

Canadian Harambee Education Society

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

Winter 2024 Newsletter #81



Our Amazing Staff in Kenya and Tanzania

CHES is very fortunate to have such dedicated individuals who work for CHES in our Kenyan and Tanzanian offices. Our organization is well respected by district as well as educational officers in both areas. Although agents from Canada try to visit yearly, COVID certainly prevented that from 2020 until 2023. During those years Rebecca, Naomi, and Bernadetta looked after all facets of our operations in Kakamega and Katesh.

At the start of 2023, we breathed a sigh of relief thinking the worst was over, the school year in Kenya would return to normal, and all CHES girls were safe and secure. However, that was not to be; disasters occurred in both countries this past year.

In Kenya one of the schools used by CHES was closed for over a month due to water poisoning and several CHES students were hospitalized as a result. In Tanzania huge landslides engulfed much of Katesh at the beginning of December. Although the CHES compound was not destroyed, the town was devastated, and people there remain in a state of shock; several thousand remain homeless.

In both countries CHES employees met the challenges and ensured that all CHES girls were looked after. Workshops were set up in Kenya for the girls so that they would not fall behind during the month the school was closed and medical assistance was obtained for those affected by the poisoning. In Tanzania the CHES girls were kept secure at the Sara Williams Hostel until their families were contacted and they were able to return to their homes safely. Fortunately this happened as the school year was ending and the girls had been preparing to return to their villages later that week.

We cannot thank Rebecca, Naomi, and Bernadetta enough for how they have always gone over and above what their job description says. They truly care for all the CHES girls as if they are their family. Asante sana from all the sponsors and contributors; you are the backbone of CHES.

CHES Office: #102B - 9030 King George Blvd.,
Surrey, BC V3V 7Y3
Phone: (778) 565-5261

CHES@canadianharambee.ca
www.canadianharambee.ca
BN 13148 8017 RR0001

CHES AGM 2023

The CHES AGM was held on October 28, 2023, via Zoom with 41 members present. Joy welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting. The agenda, 2022 AGM minutes and the 2023 reports had been emailed to all sponsors prior to the AGM.

Joy went over the Compilation Engagement Report (financial report) and explained why there were differences between last year's and this year's expenses and income. The reason is that CHES does not keep any money in our bank accounts in Kenya or Tanzania until money is sent to schools when needed.

It has been 38 years since CHES was incorporated as an NGO in Kenya and 31 years in Tanzania. Thousands of girls have benefitted from the generosity of its sponsors and contributors so that they were able to go to school. Many of the girls are now doctors, lawyers, engineers, community development workers, nurses, teachers, business owners, shop workers, and so forth.

With rising inflation in Kenya and Tanzania, CHES has had to make the difficult decision to raise the sponsorship fee to \$650 for the coming years; this amount will just cover all costs for the schools.

CHES has received several bequests from former sponsors. The board set up an Investment Trust Fund for all such donations. The fund now totals just over \$750,000. The annual interest from the fund will be used to sponsor girls. In the event the government no longer allows CHES to operate in Kenya or Tanzania, the trust fund would be used to meet our obligations to complete the education of girls being sponsored by CHES at that time.

Anne Norman kindly chaired the election of officers for the 2023-2024 CHES Board. The following were elected to be members for 2023-2024:

Orrie Babiuk	Wendy Horan	Joy Ruffeski
Dwight Dracek	Karen Kilbride	Jeanette Taylor
Becky Finley	Mandy Klepic	Robb Taylor
Bev Ford	Nancy Mann	Lorrie Williams
Catriona Harker	Lorrie Sarah Tobin	
Chris Harker	Maureen Polard	

Anne Norman mentioned that short articles from sponsors about their students would be welcomed for the newsletter. Articles can be sent to the CHES office in Surrey, B.C.

Joy thanked all CHES sponsors, contributors, agents, board members, Julia, and the CHES staff in Kenya and Tanzania, for without them CHES would not exist and thousands of girls would not have been educated.

Following the adjournment of the meeting, Joy showed a PowerPoint presentation of the CHES complex which she made after her recent visit to Katesh, Tanzania. The various buildings in the complex were shown. Joy stressed how much letters from sponsors mean to the girls. Joy asked that sponsors send their letters, addressed to their girls, to the CHES office in Tanzania.

Lorrie Williams was able to join us for part of the meeting. She saw the slide show and was quite impressed. Lorrie said she tried walking today for the first time in months. Lorrie also said she attended board member, Lorrie Sarah's wedding in Langley, B.C.

by Orrie Babiuk

REMINDER

If you missed the email and/or invoices sent out in the summer, sponsorship fees were raised to \$650 for the 2024 school year in order to cover additional school expenses. If you forgot to send the new amount, please do so as we will be wiring the monies before the end of January to cover the school fees.



Disaster in Katesh, Tanzania

The headquarters of the Tanzanian CHES program is situated in central Tanzania in the town of Katesh, which lies on the slopes and around the foot of Mount Hanang, the fourth highest free-standing mountain in the country. Katesh is the capital and administrative headquarters of the Hanang District in the Manyara Region. The number fluctuates yearly, but at this moment, 353 CHES girls attend secondary schools in the district and many hundreds of grads live in the area.

On the weekend of December 3, 2023, at three o'clock in the morning, when nearly everyone was sound asleep, a large part of Mount Hanang gave way. Torrents of rainwater created a raging, mud-filled river that poured down the mountainside, across the downslope and through the town of Katesh. It then roared across the main road, leaving much destruction in its path. People's homes and



shambas (vegetable gardens) were destroyed as were many buildings in the town. A number of vehicles, including huge trucks, tankers and other smaller cars, were rolled over and covered with or buried in mud. Many were destroyed.

According to recent news reports, the numbers of people badly affected are fluctuating daily and appear slightly different when reported in different news sources. However, at the time of writing, approximately 5600 people have been affected--89 have been killed, 116 are missing, and 1500 households have been

crushed beyond repair. Also with alarming ramifications, 750 acres of cropland have been damaged.

There is a certain irony in that the Tanzanian president, Samia Suluhu Hassan, was attending the COP28 climate change conference in Dubai at the time and had to leave it to hurry back to Tanzania to deal with a climate-change disaster.

There is now a great deal of rescue work and rebuilding happening in the town and in the surrounding areas. Help is pouring in from the government, the Tanzanian army and foreign aid sources. Much more is needed. A poignant and heartbreaking picture on the news is one showing rows of coffins, many being built and others ready for the bodies to be carried to burgeoning and new cemeteries.

This is also a disaster which, in retrospect, over the last year and a half while visiting Katesh, Chris and I, as CHES agents, had seen hints of, but not understood, nor were able to predict. When we were in Katesh in October 2022, we were upset that there was not enough city water being pumped into our tanks for the CHES House and the Sara Williams Hostel. Everyone locally knew that the required amount of rainfall had not fallen on Mount Hanang, the city's water source. Also, the soil-holding vegetation of grasses and plants on the mountainside was dying. When



we were there, we solved our CHES problem by hiring trucks to bring tanks of water up from aquifers in the nearby Rift Valley.

The other thing, which was really disturbing, was a picture that Joy Ruffeski, CHES executive director, had recently taken of the CHES garden in Katesh and shared at our last AGM. Everything looked neat and tidy and the tall tropical fruit trees seemed to be growing well. But, to our surprise, the huge vegetable garden was gone. In its place was a wide expanse of smooth dry sand.

For many years, CHES has bought the seeds, and our hostel girls, after school and on weekends, took turns to plant and tend a wonderful, fertile and very productive garden that provided their vegetable needs year-round. Obviously this year there was not enough water to maintain the garden and everything had died. Consequently, all their vegetables have to be bought in the local market,

where supplies are much fewer and in smaller quantities than had been there before. They are also considerably more expensive because of local produce shortages.

However, heart wrenching as all this is, the good news from Naomi, who oversees the CHES program on the ground in Katesh, is that our CHES compound has not been affected by waves of mud and neither have the homes of her or of Bernie, our office manager. All our girls are safe and accounted for and are being looked after in their schools and/or the hostel, and to date we have not received any bad news about their families. May this silver lining last.



Weather and climate disasters permitting, Chris and I and our extended family of 23 will be visiting Tanzania in Zanzibar and in the northern game parks from December 19 to January 6. After that sojourn, a small group of us will be visiting Katesh.

When we return to Canada, I will send board members and sponsors a comprehensive report about the after-effects of the mudflow and any updates related to the CHES program in Tanzania.

by Catriona Harker, Dec. 12, 2023

And the winner is . . .

In the last edition of this newsletter we invited readers to bid on a unique wooden set of half a dozen African animals enjoying a comradely drink around a table carved in the shape of Africa.

We received several bids but the winner and new owner of the set with a generous bid of \$1,000 is Lenore Hik from Kamloops. Lenore signed up for and enjoyed a Tanzanian safari led by Chris and Catriona several years ago. In so doing, she learned about CHES and has ever since been a sponsor and generous supporter. Thank you, Lenore.

by Chris Harker



A CHES Wedding to Celebrate

CHES girl Lorrie Sarah Okunyanyi graduated from Musoli Girls High School near Kakamega in 2014. She spent the next eight months in Nairobi, applying for a Canadian study permit. Her initial application was denied but her second was accepted. CHES founder Lorrie Williams then stepped in, and through her various connections she managed to get Lorrie Sarah a scholarship at a private college in Vancouver. Lorrie Sarah graduated with a diploma in Business Administration and then enrolled in the University of Northern British Columbia, where, in 2021, she graduated with a B.Comm in Accounting. Currently she's working as an accountant for the Pattison Food Group but hopes soon to move on to become a CPA.

In 2018, while hiking a remote wilderness trail, Lorrie Sarah met Mathew Tobin, a young man who has gone on to take courses in law enforcement with the intention of becoming a municipal police officer. Mathew and Lorrie Sarah discovered they shared a passion for "adrenaline rush" adventures such as bungee jumping, ziplining, skydiving and paragliding. Their passion quickly transitioned into a fondness for each other.



Which brings us to the present!



On September 23, several CHES directors were among the many who attended Lorrie Sarah and Mathew's wedding in Langley, B.C. It was a gala and supremely happy event. Lorrie Williams, disregarding the effects of her recent stroke, was on hand to witness the nuptials and receive a special celebratory hug from the new bride. Lorrie Sarah's parents, Laban and Adelaide Okunyanyi, and her older brother, Stephen Ambundo, all made the long trip from Kenya to share this very special occasion. Also present were several of her UNBC professors.

Mr. and Mrs. Tobin will reside in Langley, B.C., where they plan to raise their family. This, their work and their future studies will keep them busy, but their to-do list includes climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro and experiencing a 764-foot bungee jump from the Macau Tower in China.

Lorrie Sarah's English is excellent but it seems she has trouble with the word "takeiteasy"!

by Chris Harker

DONATION FUNDS PUT TO GOOD USE

We recently received a donation bequested from someone who wished to remain anonymous. Our donor was an avid cyclist with an interest in health care.

"What might be needed?", we asked our staff in both Kenya and Tanzania.

"A bike for running local errands and well equipped on-site first aid kit" were the responses we received from both offices.

The photos from Tanzania show what has been purchased with this welcome and generous donation.

Kenya made similar purchases.

by Chris Harker



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



FORMER AGENT RETURNS TO KENYA

After being fortunate enough to help at CHES Kenya five years ago, I was keen to get back there again. Not only to help out, but also to catch up with some of the great friends I still keep in contact with as well as the two girls I sponsor: Grace, who's in University, and Lynah, who just finished Form 4.



When I arrived, I hit the ground running, taking in the girl's marks for the term, receiving their sponsor letters, and trying to get them to smile so we have a decent photo to send their sponsor (they do smile, but for some reason after I've taken the photo they start laughing!).

We've also organized a weekend workshop!

Then it was straight into interviewing for the new scholarships!

I'm so glad I work with Rebecca and the solid team she has helping in the office, as well as in the workshops and for the interviews, which is making everything run very smoothly. The only thing I laugh at is that somehow I've become the computer & printer expert?! I can see my old boss shaking his head over that . . .

But after three weeks in and I've gotten into the swing of things.

by Naomi Andriessen



The interview process for new Form 1 candidates involves many steps to ensure that the neediest and brightest girls are selected.

Thoughts from a CHES Beneficiary

Your family or you might be thinking for yourself that you are one person, but we consider you sponsors as millions of people. Your support builds and makes a great foundation that we can now support our children and indeed the people surrounding us. Even the coming generation benefits from what you have done. You have created a good foundation to millions of people, so you are millions and not one. Thank you very much.

My name is Marcelina Qedo. I am currently a teacher at Katesh Secondary School in the Hanang District.

I am so thankful to CHES-Hanang and all CHES sponsors for your incredible support in sponsoring my studies. My genuine gratitude and sincere thanks to my beloved sponsor, the late Celine Podins' family as your mother was my beloved sponsor from 2001 when I was in Form 1 until 2006 when I was in Form 6. After completing Form 6 I went to the CHES office to say thankful words. There I was told such sad and sorrowful information about the death of my sponsor. It was so painful to me as she was someone who not only helped me to achieve my educational goals but also motivated me to strive for excellence. May God rest her soul in Peace! Amen.

I would also like to share with you the journey of my educational studies. I was selected to join Form 1 in 2001 at Nangwa Secondary School. Then I managed to accomplish my Form 4 in 2004. In 2005, it was also very lucky for me also to be selected by the government to join the Advanced Level of Education, particularly Form 5 and Form 6 in my previous school at my Ordinary Level of Education, Nangwa High School. I graduated from Form 6 in February 2007.



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



The sponsorship I got from CHES boosted my confidence and determination. Your belief in my abilities and those of many other CHES girls had not only eased the financial burden but also became a vote of confidence that encouraged us to strive for excellence in the whole journey of our studies from Form 1 up to Form 6.

By the end of 2007 I was very lucky to have the opportunity to apply for some colleges and universities. After multiple selections I confirmed to join the University of Dar-es-Salaam in its campus of Mkwawa University College of Education in the Iringa region. I was there for three years of studies and pursued a Bachelor of Arts with education specializing in History and English language courses. I managed to graduate in 2010.

In addition, the sponsors' financial investment in our education (as I am representing many other such CHES girls) has allowed us to fully dedicate our time to studies without the financial burden that often hinders many students from poor families like mine.

With your support, I am truly grateful for it. I am now somebody from being a nobody in society and the nation at large. You have added many values to my life and made me a different and significant person.

Surely, the sponsorship I got from CHES in all classes of my secondary education has brought great impact to my current life status. Also, a lot of advice from CHES leaders and many CHES elder girls through CYWAHA workshops, by then, has made a great value and benefit to my life in general.

Here are just some of the benefits I have as the result of a CHES sponsorship to my education.

I was employed by the government of Tanzania as a teacher of History and English Language in January 2011 in Babati town. Then, on my own accord, I transferred to the Hanang District in 2013 and joined at Katesh Secondary School. In the same year my husband, Paulo, had also been employed by Tanzania Electrical Company (TANESCO) in the Hanang District; this became the reason for us to settle at Katesh.

I also supported my mother to build her house with three bedrooms and a sitting room. My mom is very happy with the house she is in and now free from repairing a house each year as was done before since it was made up of mud walls and a grass roof. With the support you have done for me, the whole family, my mother and my siblings are all happy as they have a conducive living environment at home.

In addition, I can also pay for my children's school fees from what I earn on my job. I have two boys; Peniel is 12 years old and he is in Standard 6. The younger boy is Prosper. He is in Standard 3 and 9 years old. They are both studying at Mount Hanang English Medium School. I am not worried about getting the boys' school contributions because of what you invested to me in my previous days.

I also managed to build our house in Katesh; we are generally living in a good and conducive environment. Thanks once again for your kindness and generosity for supporting many girls in Hanang like me. We are among the successful girls in our family and society at large.

Furthermore, your belief in me has also given me the privilege of teaching and advising younger CHES girls during English Immersion and tutorial programs. You have given me the chance to contribute to their future life.

Finally, thank you once again for your kindness and assistance. Your kind favour motivated me to help others and I will do so in the future.

by Marcelina Qedo

(Recently Marcelina was asked to conduct a workshop and share effective teaching techniques. She willingly did so in order that all students in the area could benefit from the methods used by CHES' EI teachers which stress teaching for understanding rather than rote learning - the usual methods used for all subjects in African classrooms)

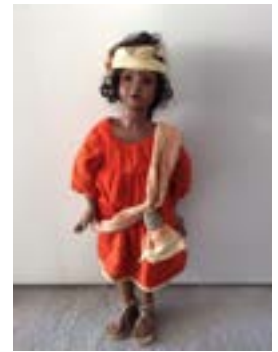


Another Auction

As our last newsletter provided a lucky bidder with an intriguing African carving set we called “Animals at the Bar,” we thought we might try it again. We call this attractive, pliable African doll “Monica” but a new owner may opt to re-name her. She is 23 inches tall and has been lovingly clothed by Mary Ellen Patterson from Kamloops.

What a nice gift for a granddaughter?

We'll start the bidding at \$50.00. Send (ches@canadianharambee.ca) or phone in (778-565-5261) your bid to the office by February 15. We'll send it to the highest bidder and publish their name in our next newsletter.



Dreams Realized Thanks to CHES Sponsorships



I am Edna Were writing this with immense gratitude for the incredible impact CHES has had on my educational journey. As a beneficiary of CHES, I have just completed my final year in university and I cannot express how essential your support has been in shaping my future. The foundation I received in CHES was invaluable. It not only equipped me with the necessary academic skills but also instilled in me a sense of determination and resilience. I am eager to contribute to my community thanks to the values instilled in me by CHES. Your dedication in providing educational opportunities has transformed lives and created a brighter future for all of us. Once again, thank you from the bottom of my heart; I am proud to be a CHES alumni and look forward to paying it forward to help others achieve their dreams just as you have helped me realize mine.

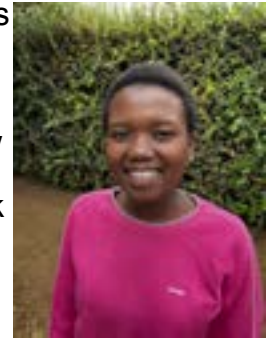
I am Caroline Apiyo from Kakamega, Kenya and a beneficiary of sponsorship by CHES. One day my mother visited me in Primary School. At this time, I was staying with my relative far away from home. I was in class 8 wearing a tattered uniform and my mother was unable to raise my school fees. This moved my head teacher who decided to pay for my remaining Primary education. Unfortunately, he couldn't pay for my Secondary education because he was struggling too. I saw my dream shutting down. I decided to go back to my former head teacher, Mr. Gerald Wasiki, who recommended me to CHES. At his recommendation, I visited CHES and luckily enough I was selected for sponsorship from 2012 through 2014. After qualifying from Kenya Medical Training College in 2022, now I am a Registered Community nurse through sponsorship courtesy of the church and well-wishers. I send many thanks to my CHES sponsor, Iris Brendle Moczuc and to Rebecca Adhiambo in the Kenya CHES Office who encouraged me through my secondary education.



My name is Josephine and I was a CHES student. My family was very poor and there were 7 children. We had no farm and no money for school. They could not pay any school fees but I wanted to study so my mama took me to CHES. I became a CHES girl and lived at the Sara Williams Hostel while I studied at Dumbeta Secondary. I did well in my Form 4 exams and also in my advanced levels. I went to the University Udom where I studied education courses in geography and Kiswahili to become a secondary school teacher. I finished my courses a couple of years ago and am waiting for a position in a school. The government doesn't have enough money to pay for more teachers even though they are needed as the classes are very big with up to 100 students in a class. While I wait for a position in a classroom I am doing some small business like selling produce in the market in Measkron. I am the only person in my family that is educated and when I finally get the teaching position I hope to help them get some land so they can grow food.



My name is Joyce Ronald. I have been sponsored by CHES since 2016 when I was in Form 1. CHES has paid school fees for me, gave me pocket money, gave me books to study, and a place to live while I was studying at Daniel Noud Secondary School. I did well in my National Examinations and did my Advanced Levels at Makambako Secondary School in the Njombe region. I performed well and am now continuing my studies at the Institute of Finance Management in Dar-es-Salaam. When finished I will have my Bachelor degree of banking and finance and can work as a banker, or with any office, company or any organization as the one who deals with finance. I will finish my studies in 2025. I have to give more thanks to CHES because you sponsored me from Form 1 up to Advanced Level and also CHES helped me to get a university loan. If it was not for you I would not be able to reach here.



“Homeward” Bound - Returning to Our Tanzanian Home

Having not been to Tanzania since August 2019 due to COVID, it was interesting to see changes both positive and negative that had occurred in the country when I arrived this September. It was definitely cleaner environmentally. However, many trees had been cut down, and the evidence of a thriving charcoal industry was even more prevalent in spite of the fact that charcoal use for cooking was banned 5 years previously and people were “required” to cook with gas. Climate change was very evident as well and people were struggling to grow adequate food - drought certainly had taken its toll.

Although the time to travel from Arusha to Katesh has diminished with an actual highway being built since I first visited Tanzania in 2003, it does take around 5 hours to drive the 250 km. The first section as one leaves Arusha is a gridlock of all varieties of transportation and somewhat bizarre driving habits. Finally, as one turns towards Tarangire National Park trucks diminish as do the daladalas, pikipiki, and safari vehicles. After Babati there were less changes in the landscape and the highway that the Chinese built less than 10 years ago had huge potholes everywhere due to the lack of asphalt used in the construction. The road from Babati to Katesh was definitely showing wear!



At the CHES compound there has been so much work done with a privacy wall and plantings of bougainvillea to separate the hostel buildings from the rest of the buildings on site. It was unbelievably dry, and the ground was like concrete - no vegetable gardens anymore as there is no water to spare to coax a few greens to grow. Along the side of the compound underneath the hostel windows, a few flowers are still evident as they are being carefully tended and with that area being protected from the sun; the little water that is given works its magic. The solar panels have been a blessing allowing the girls to study in the evenings; they regularly work together helping each other understand the lessons.

The hostel really feels like a cared for home now, welcoming the girls to a different life in the future if they work hard at their studies. Such a profound difference a CHES sponsorship makes in the lives of these girls.

One of my favourite “spare time” activities when I am in Katesh is talking with both current and former CHES students. Many former students who are in university dropped in during the days I was in the office and shared what they were studying, their hopes for the future, and the wish to be able to give back to the community (see some stories in this newsletter). Unfortunately, I did not have much opportunity to talk to the girls at the hostel as they





are at school even on Saturday when extra sessions to review and/or cover the curriculum are held by their teachers; Sunday is the day for church, study, and washing their school uniform in readiness for the coming week.

Special moments occurred as I reconnected with many of the teachers who so willingly give up their holidays to teach the English and Math Immersion programs as well as subject tutorials. For many years I worked with these individuals both in June and also in late November, developing and then updating the English programs and teaching them new educational techniques.

Many of these teachers have become leaders in their schools and have shared these skills with their colleagues; as a result, students in many of the schools are

understanding what is being taught and not just memorizing materials with no concept as to relevance.

I am looking forward to my return in 2024 and hope to spend time in our Kakamega office as well! For those who have been fortunate enough to visit our sites in Kenya and Tanzania you understand well how Africa and its people touch your heart so deeply.

by Joy Ruffeski



We Can Always Use More Sponsors!

Sadly, some of our sponsors are “aging out” and the financial circumstances of others are changing. The result is that we have lost quite a number of sponsors this past year and at a time where the need to help school girls achieve their potential is more important than ever.

PLEASE, CAN YOU HELP by finding one or two new sponsors? Are you comfortable asking extended family members, friends, colleagues, team-mates, classes, social or church groups if they would like to support a girl in Kenya or Tanzania? Refer them to our website canadianharambee.ca

If the \$650 a year is a stumbling block for some, suggest that they can share the cost with one or two others. Some sponsors prefer to pay semi-annually or even monthly with post-dated cheques, although most send CHES \$650 each year. Don't forget to mention that a tax receipt is issued for all donations over \$20.

Many thanks if you are able to help CHES help just one more girl.

