

# Canadian Harambee Education Society

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

Fall 2025 Newsletter #86



## CHES AGM – November 1, 2025

In 2020, CHES started holding our AGM via Zoom. 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.

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.

**Date: November 1, 2025, at 2 p.m. (Pacific time)**



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# An Unforgettable Meeting

It's so nice to be sharing my experience in the Canadian Harambee Education Society newsletter. My name is Rev. Tracy Fairfield, and I'm the minister at Trinity Memorial United Church in Abbotsford, BC, Canada. I was in Moshi, Tanzania, from June 28 to July 12 of this year. I was visiting Moshi to attend a clergy conference that involved ministers from all around the world. Before the conference I acclimatized for a couple of days, then three days on safari. It was this time while I was acclimatizing, immediately after arriving, that I had the chance of a lifetime

I arrived at 1 a.m. after several hours of flying and then some driving, but unknown to me, a remarkable young woman was awaiting my arrival. Debora (De-BOAR-ah – different pronunciation than in Canada) Barnaba had taken transportation from her school with her headmistress and were spending the night at the Lutheran Conference Centre in Moshi. It was, actually by luck, and with limited last-minute planning, that we found each other on Sunday, June 29. I was just walking into the dining hall when this striking, yet shy young woman was seeking me out. You see, we hadn't secured our meeting time yet, so we were both very lucky to find each other - might I add bright and early at 8:30 a.m.!

It's with such joy and privilege that Trinity Memorial United Church has been able to support Debora for the last seven years. There have been several letters, and now since our meeting we have had the opportunity to instill a more personal connection. Many souvenirs and gifts were brought for her: soccer balls, soap, cross-stitch, Canada pins, pencils, candy ("pipi" in Swahili), and a bucket hat. The gifts were undoubtedly overwhelming; however, it helped break the ice and we both overcame our shyness.

I was left alone with Debora for about 40 minutes, and she shared with me details about her family, her loving mother, her efforts in school, and her friends. She was happy. She wants to make her mother proud and succeed. I think she mentioned something about becoming an engineer when older! Such high expectations for such an excellent student.

When the headmistress of Debora's school came back some time later, it was with great surprise that she brought me gifts. Meeting Debora was gift enough. But no, there were several things generously offered: necklace, bracelet, and earrings; a Maasai blanket that was tied on me in traditional fashion, and some additional fabric. It was so overwhelming. We had some beautiful pictures, and we shared many smiles. By this point we were very relaxed and comfortable with each other.

I immediately sent news of this event back to my congregation which is located about an hour from Vancouver. There are so many churches in this area, and so many organizations they can connect with for an act of sponsorship; however, Trinity Memorial is happy with CHES and so pleased to have this connection. People at the church were so delighted to see the few pictures I could send and hear my "short" stories as email was spotty. But now that I'm home and plan to do a presentation of thanks and information, I have many more pictures and stories to offer. My heart is forever warmed.



I've heard of sponsorships, and they are very popular in this area. However, how many opportunities do people actually get to meet their sponsored child/youth? It's rather life-changing for people on both sides. To put a face to the name, to hear their life circumstances and experiences and life events, to make that personal connection – it all warmed my heart, and I will cherish it always.

It is a source of great pride to me that my congregation has been supporting Debora these past seven years. It is my hope that more people would take on a sponsorship and maybe the adventurous road would lead people to a chance meeting with their child or youth. It is truly a life-changing experience, not just for me, but for my congregation as well.

*by Rev. Tracy Fairfield*

## Meeting my Sponsor

I had a good journey of over 10 hours to Moshi that was full of joy with much desire to meet my sponsor. I was accompanied with my head mistress, Madame Gisela Msofe (she had once been a CHES girl) who as curious also and full of desire to meet my sponsor.

I was so grateful for this special visit and am so excited for the great love shown to me. I am thankful for the presents for my school of two footballs, pump, and lots of pencils. I also give thanks for the special soaps for me.

I am going into Form 6 – this is my last class in the advanced level. The subjects are understandable and relate to the way I can meet my goals. I will continue to study hard as I plan to become an Electrical Engineer.

*by Debora Barnaba*



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# Wilfrida Elisante

I was born in Lamay village in 2009. I have one brother called Alex. My mother passed away when I was very young and my father died in 2023. Before my father passed away, we lived with my father and stepmother. She had four children. Sometimes she tells me bad words like, “I hate you; go with your mother”. And when I was sick sometimes she does not care about me. I walked long distances from home to my primary school and sometimes I lacked my school needs such as exercise books, school uniform and when I came back for lunch there was often no food.

My father was very sick and then he died and this caused me to live with my grandmother who could not afford all my basic needs. This made me worry and how to continue with my studies and reach my dreams of being a teacher.

I finished standard seven in 2023 and passed my national examinations. I didn't hope for good luck but I was selected to be sponsored by CHES which will continue to support me with my education. Up to now I am in form two.

Finally, I would like to thank CHES Office for giving me this opportunity and I promise I will study hard in order to reach my dreams.

*by Wilfrida Elisante*



## Special Tutorials for Form 1 Kenyan Students



*Facilitator in classroom*

With the change in the Kenyan school configuration, this year's intake for 42 Form 1 students was markedly different from the past. The girls being interviewed were ones that had already completed Form 1 Secondary in the old configuration but had attended day schools and shown great promise as students. However, many of these girls had missed much of their school year due to lack of fees. As a result, their test scores at the end of their first term in April were quite low.

To compound this challenge, there are many changes in the education system with the only compulsory subject being maths. Students need advice on which subject to select in order to achieve their desired career pathway.



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A decision was made to provide a week of special tutorials for them during the 2<sup>nd</sup> term break. The tutorials were held from August 4-8 with experienced teachers who were able to identify areas of difficulty and individual student strengths. Subjects covered during the week were Math, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, History/Geography.

The students said they so enjoyed the sessions they were reluctant to leave!



*Tutorial instructors*

## Upgrade: Bathroom Services in the Girls' Dorm at Mwahu



*Toilet stalls*

In 2019 students from Stelly's Secondary School in Central Saanich visited Katesh and helped construct a girls' dorm for the school. It took several years for the dorm to be completed and for the girls to move in. However, one big feature that was lacking until now was water access and storage, plumbing, toilets, and washing facilities. Thanks to the Royal Commonwealth Society, a NGO based on Vancouver Island, which had funds left over from building the boys' dorm at Mwahu this year, the girls now will soon have indoor plumbing!



*Girl's sink area*



*Water tank for girl's dorm*



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# Your Student Support Donations Make a Big Difference



Rebecca, our Kenyan office manager, recently sent a special thank you to donors who give extra funds for student support. She writes, “Please let those donating to this fund know that we sincerely appreciate them for extending their help toward our students.”

CHES has always supported the health and welfare of all sponsored girls, and this has become even more important recently in Kenya. Formerly, the Kenyan government had a fund that schools could access should a student become sick while attending a boarding school; they would be treated for free while in school. The current government has abolished this and instead introduced a social health fund (SHA) which is not functioning well. Impoverished individuals can only be helped if they are already in the hospital! It definitely is not convenient for a student who needs quick service or medications and returns immediately to school.

Since the school year started, many students have come in seeking help with a variety of medical issues. Desperate phone calls from school patrons to CHES asking what to do with CHES’ sick students have been met with instructions to take them to the nearby health centre with whom we have contracted for medical assistance. The health centre treats the girls immediately and then sends CHES the m-pesa bill with the cost of the treatment. Since the start of the year, many CHES students have been helped.

To all contributors, thank you for your kindness in adding a few extra dollars to your donation. It goes a long way towards keeping our girls healthy and in school!

## Adelina Nicolaus



I was born in November 2009. I am the third of five children; Anton, Adolpu, Adelina, Andrea, and Anita. Sadly, Anton passed away in 2024. My father passed away when I was young so we lived with my mother but when I was in standard three my mother also passed away. Our grandmother took us to live with her.

In my school life I faced many challenges as I lacked the basic needs of school like a bag, shoes, books. This caused teachers to send me home so I missed many classes and I got no food as no one was at home. My grandmother had little money so we only had two meals a day. I received no medicine when I was ill and could not attend church on Sunday as I had no good clothes. I was walking far to school and back but never lost hope of continuing my studies.



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When I completed standard seven my grandmother told me she had no money to send me to secondary school. She told me to go and ask my uncles for help. When my uncles told me they had no money to help me my heart was broken as I understood my education would end at primary level.

When I finished standard seven I heard there was an organization called CHES which helped girl children who had a hard life. I decided to write a letter and then wrote exams. I did well and was chosen to be educated so my happy was back. I will study hard to reach my goal of being a doctor. I have wanted this since I was very young. I am promising that I will not let you down and will work hard. Thank you so much; God bless you so much.

*by Adelina Nicolaus*

## Amazing Willie!

You can't keep a good and very caring man from helping to educate girls for CHES!

Willie Alexson did it again and grew tomato plants which were sold to people in the Saskatoon area where he lives. This year just over \$3,1000 was raised to support special projects for students at the Sara Williams Hostel in Katesh, TZ.



## Studying Hard Pays Off

The results of the Form 6 National examinations in Tanzania show that students sponsored by CHES take their learning seriously and want to make their sponsors proud. There were 29 students who completed Form 6. They finished their studies with their National Examinations in May 2025. The school year for Forms 5 and 6 goes from August to May as opposed to the school year for other levels which is from January to November.

Division I and II standings were received by 25 of the 29 students and the other 4 students just missed a Division II standing by 1 point! With these outstanding results, the girls should have no difficulty in applying to and being accepted by the university and program of their choice. As the government has altered the application process for those who have graduated with the support of an NGO, this qualifies them for significantly reduced fees at university.



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# Annual Life Skills Workshops for Kenya

The annual workshops for CHES Kenya's students were held from August 19 – 21. Students worked in small groups throughout the three days. Very thoughtful planning by the facilitators highlighted the areas which are relevant to the country in which they live. Topics included: Reproductive Health, Financial Literacy, Study Skills, Critical Thinking, and Moving Forward after Form 4. Our agent, Barbara Melara, helped facilitate the workshops.

A new facilitator, Christine Mutayi, (CHES '08 who is now a civil engineer) from the nearby university worked with students on team building activities. There were a series of presentations, an art activity that involved painting stones, and outdoor games daily. In the evenings, students were invited to show off their talents with dance, song, poetry, and imagination. Closing ceremonies invited each school to present a short performance.



*Agent Barbara Melara helps with workshop tasks*



*Game time*



*Facilitator Christine*



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# Annual English and Math Immersion Workshops in Tanzania

CHES Hanang would like to convey sincere thanks to all sponsors and donors for the contribution of funds which allow Tanzanian girls to have extra classes. The tutorials have been excellent help to the students over the years as shown by an amazing 89% of the Form 4 students earning acceptance into Forms 5/6 and/or teacher's colleges this past year!



*Math immersion lesson*



*English Immersion lesson*

All the students came to Katesh in June and were housed for the four weeks at the Sara Williams Hostel in the CHES compound. Classes were held in the nearby Katesh Secondary School.

Students from different schools were mixed within the classes as well as in the rooms at the hostel.

The seven Math teachers and the seven English teachers ensured that all topics were covered so that the students would perform well in their Form 2 and Form 4

National examinations. Mathematics teachers planned the topics and each class was divided into small groups to make the teaching easier. The timetable of topics covered was astounding!

Each year the Tanzanian government commemorates African Child Day in order to honour children who were killed in South Africa when they demonstrated for their rights in 1975. CHES was invited to participate on this day and were pleased to do so.



*Award giving at end of the workshops*



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CHES Hanang teachers and all sponsored students would like to send a word of appreciation to all sponsors and donors. The generous heart you each have in helping our girls is very valuable and appreciated.



*Children's' March*

## Student Fees for 2026

Sponsors will be receiving a printed invoice at the beginning of November reminding them that the fee continues to be \$650 for the 2026 school year. Should you be unable to sponsor in the coming year, would you please let the office know as the number of girls supported by CHES is dependent on the number of sponsors!

We appreciate receiving the payment for your student's/students' fees by early December 2025 so we have sufficient funds to send to Africa at the beginning of the school year in January. Also, if you wish to receive a tax receipt for 2025 you will need to send in the funds by December 31.

A reminder that funds can be sent by cheque or e-transfer. Please phone our office to receive information as to how to do a bank transfer of funds directly from your bank account into the CHES bank account if you are not familiar with the process of doing e-transfers.

Thank you for your continuing support.



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