

Kenya Education Endowment Fund

- Empowering Young Kenyans

www.kenyaeducation.org

KEEF Newsletter #6 February 2011 Vol. 4 No. 1

KEEF'S new Website

Peg Klesner

We welcome you to our new website, www.kenyaeducation.org, with updated information, new photographs featuring several of our students, and a number of photos taken around the Kakamega area, where most of our students and families reside. You will also find a new Picture Gallery to sample and enjoy.

The KEEF Board selected Kim Kieler to develop the new format in cooperation with several board members who wrote articles to reflect KEEF's current activities in Kakamega County, Kenya. Kim graduated from UBC and then BCIT. Following her education she worked as a programmer for the B.C. Cancer Control Agency for eight years, then for the Vancity Credit Union as the manager of Systems Integration for 10 years. Since then she has moved into web development, specializing in small businesses and non-profit organizations. Kim is a Zen Cart (*an online store management system*) and Joomla! developer. (*Joomla! is a free and open source content management system for publishing content on the World Wide Web and intranets*). Her business website is www.nanaimoconnections.com and her email is kk69640@gmail.com. Kim welcomes contacts from anyone who would like further information about web development.

The wish of the KEEF Board is to keep our website current so that it will entice sponsors and potential sponsors to return frequently. By regularly updating photos and adding new information, we expect the website will help us to increase the number of KEEF supporters. We are especially hoping to increase sponsorships for a full four-year secondary program.

This year we could offer only 15 new boarding school scholarships for more than 100 strong academic students that were interviewed. In addition to those 15, we have also taken on 11 students in day schools with donations received for student support.

If you have friends who may be interested in KEEF's direct, hands-on support of very bright but needy students, please pass along this newsletter and encourage them to visit our website. We believe that "Education is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries." (UNESCO, 2000).

Looking for a Sponsor

Alinda Ware



Brian Likami, 14 years, Form 1 (Gr. 9)

Brian lives with his mother and father and three younger siblings. His parents had to leave school at the end of grade 8 due to lack of school fees. They are jobless. Brian scored 383 out of 500 on the national exams and was position 1 in a class of 61 students (3 to a desk) in gr. 6,7, and 8.

He was a scout while in his school and, like many students, hopes to be a doctor because he "... likes to make sure hygiene is well kept and doesn't like children to be ill."

He has been called to the top performing boarding school in Kakamega municipality so if he stays focused and gets an A in the grade 12 national exams he could become Dr. Brian Likami.

Happy Scholarship Recipients

Alinda Ware

Interviews are over, 26 students selected and these lucky scholarship recipients are off to school. The most difficult part of being a KEEF representative is over, as saying 'no, sorry,' to many clever, needy children is emotionally draining. We try to focus on the happy recipients.



Kenyan students speak at least 3 languages - their mother tongue, Kiswahili and English. They write an autobiography when they come for processing and I have pulled a few comments from them as well as some verbal statements. Some of them so I could explain more and some to show how a word can cause some misunderstanding,

One boy describing his house wrote, "It (the floor) is smeared with cow dung to avoid jiggers and other dependents." Jiggers are fleas that come up through the soil and burrow in the skin around the toe and fingernails. They lay eggs that hatch under the skin and create problems unless they are removed with a pin or needle. Smearing the floor with fresh cow dung or a mixture of water, termite soil or regular soil and older cow dung stops the jiggers. The smell disappears and it becomes hard.

One boy wrote, "To utter in sober truth, I was born..." Another time a student wrote, "I hope you are breathing in and breathing out." Fortunately, I am!

"My school work was very brilliant and pleasing. Despising the fact I lived in hardship..." He meant despite the fact.

I'll close with a remark from Cedric. He was asked if he was happy about the scholarship and he replied, "I

am as happy as Isaac Newton when he discovered the forces of gravity!"

All KEEF students and their parents or guardians are extremely happy and appreciative of your generosity. You have opened a door to a brighter future.

Thank you for this.

Report From the Field

Marie Mackay

Just about the time I arrive in Kenya at the end of December the marks from the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) are announced. The marks out of 500 determine which high school students will go to. The higher the mark the "better" the school they will be called to. Students do not choose the school, the school calls them.

As soon as they get their marks they start arriving here asking for help. The Guest House compound has a gate with a guard. We give the guard (askari) instructions not to let anyone in unless they have a mark of 370 or better out of 500 and were number one, two or three in their class 6, 7 and 8 position. All students are ranked in position both in primary and secondary school. Using this bench mark we have to date (January 16th) interviewed 127 boys who meet the criteria. We have turned away dozens more who do not meet it. Most of the boys who arrive are just starting high school but we have a few who are already in school and have been chased away because of lack of fees.



Marie MacKay, Susan Thompson, Alinda Ware in Kakamega

All students with good grades strive to go to boarding schools. I believe this is a left over from the days of the colonists who all sent their children to boarding

school. So the myth has persisted that only boarding schools will provide a good education. This is not true in my opinion since we have several boys in day schools that are performing very well.

We will spend a lot of time going through the interview materials to decide who will get a scholarship. We then go out to the homes of those we have chosen to make sure they are as poor as they have said they are. We usually don't find too many scammers but we do find a few. This work is done by a Kenyan because of the language and knowledge of the area.



Peter Muhanga helping candidates draw a map to their home

When we have chosen we will let everyone know by mobile phone that they have a scholarship– everyone knows someone with a phone who can be their contact. We ask them to come and bring their calling



Boys writing their autobiography

letter so we know which school they have been called to and whether we can afford it – we do not send students to National schools because of the high cost.

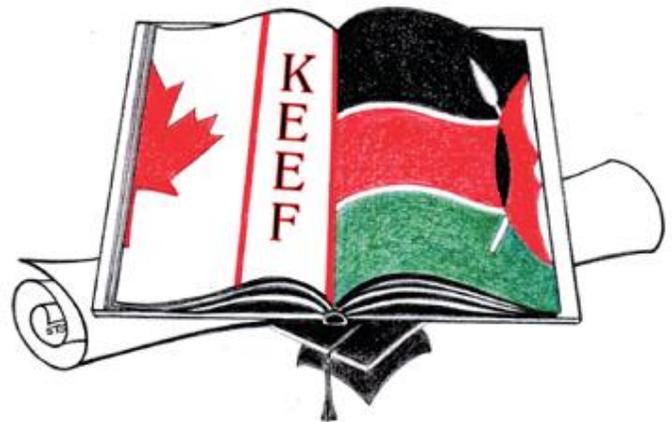
The students chosen are assigned a sponsor. They write an autobiography and have their picture taken to send to Canada. We ensure there is someone to buy their shopping (a list of which appeared in the last newsletter.) We write a cheque for their fees and then send them off to get their uniform and books. We don't see them again until the end of March when they will come for a workshop and bring their first term marks.



Peter with a hopeful boy

During this time period we also send our 75 or so continuing students back to school with fees paid, picture taken and sponsors letter written.

Marie MacKay for Alinda Ware, Susan Thompson and Peter Muhanga



Nelson's Juma Were's Story Janice Trenholme

I had been supporting a young teenager (Nelson Juma Were) in high school in Kenya for several years when I learned about the **Kenya Education Endowment Fund (KEEF)**. I was very excited to learn that **through KEEF 100% of the donations would go directly to a student's education.** (Board members like Marie MacKay go to Kenya annually – entirely at their own expense -- to ensure that all funds go to education).

Please see my student's story below to see the impact and the hope that even small monthly or annual contributions like mine can cause!

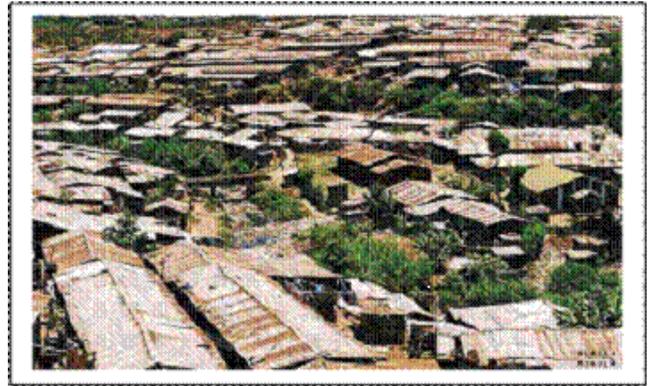


My friends and I joined together to support Nelson Juma Were throughout high school and university in Nairobi, Kenya. Nelson was an under-nourished boy from a small village with a very bleak future, but this Spring he will be graduating from Kenyatta University with a degree in

Finance. I will never forget – and continue to be inspired every day -- by the message I received from Nelson during his first semester at university:

"I am definitely working hard because I know of the great task that lies ahead of me, which is to deliver not only my own people but the whole country (of Kenya) from the high level of poverty we are experiencing, ... and not to let down all the people who have been and are still assisting me."

Nelson later undertook leadership training in Nairobi. He raised the deposit for the course himself (equivalent to a month's wages in Kenya). Nelson actually did this during the three weeks when he had been guarding his cousin's home from vandals and was suffering from malaria; in fact, the home was torched and burnt to the ground! (You will recall the terrific violence in Nairobi 3 years ago). And most recently, when Nelson lost his dear brother due to the crushing hopelessness of poverty, Nelson told me that his brother's death would only serve to further strengthen his resolve to eliminate poverty in his country!



In spite of all the adversity, this inspiring young man continues to encourage other youths to delay having children, pursue education, get jobs & start small businesses – and escape the poverty cycle. You never know how one small act can inspire others. Please consider contributing to other committed young students like Nelson.

TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION by cheque, make it **payable to 'KEEF'** and mail it directly to:
Peg Klesner, KEEF,
#904 – 2135 Argyle Avenue
West Vancouver, BC V7V 1A5

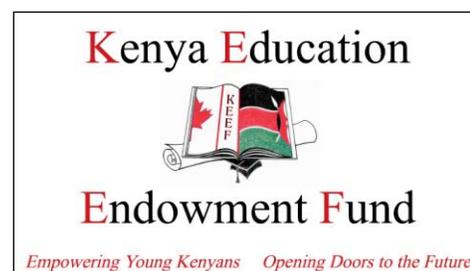
Tax receipts will be issued for donations in Canada.

Should you wish **to set up monthly contributions** from your bank account, kindly call Maureen Howard at: (604) 737-0454 (a tax receipt will be issued at the end of the year).

If you are making the contribution as a gift in the name of a friend or loved one, please let **Peg or Maureen** know **how many gift certificates** you would like to receive. Peg's email is lachaiam@telus.net.

I thank you in advance for your generosity,
Janice

KEEF Board member Janice Trenholme is a registered Elder Planning Counselor (EPC) working with her brother, Blair Trenholme (CFP. CLU). If you are interested in making charitable donations that will maximize your income tax benefits, please feel welcome to contact Blair at 604-742-1203 or blairtrenholme@telus.net.



About KEEF

Our mission is to provide scholarships for students from the Western Province of Kenya to attend secondary and post-secondary schools.

KENYA EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND (KEEF) has been established to provide financial assistance to Kenyan young people in Western Province to assist them in furthering their education and in developing skills that will empower them and their communities.

KEEF was established in 2004 under the Societies Act of B.C. and granted charitable status by the Canada Revenue Agency in 2006. # 845413145 RR 0001.

KEEF is a non-profit organization, not affiliated with any government or religious organizations. **All of the monies donated to KEEF are designated for educational purposes in Kenya.** Our very low administrative costs are covered through sales of Kenyan crafts and other special fund raising events.

KEEF is also registered in Kakamega, Kenya as a Community-Based Organization.

Current Board Members of KEEF are Alinda Ware, Marie MacKay, Margaret (Peg) Klesner, Maureen Howard, Susan Thompson, Janice Trenholme and Don Reimer. Members at large are Nila Gopaul and Susan Peake.

How You Can Help

KEEF seeks donations of all amounts to assist in our work. The board members of KEEF are volunteers and all scholarship funds are guaranteed to go directly to students.

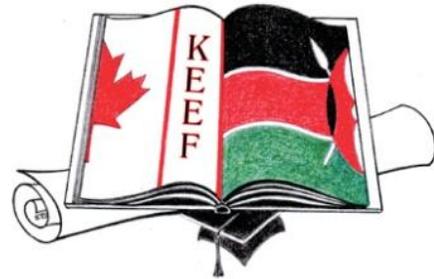
The cost of supporting a child for a year is at least \$500 CDN dollars, but partial donations can be combined with other sponsors. Smaller donations also enable us to provide some students with essential items such as school supplies or medical care.

We have eligible students who are waiting for scholarships right now – would you like to be a sponsor?

Tax receipts will be issued for all donations in Canada.

Cheques should be made payable to **KEEF** and sent to Margaret (Peg) Klesner, who coordinates donations and revenue from fund raising:

Margaret Klesner, Suite 904, 2135 Argyle Ave., West Vancouver, B.C. V7V 1A5



For more information, please go to our website at www.kenyaeducation.org or contact:

Margaret (Peg) Klesner at lachaam@telus.net
Tel: 604-926-3018

Please include your email address with all correspondence, whether you contact us in writing or by email.



A Reminder to Sponsors

KEEF pays student fees for the 2011 school year in January. If you haven't already sent in your sponsorship for the coming year, please do so as soon as possible

KEEF - Opening Doors to the Future

Photo Gallery – Form 1 Boys



Newsletter prepared by Don Reimer