



Friends of Kenya Schools and Wildlife

November 2013

Communities on the Move

For ten years, FKSWS has been supporting projects and providing student scholarships in the rural communities of Kachiuru, Endonyio Sidai, Aitong, Archer's Post and Kokwa Island at Lake Baringo. In 2008, our partnership with the Kenyan non-profit Network for EcoFarming in Africa (NECOFA) expanded our efforts to include Molo. NECOFA and FKSWS work together to support participatory community development that focuses on education, income generation, health care, nutrition, food production and clean water. With his staff at NECOFA, Director Samuel Muhunyu coordinates project activities in the communities.

We are so grateful for Samuel's wisdom and guidance in our work. He continually demonstrates to us ways of empowering people and building capacity that enhance dignity and result in local ownership of processes and outcomes. Communities evolve at their own pace and in their own way, depending on where they begin and the vision they hope to achieve. The mature fruit of this process is transformation.

This newsletter will continue to share the stories that exemplify the process of transformation that is enabled by generous gifts from our donors. Each story is a testament to the potential, the talent, the determination and the hope of people who are transforming their lives by participating in that process.



Kachiuru

Rotary Assists in Building Infrastructure

Kachiuru is the most isolated of the communities supported by NECOFA and FKSWS. The very few people who come here are usually passing through to someplace else. Located on the southern border of Kenya's desolate and insecure Northern Frontier, the harsh climate is unrelenting. It is always hot and dry with frequent strong winds that easily peel back roofs made of corrugated iron. The nearest water is

a day's walk away and is not potable. At the entrance to this windblown village, travelers are required to stop at a police checkpoint manned by officers who live next to the barrier. Half a mile down the road, the Kenya Police Anti-Stock Theft Unit, houses more men whose job it is to deter animal rustling.

Kachiuru is mostly "off the map" for the government and other service agencies. Malnutrition is high and illnesses are untreated. Literacy among the Meru and nomadic Borana people who live here is low. On our first visit to Kachiuru in 2004, there was no school, no teachers, little community leadership and scant hope that things would ever improve. When FKSWS worked with the community to build a nursery school in 2005, it was perhaps the first step on the road to something better.

Today, five government salaried teachers, and a nursery teacher supported by FKSWS, teach 105 students through class 8 in the five room school. FKSWS donors provided thirty six student scholarships this year, and the school committee, lead by Head Teacher Samuel Mutabari and community member Silas Kagendo, is functioning effectively, with committed members who are beginning to provide direction and guidance for the school and the community.

Kachiuru still relies on assistance to help build infrastructure and address basic needs, and a Global Grant through the Rotary Club of Cupertino, California is helping them to realize that vision. Since last August, the grant has provided two 14,000 liter water tanks and clean water*, a two year's supply of sanitary napkins and new toilets for the girls, desks and benches for classrooms and a school lunch program. Last November, a medical camp brought health professionals from Meru to determine the health needs of the community and to diagnose and treat illnesses and make referrals for treatment. The second year of the grant will maintain current activities, support a second medical camp in November and initiate chicken and school garden projects to enhance nutrition and income. There is still a long way to go, but now there is a clear vision, and hope.

*NECOFA has just received a grant through the European Union which will in part, fund the drilling of a bore hole for the community.



Kachiuru students play football at recess

Sian Mulwa Goes to School

Last year, Endonyio Sidai Primary School Head Teacher Jeremiah Kitesho asked FKSWS to help a young girl realize her dream. Blind since birth, 15 year old Sian Mulwa had never been to school. The nearest school with services for her was a boarding school 3 hours away and Sian's parents did not want her to leave home. Jeremiah was able to convince her father to at least let him take Sian to Kikuyu Hospital in Nairobi, the best vision facility in Kenya, for an assessment. The hospital report suggested that Sian would benefit from being in school, and with that encouragement, Sian's father agreed to let her go. In May of 2012, Sian was enrolled in Thika School for the Blind. She loved school but after a month, she returned home due to undiagnosed health issues.

Over the next months, Jeremiah tried to ascertain from Sian's parents the nature of her illness, but they were reluctant to talk with him. At last, in April of this year, the parents permitted Jeremiah to take Sian to the hospital for tests. She was diagnosed with epilepsy and began to take medication. By the end of July, her seizures had stopped and her health was stable. She wanted to return to school.

In early August, Jeremiah took Samuel and me to meet Sian and her parents. As we sat talking inside the mud and stick house, Sian repeated her request to return to school. Her parents agreed without hesitation. Sian movingly expressed her gratitude to Jeremiah for assisting her to become a student and to FKSWS donors for providing her with a scholarship to help her realize her dream. A week later, Sian was back at school in Thika where one of the things she wants most to learn is how to use a computer. We look forward to news of this bright and articulate young woman's progress in the coming years!



Sian Mulwa with her mothers

Students from Endonyio Sidai Travel to Elburgon for an Exchange Visit



Jeremiah Kitesho

On October 15, accompanied by parents and teachers, thirty eight students from Endonyio Sidai Primary School set off on an adventure. Most of the children had never been outside of their own village, and the trip would offer sights and activities they couldn't even imagine. The trip was Head Teacher Jeremiah Kitesho's idea to allow the children to broaden their experiences related to nature, to people from different ethnic communities, and to other schools and students where the programs and activities might give them new ideas.

The visit was organized and coordinated by NECOFA staff Lucy Mathenge, John Washira and Jane Karanja. The Endonyio Sidai parents contributed 70,000 Kenya Shillings (about \$800) towards the cost of the visit and FKSWS provided the remainder. Traveling in two buses from their community south of Nairobi, the students spent the first day at Nakuru National Park, one of Kenya's premier game parks, to see wildlife they had only heard about. In the late afternoon, the excited students traveled to Michinda Primary School in Elburgon, where they would stay for two nights. They spent the next day at Michinda, where they learned about the school's government sponsored 4K Club School Garden Program. The

goal of the 4K School Garden Program is to teach students, through hands-on experience about food, agriculture and the environment. The children learn food production skills; rearing of small livestock; processing and value addition; culinary skills; environment conservation; management and utilization of renewable energy and leadership skills. Supported in part by NECOFA, FKSWS and Slow Food International, the Michinda 4 K Club's School Garden Project finished first in the country in a 2010 national competition sponsored by the Ministry of Agriculture.

On the third day, the Endonyio Sidai students visited the NECOFA office in Molo and then went on to Mukinyai Primary School to learn about 4 K Club activities there. After the visit, Jeremiah said that they had all learned a lot at the two schools and that the learning was quite important for the Endonyio Sidai community and for the school. He hopes for a follow-up visit to bring even more parents. In a thank you note, he wrote: "Our exchange visit was wonderful. We learned a lot from the Michinda 4K Club and today my pupils have decided to form the Endonyio Sidai 4K Club and promise to put in practice what they learned. We are grateful for your support. God bless you and thank you."



New Endonyio Sidai classroom on the right

Endonyio Sidai Primary Continues to Grow

Endonyio Sidai community has added another classroom to their primary school! With 6 classrooms now complete, they have only 2 to go. A great example of a community contributing resources and working together to achieve a dream!



Weaving Instruction for Karunga Women

On August 26th, ten women gathered at the Karunga Women's Group Workshop in Elburgon to begin their first week of weaving instruction. Julius Were, a weaver since 1983 and a member of the Kenya Cotton Rehabilitation and Management Board, will instruct the women over the next six months on the finer points of weaving. During this first week, the women learned the parts of the loom and how it functions and to wind warp on the huge warping reel. They will be weaving very fine cotton thread to make fabric for clothing, kikois (cotton sarongs) and other household items that they plan to sell locally.



Teacher Julius shows Margaret, Monicah and Anastasia how to wind warp



Beatrice learning to wind warp

Earlier this year, with funds donated by the Eugene Metropolitan Rotary Club, Julius built the two large floor looms, which use a flying shuttle mechanism. The women were eager learners and by the third day, were taking turns weaving. As they worked, the clattering of the shuttle and treadles mixed with their laughter. From time to time, Julius would lean over their shoulders with a bit of advice or encouragement.

A second weaving session was held in mid-September and the third last week. Next week, Julius and Chairlady Beatrice Kamau will visit Nairobi to purchase weaving thread and dye and will also visit potential markets for Karunga products.

The Knitting Machine

In January, Karunga received the donation of an industrial Italian knitting machine from Mark and Mari Dembrow of Eugene. In a stroke of luck, the Spin Knit factory in nearby Nakuru uses the same type of knitting machine. This enabled us



Anastasia watches as Jane practices weaving

to hire one of the knitters from the factory to train the women on the use of the machine. They are now making sweaters for children and adults as well as school uniform sweaters for local students and they have sold quite a number of them!

Several of the women have been practicing the felting skills they learned in January from felter Pam MacGregor who spent 3 weeks with them. They have created some great birds and lizards! In addition to the knitted animals the women make to sell abroad, they are gradually expanding the diversity of their products to include items they can sell locally. This is a big step on the way to the group being able to support itself!



Beatrice, Lucy and Priscilla show off some of the sweaters they have produced on the knitting machine

Karunga Workshop and Toilet

The new Karunga workshop built last year has made a huge difference in how the women are able to work. Before, they had no covered place for working together, for training, or for their looms, spinning wheels and other tools and equipment. Now they come together to work no matter what the weather. In June, they supervised construction of a new toilet and added a wall to the front of the building for privacy. A wash basin is yet to be installed. Next, they hope to build a kitchen so that they will be able to prepare tea and lunch during day long work sessions and trainings.



New toilet at Karunga



Kokwa Dispensary underwater

flooding like this since 1961, and that this may even be worse.

As if this weren't enough, while I was in Kenya in August, a fierce windstorm ripped across the lake and blew down the apiary that the AKASE Self-Help Group constructed last year. Although the roof collapsed directly on the hives, there was no significant damage. After a bit of angry buzzing and flying about, the bees settled down and were back to business as usual, with all but 3 of the colonies still intact. The AKASE group members carefully removed the damaged materials and decided to relocate the apiary to a nearby spot that is more sheltered from the wind and higher in elevation. The three evacuated hives have been cleaned and the beekeepers plan to capture additional colonies of wild bees to replace those that "absconded."

AKASE Self- Help Group

In the Honey House, the small building AKASE uses for processing and selling its honey, members continue to develop their entrepreneurial activities. The barber shop, beauty salon and phone charging services are bringing in income and the small shop where they sell honey and other basic household items is also seeing a small profit. They are encouraged by the increase in business since they began their enterprises earlier this year.

In August, we traveled to Kokwa Island where NECOFA staff person Lucy Mathenge trained AKASE group members in the use of the mobile telephone banking system called MPESA. In Swahili, the word "pesa" means money and the



Lucy Mathenge instructs the AKASE treasurer on how to make a deposit.

"M" refers to "mobile phones," which is the term Kenyans use instead of "cell phones." Safaricom's MPESA was the first mobile phone banking system in the world and it has spread throughout Kenya. Previously, there was no MPESA at Kokwa and AKASE members wanted to start a business.

With MPESA, a person can deposit funds in their mobile phone account and keep it there until they need it. They can also send it to someone. To send money, you go to an MPESA shop and give the cash to the agent who charges a small fee for the transaction. The agent, or you, send the funds by dialing the recipient's phone number notifying him of the transaction. The recipient then goes to the nearest MPESA and picks up his cash. If you have sufficient funds in your account, you don't even have to use an agent. The group reports that in the two months since they opened their MPESA agency, they have had quite a lot of business.

Once the apiary is stable and the MPESA is working smoothly, the group will discuss the next enterprise they wish to begin -- an entertainment center in the Honey House. They want to install a television and CD player in the middle room of the building with some chairs. Then, for a small fee, people will be able to come and watch popular sports activities or movies.

Flooding at Lake Baringo

For over a year, the water in Lake Baringo has been rising. As a result of unseasonal and heavy rains in the highlands, the lake has received unusual amounts of runoff and because there is no outlet, the water just keeps rising. On the lake shores, the water has submerged homes, schools, churches and has caused tremendous damage. Kokwa Island is now three islands as water has covered the low spots between three higher areas. Families are separated and some children must now wade to school or take a boat. The Kokwa Island Dispensary is almost completely underwater. The roofing materials have been removed but the remainder of the building will have to be replaced. The nurse now sees patients in one of the classrooms at the primary school. Local residents say they haven't seen



Wilson Lemukut shaves a customer



Akase Group's MPESA Agent number



A Letter of Thanks from Kirepari Nursery Teacher Jamlick Pariyo

August 15, 2013

Dear Mrs. Gwen Mayor,

I salute you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I wish to thank you most sincerely for your support and commitment for paying my school fees for ECD* teacher training. On behalf of school community, I wish also to thank for and appreciate the well-wishers for the support and commitments for school development endeavors. This was particularly exhibited during scholarship distribution every January of the year and also feeding program of the children at Kirepari School.

Thank you for continued support and co-operation.
God Bless.

Please consider making a contribution to help fund worthwhile projects like the following...



Rebecca Lebene,
Kokwa Primary School

Scholarships

We'll be adding scholarships for new students at the beginning of the school year in January. We hope that you'll continue to support the students for whom you provided scholarship(s) this year. Thanks to you, 177 children were able to attend school!!! If you are not already a sponsor, we have children who need your help.

Scholarships for one year are:

- \$50 for primary school (uniforms, shoes, books)
- \$125 for boarding (room and board at school)
- \$500 for secondary (room, board, tuition, and supplies)



Leniyon Lekatai, Sokotei Primary School

Ten students will be completing 8th grade at the end of this year and will be hoping to go on to secondary school. For most of them, this won't be possible without continuing support. Because these students live at a distance from the nearest secondary school, they usually must board. Boarding involves extra costs for mattress and bedding, personal items, boarding fees. Students are selected for secondary placement on the basis of their achievement and progress in primary school. Please help us to provide a continuing education for these deserving students!!

...or make an unrestricted donation in any amount to help with the greatest need. It's easy to give...

- ❖ Put a check in the enclosed envelope and drop it in the mail
- ❖ Use the PayPal button on our website www.fksw.org

Thank you so much for your support!



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*To our donors and well-wishers...
for a decade you have supported
Friends of Kenya Schools and Wildlife
with monetary donations, with contributions of
your time, encouragement and investment in
the futures of children and adults in Kenya. So
many lives have been changed by your
generosity. We are so grateful to ALL of you for
your continuing support!*



Thank you!!



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**Happy 10th Birthday
Friends of Kenya Schools and Wildlife!!!**

We're having a party!

Friday, December 6th
5-8 pm
Swahili Imports
5th St. Public Market
296 E 5th Avenue, Eugene, OR 97401
Please join us