, please continue to use this service. However, nowadays anyone who has a bank account can use an e-transfer to pay bills. It is immediate, easy and costs nothing. If you are familiar with this method of payment, please consider using it when the time comes to send in your next donation.

Transfer detail:

Name: Canadian Harambee Education Society

Email: ches@canadianharambee.ca

Emiliana's Story

Emiliana, 14, is now in Form III at Measkron Secondary School in Tanzania. She was raised by her mother and her stepfather with her siblings. Emiliana wrote that her life was tough and that her stepfather spoke to her and her older sister "by command words" but they did not know of anywhere else to go. She wrote that in primary school she seemed different because of her "cracked" uniform and not having proper shoes. However, there were people that wanted to help her. Emiliana wrote that she would never forget her primary school headmaster who told her to study very hard, and "when you pass well I will show you the place where you will get support." The headmaster was referring to CHES, which Emiliana did not know about at that time.



After Emiliana finished primary school, her mother left home and Emiliana and her older sister were left with her stepfather. Emiliana was very happy when she got her exam results two months later but she did not know how she could afford secondary school. Her mother sent a school uniform but there was no money for fees and books. However, her headmaster had applied to CHES on her behalf and he told her to attend the CHES office one Saturday. This is what Emiliana says about the news that she would be a CHES student:

I gained my lost hope and my mother was so happy after hearing this information. My school fees were paid and other school needs also paid by CHES. I was seen as other students due to the sponsorship from CHES. It's my hope that I will reach my dreams through the sponsorship from CHES.



Janeth's Story

Janeth is 17 and in Form IV at Bassotu Secondary School. Her mother died when she was young, leaving their father with Janeth and three siblings. She said they had "an unhappy and helpless



life." It got no better when her father remarried a woman with five children. Janeth is the third oldest of the nine children. She wrote, "Sometimes I went to school without school uniforms and exercise books due to lack of money for school needs. There are some days my family didn't eat and we sleep without eating."

She began secondary school, but as there was no money, her father told her to leave. However, her headmaster told her to apply to CHES. Janeth was very happy to be chosen by CHES. She said it changed her life as she had previously been one of the children who were not able to fulfill their goals.

She said she studies hard and gets good results because she can study without obstacles. She also enjoys the benefit of the extra tuition in basic math and English immersion that CHES offers

during the school holidays. She wants to become a doctor.

Janeth ended her story with thanks to CHES sponsors:

I am encouraging them to continue giving sponsorship since it will help to save the lives of many poor girls and bring them to reach their goals. May almighty God bless our sponsors and pay twice to them for their kind hearts.

Former Agent and Long Time Sponsor is Remembered

Celebration of Life for Margaret Berry

September 24, 2023 (Sunday 1:00 – 5:00 pm)

Brockton Pavilion, Stanley Park

1151 Stanley Park Drive,

Vancouver, BC V6G 3E2

Please RVSP to Darlene by email: dberrydavis@hotmail.com

Margaret was a long term (25+ years) CHES sponsor whose generosity changed the lives of many students and families. Numerous students continued to stay in touch with Margaret long after their sponsorship ended; a testament to the commitment she had above providing sponsorship and writing to students.

Margaret was a CHES agent from September 1996 – April 1997 and then again, March 1998 – October 1998. She was thrilled to volunteer for CHES and said that her time in Kenya was the realization of a lifelong dream twice.

"I was most fortunate to realize my dream twice. Working as an agent was one of the most gratifying experiences of my life."

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Rebeca's Story

Rebeca, 17, attends Bassotu Secondary School in Tanzania in Form III. She wrote about the problems that caused her deepest stress when she lived at home while attending primary school. She said that every day her father was beating her mother. He told her that if she finished primary school she would be married (at age 14). She wrote, "Also he did not give me any school needs like books, pencil and pens."

Rebeca's mother told her that if she finished primary school, she would talk to the headmaster to get help. Encouraged by her mother's words, Rebeca said, "I increased the hardworking of my studies in order to score the good grade." While waiting for her exam results, her father told her to prepare to be married, but she ran away and went to stay with her grandmother.



When Rebeca was successful in her exams and was offered a place in secondary school, the headmaster told her to apply to CHES. Rebeca described the changes to her life and the importance of being sponsored by CHES:

Firstly it makes me continue well with my studies without any stress [for] my mother to pay the school fees and secondly the pocket money helps to buy all necessary school instruments like books, pens and compass instrument and to buy the girl requirement.

Rebeca ended by saying that if she is able to reach her goals, she will then be able to help her mother and the younger children.

ACCES 30th Anniversary Celebration

In the early 1990s, after learning about the work of CHES in Kenya and seeing the need for post-secondary scholarship assistance, Beth and George Scott founded ACCES in 1993. Just as is CHES, this organization is dedicated to alleviating poverty in Kenya and many CHES girls have received post-secondary scholarships through ACCES.



CHES directors Karen Kilbride, Mandy Klepic, and Joy Ruffeski along with our office secretary Julia Kambeitz were pleased to be able to attend their 30th Anniversary Celebration on June 10 and celebrate the work they have done and continue to do for needy but very bright students from the Kakamega area who qualify to attend university.



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Kenyan Update - University Entrance Fees Escalate

CHES' mandate in Kenya is limited to providing scholarships for girls in secondary schools. However, there are several other organizations in the Western Region, where CHES operates which assist those entering university and/or offer post-secondary scholarships. In addition, the Kenyan government offers levels of assistance and/or loans to individuals based their grades. Our CHES girls know that they are not permitted to ask their sponsors for monetary help or money to continue their studies past Form 4. This is clearly in the contract that their parents/guardians sign when they first receive their CHES sponsorship. Immediate termination of CHES assistance is the result if they do so.

The new leadership in Kenya has resulted in many changes – taxes have increased and the price of basic commodities have more than doubled. Another sad part of this story is that fees for universities have more than tripled by the new government. The fee for university tuition in 2022 was 40,55 Ksh but this year universities were able to set their own fee structures. These now range from 110,000 to 137,000 Ksh – triple that of the previous year. To make matters worse the students are not allowed to defer/postpone their university entry dates because there are a lot of changes which are being done to the education sector in Kenya.

CHES' Kenyan students did well with 33 of 42 students qualified to join universities, 3 to join colleges that provide trade courses, and the other 6 to attend diploma programs for primary teachers' colleges.

All CHES girls qualify for government help but the new government has not yet laid down proper guidelines on how to reach the funds. Our office manager and CHES directors in Kenya will share this information with the girls as it is received and help them provide the required information.

by Joy Ruffeski

(from information provided by Rebecca Odhiambo, Kenyan office manager)

Adelina's Response

In Tanzania, when parents die, abandon or are unable to support their children, invariably a family member (grandparent, uncle, older sibling) steps in to support the children left behind. They have to, as there is virtually no government support system. Almost all our CHES girls come from such homes.

Adelina – mentioned in our January 2023 newsletter – reacted to the article by writing to CHES directors Chris and Catriona Harker. We have her permission to share her letter.

She and her four siblings were brought up in Nangwa village by her mother as her father had disappeared. A small farm was the family's only means of support. Adelina received a CHES scholarship and graduated from Moshi Tech Secondary School in 2004. She completed her A-levels at Weruweru High School. Post-secondary studies followed.



Adelina is married to a policeman and now runs a successful safari and mountain climbing (Mt. Kilimanjaro) company and is able to do more than most of us would consider to be her “fair share.” Her generosity exemplifies the nature of so many Tanzanians.

Oooh dear Chris and Catriona

I got emotional reading this newsletter. You know I have always wanted to give back to CHES but got caught up with so many responsibilities helping relatives. Now I am paying university fees for 3 girls and 1 boy related to my husband and I. My house is full of people. At the moment there are 16 people whom we provide for.

During COVID we opened a small local restaurant from the small savings we had so we can give employment to many young people staying in our house but also to get a different source of income as tourism came to a halt. The restaurant manages to run itself now and we get a small profit from it. It is called MAS' Restaurant Bar and Café in Moshi. It's something to keep us moving without tourism. You can see it on Google. The name MAS are the initials of my husband, me and our late son Samuel. This has been our life for several years and I believe the more we give the more we receive.

I am also helping my sister get a place to stay. Her husband, who is an alcoholic, was beating her and the children so she had to move out. I am now almost finished building a house for her and I am at the final stage so she can move in by the end of the month [May].

I am grateful to you and Mama Catriona for your trust, support and for promoting our [safari] business. I will not let you down. I am able to do all these things because CHES gave me the foundation. I still wish to study further as I love studying. I finished my post-graduate Diploma in International Relations and Diplomacy with a first class mark and will continue for a Masters degree and hopefully, later, a PhD as I absolutely love the course. I am sure I can work and study and I have a great team of people whom I have worked with for over a decade.

I am now preparing and hopefully in the next two years I can go back to study.

*Lots of Love.
Adelina*



Auction of Tanzanian Carving

CHES supporter Mary Ellen Patterson, from Kamloops, has donated for auction “A Tanzanian Dinner Party,” the unique seven-piece carving shown here. What a conversation piece! Proceeds from this sale will go towards our tutorial and life skills workshops in Tanzania and Kenya.

The table carving of Africa is about 8 1/2 inches from north to south. The dinner guests are about 8 inches high.

Interested? You have one bid. Bids will be accepted until September 30, 2023 by email to ches@canadianharambee.ca.

The highest bidder will be contacted and can pick it up from the CHES office if you live in the Lower Mainland. If the winner lives elsewhere in Canada, we'll ship it to you. We will start with an opening bid of \$65.00.

The name of the lucky new owner will appear in our next newsletter.



More Important Facts

A number of readers contacted us to say that they found the Important Facts in previous newsletters interesting. Here are some more that we bet you didn't know!

1. A typical bird's feathers weigh more than twice as much as its bones.
2. Kestrels can locate voles from the sky because of ultra-violet light reflected by their urine.
3. The ancient Greek for Ostrich is Strouthokamelos, or "Sparrow Camel".
4. Ostriches can be trained to herd sheep.
5. Humans have been hunter-gathers for 99% of their history.
6. The shortest war ever fought was between Great Britain and Zanzibar on 27 August, 1896. Zanzibar surrendered after 38 minutes.
7. Gorillas can be put on the pill.
8. The world's biggest frog is bigger than the world's smallest antelope
9. The dik dik is a miniature antelope that can go months without water but dies after a week without salt.
10. Humans and elephants are the only animals with chins.

by Chris Harker



CHES AGM – October 28, 2023

In 2020, due to COVID, CHES needed to hold our AGM via Zoom. The Zoom format was popular and it has been used since for the CHES AGM.

A link for the AGM and materials for the meeting will be sent out approximately a week prior to the AGM. Please watch for the invitation and bookmark the email link or copy the phone number so you can attend.

Both online and phone access is available through the Zoom format allowing sponsors and contributors worldwide to attend the meeting rather than just those who live in the Lower Mainland.

Date: October 28, 2023, at 2 p.m. (Pacific time)

