

Book Review



Below are two books recommended by Lorrie Williams, CHES president. According to Lorrie, these books are informative and inspirational.

OUT OF AMERICA by Keith Richberg

An illuminating look at how one Black American views Africa. Keith Richberg was the Washington Post's Africa bureau chief from 1991 to 1994, during which time he covered the civil wars in Somalia and Rwanda, among other stories. He witnessed the killings, the repression, the false promises and the horror. As for all of us, we despair for Africa and the seemingly hopeless situation but something keeps us going back and not doing everything but doing something. Read this book to get a glimpse of the dark side of humanity while finding the glimmers of optimism and hope.

SHAKE HANDS WITH THE DEVIL

By Romeo Delaire

I have not yet read this book but watched an interview with this outstanding man who tried and failed to get help from the United Nations in order to avert the tragedy in Rwanda. He feels that the United States and the United Nations did not give the same consideration to this looming conflict as we did in the Balkans. He states that the world simply does not care what happens in Africa and we have to make sure that people change their attitudes.

I look forward to reading the book and am Number 17 on the reserve list at my local library.

Thank you

Many Thanks to Katha Pollitt

In late December, CHES began to receive donations from all over the United States. We found out that Katha Pollitt, who has been a sponsor for several years, had written an article in an American publication "The Nation" suggesting that you could help needy people in various parts of the world instead of giving Christmas gifts. She stated that you could give a gift to a charity in a relative or friend's name. CHES was fortunate to be one of the featured charities. The following is a quote from her article

Remember Africa? In Kenya and Tanzania high school tuition is more than some families earn in a year, and parents often prefer to educate sons. The Canadian Harambee Education Society, a secular humanist project, pays tuition for poor girls who have done well on the entrance exams and provides the help they need to succeed in school.

The organization's slogan, "We can't do everything... but we can do something!" is apparently quite a motivator. In 1985, they underwrote twenty-five students; last year it was nearly 400. You can fund one girl's education for \$400 Canadian or \$305 US, but any amount will be gratefully accepted.

As a result of these two paragraphs CHES was fortunate to receive donations of up to \$15,000 CDN. Many people sent money to sponsor a girl in a Kenyan or Tanzanian secondary school. Soon, these new sponsors will be receiving a letter and photo of the girl(s) they are helping to educate.

Thank you very much, Katha, for telling your readers about CHES. We would like to thank all of your readers who have now become CHES supporters and are helping to educate girls in Africa. We hope to purchase new text books with part of the donations. We loan the books to the girls so they can do better in their studies. Every donation will be used in Africa to help educate CHES students.

CHES would like to thank you all for your generous "Christmas Gift" for the girls that CHES assists in Africa.



CANADIAN HARAMBEE EDUCATION SOCIETY

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Newsletter 37

Spring 2004

President's Message

The year is well underway and I would like to thank all of you for your continued support of the Canadian Harambee Education Society. We have much going on this year in Kenya and in Tanzania. Our recent workshops for CHES students in Kenya proved a tremendous success, thanks to the hard work of our Kenyan Board, our organizers here at our Canadian office, all the facilitators, many of whom are former CHES students, and to all the CHES students who attended. There are many more projects on the go as well, and it seems we do not plan to slow down any time soon! Read through our spring issue and catch up on all the wonderful projects CHES is undertaking this year.

I have planned to visit Africa in July 2004 and will be traveling with my two nephews, Christopher and Clayton. While I am in Kakamega and Katesh, I will be attending assemblies and handing out certificates to last year's Form Four leavers. I hope to come back with some new photos and videos and would welcome the chance to make presentations to show our work in Africa and how it is making a difference. If you would like information on these presentations, please contact our CHES office here at 604-521-3416, or e-mail us at canadianharambee@shaw.ca. If anyone would like to send a small gift to their student(s), please drop it off at our office in a small ziplock bag, with a note with the student's name and school visible. Please do not wrap any gift. Suggestions for gifts include, school supplies, hygiene products, and toiletries.

To everyone, have a wonderful summer.
Lorrie Williams

CHES DIRECTOR HONOURED

Mr. John Katumanga, a director of the CHES Kenyan Board and the CHES Canadian Board, was recently honoured by the Government of Kenya. He received the prestigious award of *Order of the Grand Warrior* which was conferred upon him by President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya.

Just last year, John retired from a lifelong career in Education during which he was a teacher and headmaster of note. As well, he was Chairman of Kenyan National Teachers' Union for 15 years. Although retired, John is still active on the Constitutional Review Committee of Kenya. He has done much to promote the cause of education in Kenya.

It's about time!



The new government in Kenya is making a difference! There is now free public school education for standards 1 - 8 (Grades 1-8). The result? Just don't be surprised to see a 60 year old and a 14 years old in the same standard.

Interesting of all is an 80 year old man in standard 1. He had always wanted to learn to read and write so he bought a school shirt and cut a pair of pants into shorts so he could replicate the current school uniform where he is attending. Just goes to show, no one is ever too old to learn.

Off to Africa, one more time!

Louise and Bev

Louise Paulsen and Bev Ford are two CHES directors that have gone to Africa many times as CHES agents - and they're going back again! They plan to spend 3 months in Katesh, Tanzania leaving June 2 and returning sometime in September. "We plan to put on a week long set of workshops for all of the current CHES students and all CYWAHA members. I would like to thank the people of Tsawwassen United Church for all of the sewing notions that they have collected for the sewing training centre." All things collected will be tucked away in their luggage, as Louise and Bev will be collecting letters and photos from sponsors to give to students, and bringing back letters from students to give to sponsors. If you have a letter you'd like to send, please send it to the CHES office by the end of May.

The Harker's

Chris and Catriona Harker were CHES agents in Katesh, Tanzania for three months in 2001, and again in 2003. To this day, the Harker's continue to maintain close links with the community. Since 2001, they have found time to organize nearly a dozen safaris to the wildlife parks of Tanzania, as well as to Mt. Kilimanjaro, and to Zanzibar, which is a tiny island off the east coast of Tanzania.

In November 2002 and again in February 2004, they extended their services to escort tourists, including many CHES sponsors, into Katesh so they could meet students and members of the CHES organization who reside there, and allow them to experience life in a village where tribal life and routines are still the custom.

If you would like participate in such an adventure, Chris and Catriona have offered to go once more to Katesh in 2005. For more details, you can contact the Harker's at 250-656-9229, or by e-mail at chris-cat@pacificcoast.net

About a girl

Chris and Catriona Harker recently came back from Katesh, Tanzania, and brought with them the story of a girl who is well known and loved by many people in her community, and by CHES. Her name is Mucho.

Mucho is a girl that works in the CHES office. Lovely, sensitive, friendly, and hard working, she is 27 and the office manager at the CHES office in Katesh.

In the middle of a meeting Friday afternoon, Mucho appears from the office to report that someone from her village had arrived on bike to say she should go home immediately.

Having set off to Dewar, a village on the other side of Mt. Hanang, Mucho was concerned that the news had to do with her sister's health, which had fallen, but was on the mend. Sadly, the news from her brother as they approached the family's compound was the opposite of what Mucho wanted to hear. Her 29 year old sister passed away, and left behind three children, the oldest of who was 9, and a husband that was pretty much non-existent.

Interestingly, and appropriately, one of Mucho's first thoughts, after the initial shock of the news, was what was to become of the children. In many parts of Africa, and certainly in Tanzania, "successful" family members are expected to absorb orphans and even anyone else in the family who is destitute and in need of help. This means that anyone with a good salary, like Mucho with her regular salary of \$35 a month, would be expected to help.

Looking around you could see a few somber men standing around, all with spears and blankets. The half dozen women were crowded around a hut all with their multi coloured tartan blankets drawn over their heads. Sitting on a mound of dirt, off to the side, was a older chap, dabbing his eyes.

Sunday, with the help of generous CHES agents, Chris and Catriona Harker, a coffin is delivered to Mucho's village. The road is lined with people on their way to church, women's heads covered with a kitengi.

The area selected as the burial site was in the dusty scrub, amid thorn bushes and flat topped acacias. Mt. Hanang towered to one side and the fortress-like wall of the Rift escarpment formed a boundary of the other.

Dry stunted cornfields could be spotted in the area and, wandering aimlessly in various directions were herds of cows. The silence was punctuated with the bawling of cattle, braying of donkeys, and the bleating of goats.

The minister welcomed everyone and the service began. The singing was lovely, beautiful harmonies, and a unique beat to some well known hymns. Countering these inspirational sounds were those of lament - the crying of women who did so with their heads and faces covered in kitengis, and the heart rendering sobbing of Fabiola's three young children.

A prayer was read as the coffin was placed into the grave, and two gravediggers held a shovelful of dirt so whoever wanted could throw three handfuls of dirt onto the coffin. The choir sang while the grave was filled. Rocks were piled on the dirt and thorn bushes upon these. A cross was placed on top. With a heavy heart, everyone departed for home.

Mucho is an amazing girl and has the support of all her family and friends, and CHES to help her through this very difficult time.

CHWA CREATIONS

Opened Jan. 3, 2004



CHWA (CHES Women's Association) has opened a shop offering computer services, photocopying, laminating, phone calling by the second and prepaid phone cards. It is operated by 3 CHES beneficiaries. Financially, it came very close to breaking even in the first month of operation, and made a small profit in the second month.

This is CHWA's second income generating project. Any profits go towards opportunity research. Finding a paying job in Kenya is difficult even for university graduates. CHES puts on yearly workshops, and for those who qualify, are given micro-loans and possibly training attachments in the Tree Nursery/Market Garden and CHWA Creations. CHES is trying to help beneficiaries become more self-sufficient. The Kenyan Board is looking into other possibilities for training those who do not have the required grade (B average) to enter university.

Gifts for students

Thank you to all sponsors who have sent gifts to their students. CHES will continue to accept small gifts to carry to Africa for students. For sponsors and supporters who would like to make a monetary donations, we ask that they contribute to the Student Support Fund rather than give individual money gifts to their students. The goal of this fund is to make sure all CHES students receive a similar gift and that the special needs of some students can be met. CHES helps supplement this fund through fundraising and was able, with the help of CHES supporters, to provide each girl at this year's workshop with a gift bag containing hygienic products, a toothbrush, toothpaste and school supplies such as pencils, pens, and erasers. It was a fantastic way to end the workshops and bring some extra happiness into the lives of all the CHES girls.

If you are interested in donating to the Student Support Fund, please contact the CHES office at canadianharambee@shaw.ca or by phone at 604-521-3416. CHES president, Lorrie Williams, will be visiting Kenya and Tanzania this summer and will be able to carry a limited number of small gifts over to Africa. Please contact the CHES office for more information.

CHES Women's Association (CWA) Workshops

At the end of November 2003, Susan Allan, a CHES director, had the pleasure of visiting Kakamega, Kenya for an update on annual workshops which were part of a CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) project. The workshops for CHES students in Kenya were first put on in 2001 with much success. It was great to see first hand the work put into these workshops by the CWA Board, the CHES office staff, the presenters (most of whom are past CHES assisted students), and the Canadian representatives on the ground in Kakamega.

The workshops ran for three and a half days, covering topics such as money management/small business, assertiveness training, study skills, and living with AIDS. At the close of the workshops, the form 4 leavers who qualified

received a \$20 loan to launch their own micro-business. In the evening students and facilitators enjoyed performances of songs, plays and dances put on by girls from each school. Susan Edwards, a Secondary School Administrator from Ontario, volunteered her time to give a workshop on team work to the CWA Board and provide entertaining group challenges for the girls. These activities greatly contributed to the overall theme of the workshops, building team work and helping one another. I feel very fortunate to have been a part of this exciting weekend with the CHES girls and have been asked to bring greetings and thanks to all the CHES sponsors a supporters.

For more pictures of the workshops, please visit the CHES website at www.canadianharambee.ca

Notices

Going...going...gone!

Three CHES representatives will be going to Kenya and Tanzania this summer. For anyone who would like to send anything to their students, please contact our office at 604-521-3416

Have CHES come to you!

Want information on CHES? Want your colleagues to know more about us? Have us come in for a presentation. Call us for more information.

Student Support Fund

To make a donation, please contact 604-521-3416 or visit our website at www.canadianharambee.ca

Newsletter Via E-mail

To receive a copy of the CHES newsletter via e-mail, please e-mail us at: canadianharambee@shaw.ca