



Canadian Harambee Education Society

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

FALL 2010 NEWSLETTER #50

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President's Message

Two events occurred this Fall that changed the fate of two CHES graduates. The first involved Lorrie Rowena Mukirazi, who had attempted to win an all-inclusive scholarship from Sprott-Shaw College in BC, Canada. Many of you voted for her and try as we might, when they narrowed it down to the top twenty, Lorrie came in 27th. We were all crest-fallen.

A few weeks later I sent an email to the president of the college, first to congratulate him on a brilliant advertising technique and second, to point out that not one African made it to the top 20. I also added that there was no way that Africa could compete with Asia in the computer department.

A few days later I was invited for lunch with the president, Dean Duperon, and he began the meeting telling me that he was unable to give her one of the ten scholarships. I was disappointed until I heard the most beautiful word in the English language, "however". He then proceeded to offer Lorrie a four-year tuition and books scholarship if I could come up with airfare and living expenses. Well, Lorrie now lives with me and is taking a degree in Business Administration. She has also joined the CHES Board of Directors .

The second event came like a bolt from the blue. I received an email from the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario. The executive director had seen the DVD "Educating Margaret" and wanted to invite Margaret (first CHES student ever to be sponsored over 20 years ago) to be a keynote speaker at their conference in Toronto mid-October. Margaret was thrilled and accepted. A few days later, they called and said since the theme of their conference was "Women Empowering Women" they wanted me to come to Toronto as well.

Margaret was a smashing success and had the audience in tears describing her journey from poor rural girl to head nurse at a large hospital. We sold DVD's and handed out brochures and hope that they will be inspired to sponsor a girl.

After the conference, I took Margaret to Niagara Falls and to a Maple Leafs hockey game. She had her first turkey dinner and marveled at the colourful autumn trees. This was Margaret's first trip out of Kenya and she was very pleased to have this opportunity.

Incidentally, for those who do not know, Lorrie (mentioned above) is Margaret's daughter! So, mother and daughter are doing well.

Lorrie Williams



Lorrie Rowena Mukirazi

AGENTS in the FIELD

CHES currently has 3 agents working at CHES house in Kakamega. The well experienced Norm and Cheryl Filipenko have recently returned for a third time and Margaret Bartsch is experiencing her 3rd month of Kakamega 'life'.

If you too are interested and curious about a volunteer experience with CHES, please contact our Office at www.canadianharambee.ca.

CHES AGM

The CHES Annual General Meeting (AGM) was open to the general public, and very well attended. Thank you all for your contributions in helping to put on this event at the New Westminster public library. The date and time for next year's AGM will be announced in our Spring 2011 CHES newsletter.

The newly elected Executive for 2010/2011 includes:

Nadia Anderson	Mandy Klepic
Beverly Ford	Penny Lyle
Carol Gilchrist	Nancy Mann
Chris Harker	Lorrie Mukirazi
Catriona Harker	Louise Paulsen
Beverly Jakeman	Joy Ruffeski
Karen Kilbride	Lorrie Williams

Notice to CHES Sponsors

CHES is sorry that the sponsor fee had to be raised to \$500 in 2011 but costs have been increasing. So we will have the money to pay the girls fees early in 2011, please send in your cheque to the CHES office in Surrey by year end. Those of you who pay in US dollars can still send your money to The Humanist Association and you will receive a US tax receipt; the money is forwarded to CHES and we will notify you when it is received.

Sponsors with girls finishing Form 4 in 2010 may wish to send in funds to start supporting another student in 2011 or, if you generously wish to help cover administration or student support costs, funds for those purposes are also welcome.

If you have questions about tax receipts or payment for your student please contact Julia Kambeitz (secretary) in the CHES Office. CHES and the students would like to thank you all for your generous donations

Harambee Charity Golf Classic - Over the top success!

The 2nd annual Harambee Charity Golf Classic golf tournament was held on July 15, 2010 at Musqueam Golf and Learning Academy. Co-chaired by CPA golf professionals, Ginny Golding and April Stubbs, this year's tournament exceeded expectations, raising almost \$35,000, up \$14,000 from last year's inaugural event. These proceeds will go directly towards the secondary education of girls in Africa.

The organizing committee was delighted when JJ Bean Coffee Roasters enthusiastically jumped in as presenting sponsor for the event. John Neate, CEO of JJ Bean, felt this was a perfect fit for their corporate giving interests and urged participants to sponsor even more individual girls. Their financial participation included a fundraising BBQ on the CBC plaza prior to the tournament. And if this wasn't motivation enough, golfers were touched by a speech from blind paralympian, Donovan Tildesley - a budding golfer who managed to win The Longest Drive prize.

We thank our other many sponsors and contributors, including John Fleuvog, Burgandy Asset Management, Enterprise Foundation, Leith Wheeler Investment Council, and Musqueam Golf and Learning Academy.

Information for next year's event will be posted on CanadianHarambee.ca

Carol Gilchrist



Return from Tanzania

My husband, Scott and I recently arrived home from a vacation to beautiful Tanzania. The trip, organized through Chriscat Safaris, was an experience we will not soon forget! The highlight of our trip, however, was our visit to Katesh, where we got to see firsthand the wonderful work that CHES does in Hanang district. We visited 'our' girl, Christina, and Paskalina, who is sponsored by my parents. We were also able to visit the two hostels that CHES has built in the area, and see how these facilities have opened up educational opportunities for girls. At every turn we were met by smiling faces, welcoming greetings, and beautiful singing.

One afternoon, a few girls from Sara Williams Hostel took us on a tour of Katesh. They proudly showed us the village, and taught us some words in Swahili. They demonstrated their love of learning by asking us many questions about Canada. Their curiosity still makes us smile, as some of the questions were a bit tricky to answer! We were also welcomed into a couple of homes in the area. We visited the home of a CHES graduate's family and were moved by all that this young woman has accomplished. We also enjoyed a lovely birthday celebration for Naomi, who works in the CHES office. We are very fortunate to have done a fair bit of travelling over the past ten years, but the people we met in Katesh now hold a very special place in our hearts.

Thank-you to Chris and Catriona Harker, and Arumeru for a trip largely free of hiccups.

A big thank-you to Louise Paulsen, who was in Katesh while we were and coordinated our local visits. Finally, thank you to the CHES Tanzania staff and volunteers who made us feel so very welcome in the area.

Karie Rippin Bilger
Guelph, Ontario



*Karie, Scott and Christina at
Gitting Secondary School*

Return from Kenya

August was a busy introduction to life at CHES house in Kakamega. The bicycle bell on the gate summons Joel (daytime groundskeeper/caretaker) to usher the girls in twos and threes into the shaded garden to wait. In the office and on the front porch, Rebecca (office manager) and I share the interviewing of the 400+ students that make their way to CHES House.

From schools all around - Mukumu and Musoli, Imbale and Lugulu, Kaimosi and Shikunga - the students come. Some with As and Bs, others with Ds and Es, but all with hopes of a better future as a result of CHES and their own hard work.

I learn many things. At most boarding schools, the girls are up between 4am and 5am for cleaning and grooming, preps, breakfast, class discussions or assembly. I learn the girls go home for holidays harvesting maize, beans, groundnuts, readying the land for the second planting of the year, looking after siblings, and carrying water and firewood. I learn the girls are happier at school than at home because a new world has opened for them, one of meals, friends, security, but most of all, **education**.

What I do know is that CHES has been changing lives here for almost 30 years, and that Canadian tradition is recognized and deeply appreciated by the people of Kenya. I also know that CHES students are truly appreciative of their sponsors and would love to receive a personal letter from them. It's amazing how those letters can lift a poor girl's spirits immeasurably.

Harry Lewis

*Harry Lewis
pictured
with CHES
students*



New Ways to Donate to CHES

Credit card donations: (online only) CanadaHelps.org offers charities the cheapest fee (3.9%) to receive donations by credit card. CHES pays CanadaHelps a fee of \$19.50 from a \$500.00 credit card sponsorship donation. If you're able to add \$20.00, CHES receives the full amount for a sponsorship. You receive an immediate, computer generated receipt by donating through this website.

Securities Donations: CHES now accepts donations of securities and other investments. Please call our office at 778-565-5261. Our secretary & volunteers are in at least two days per week to receive/return calls or email canadianharambee@shaw.ca. We'll provide the information for your brokerage firm.

Please do not donate securities through CanadaHelps website as their fee for this service is very high.

My Table

My glass stands on a table,
A table so stable,
It stands so able,
This glass, my studies
And the table is CHES
Oh my golden table
How do you stand so able
Ready to relieve
All who come to you in grief,
Long live my table
Helping the maidens of Kenya
Achieve their dreams in an instant
Their talents not to perish
Under the poverty blemish
Hail, oh my table
God bless my table,
Long live my table,
Oh CHES, my golden table
Oh, my golden table

*By Saumu Omina Kombo, Mukumu Girls
High School, Form 2*

About a Girl

Rebecca Daremajik was chosen as a new CHES Form 1 student in 2010. She has an interesting story.

Rebecca is a 23-year-old young woman, who lives with her mother as her father abandoned the family. She is a Barbaig girl living in the small village of Gisambalang in the Hanang District of Tanzania. Somehow she had avoided marriage, but never got the chance to go to secondary school.

There is program in Tanzanian that allows mature students to complete primary education and write the Government standard seven exams. Rebecca undertook the studying necessary and in three years completed her primary education, then successfully wrote her Standard 7 exam in 2009 which led her to qualify for secondary schooling.

Rebecca was chosen as a CHES girl early in 2010 and is now, at the age of 23, attending Gisambalang Secondary School in Form 1. During the months that girls are at school, the CHES girls from Gisambalang are able to stay with a family where they prepare their own meals and study at night.

Rebecca is so thankful to be able to go to school and she hopes one day to be a nurse so she can help people. Her sponsor is Glanford Middle School in Victoria, BC, Canada. I was able to meet Rebecca in July of 2010 and was so impressed with her bright smile and enthusiasm about attending school. We all wish her the best with her studies.



Louise Paulsen

*Louise with
Rebecca*

Interpreting Tanzanian Marks

When sponsors of Tanzanian girls receive copies of their student's marks, they are sometimes shocked at what they consider to be *low marks*. Perhaps this article will provide sponsors some perspective on the numbers.

To start with, the marks are invariably a percentage. Generally the final column indicates your student's position in her class. E.g.: 10/30 indicates she is ranked 10th out of a class of 30.

Grades assigned in Tanzania tend to be lower than the grades we are used to seeing in Canada. The reasons for this are many. Tanzania secondary education is modeled on a traditional British system, perhaps with a tendency to "mark low". The school subjects are taught in English. This is a struggle for CHES girls who only began to learn English - their third language in Grade 4. In addition to this, most of the CHES girls come from illiterate families.

They are often in large classes with not enough teachers. It is not uncommon for the girls to struggle through a year in a subject such as chemistry with no teacher at all and with very few learning resources to write their exams. Exams are nationally set and marked. Our girls, with pastoral and subsistence farming backgrounds, are rated against city dwellers from much more sophisticated and educated families. It is remarkable how well most of them do.

While in Canada a mark of less than 50% is considered a FAIL, the marks in Tanzania fall into *divisions*. A division 1 is a high mark while a division 4 is a low mark. However it is still a PASS. Only a mark below division 4 is considered a Fail. This point is reached at 30% . Thus our 50% is their 30%. CHES and sponsors are justifiably proud when one of our girls moves on to higher education or to teaching, nursing or technical training. But sponsors must realize that a girl who returns to her village with low marks, still returns with four years of secondary schooling behind her. She has an education and an experience "outside" that is equaled by few others in her community, regardless of gender. She will have fewer children, fewer medical problems because of her awareness of sanitation, better educated and healthier children, probably be more ambitious and innovative than her primary schooled peers and often sought out for advice and counsel. In due course, many become members of the village leadership.

High marks are always nice to see but just as rewarding can be the comment I hear from civic officials in Katesh every time I go there. "You can always tell the CHES girls; they really stand out". Whether their marks are high or low, by enabling these girls to go to secondary school, you are giving them and their future families a precious lifelong gift.

Chris Harker

Visit Your Student

Since 2002, Chris and Catriona Harker have accompanied close to 30 sponsors in to Katesh after their safaris, and witnessed that very special moment when a sponsor and student meet. The joy expressed on the faces of the girls involved is indescribable. And for all involved, it has to rank as one of life's high points. In mid October, Tracy Shaw (recently retired principal of Hillcrest Elementary in Victoria, BC, Canada) was the guest of honour at a combined graduation ceremony for the two primary schools her school has supported over the last seven years. What an amazing, and proud, moment for Tracy.

If you wish to consider such an experience, contact Catriona or Chris at chriscat@pacificcoast.net or phone 250 656 9229.

A Woman's Life in Kenya

Written by: Naomi Ludia Kunani, Archbishop of Njenga Girls High School in Kenya

Kenya is a very peaceful country since long ago, comprised of both men and women. Though in past years it seemed as if it had only had men, as women were undermined. In some communities, the moment you are born a girl and attain the age of nine, you are circumcised and then start the duties of being a woman - even getting married was one of the practices they underwent. Education, it was said, was meant for only boys. For women were meant to cook, look after babies and do all the house work.

When a girl asked about school she was told she had to wait for all her brothers to learn, even if she was the only girl in a family of eleven children. The father would sell all the animals for his boys, but would not sacrifice even a sack of grain for his daughter. As they put it, "a request from a king is like a demand to his subjects", and the women were like subjects to their father so they followed everything he said, whether good or bad.

After the coming of the missionaries, things changed a lot, though at a slow rate. To me it was very positive, but to others it was negative because it was against their evil deeds. Female genital mutilation was abolished and girls education was introduced, and many more changes have taken place since then.

Kenya is now a gradually developing country with much less gender inequality. Women have started to realize their ability for these so-called "expensive careers". Quite a number of women have managed to get high earning jobs. Courageous women like Martha Kania, Charity Ngilu, popularly known as Mama Rainbow, and Sally Kosgey, took part in politics and are really matching their male colleagues at a sensible pace. These women challenge their male counterparts through debates in parliament and other activities. These days Kenyan women are also pilots, and managers of big companies.

I really feel good seeing women struggling to get good positions in this country, and I was even happier after the promulgation ceremony that took place on August 27th to officially activate the new constitution. For example, in this new constitution (article 127 (2c)) it says of seven members appointed to the parliamentary service commission, three must be women. A hope that one day gender inequality will come to an end. As the adage states, "Where there is a will, there is a way".

God bless the women of Kenya.

A Unique Experience

Unusual circumstances caused Sam Mwashia to become the only male CHES grad in Tanzania. When he married Paulina, also a CHES grad, in 2003 they became the only CHES couple in existence. On that occasion they adjusted their marriage date so that Catriona and I could attend. Since then they have had three lovely children and become established teachers in Hanang. Sam now has a scholarship to university and will graduate in two years.

On November 4th, Sam summoned us with two hours notice. He had built a house and wanted us to be there when he and his family moved in as we, he declared, are part of the circle of his life. There was no kitchen, toilet or glass in the windows but together we shared a wonderful meal and house blessing, thanks to the local pastor. Over dessert they jointly announced that next year, to celebrate 20 years of CHES in Katesh, they would sponsor a CHES girl! Sustainability rules!

Chris Harker