

KEEF Newsletter No. 4 March 2010 Vol. 3 No. 1

Incoming President's Message

*If your goal is one year, plant maize
If your goal is ten years, plant trees
If your goal is for a lifetime, invest in training people.*

Unknown

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all KEEF supporters for 'investing in training people.' KEEF now has 50 students in secondary school and 14 men and women in post-secondary institutions. There are 4 students in Form 4 (grade 12) and 5 students graduated from Form 4 this year. Those that obtained a B plus and above in December 2009 will be called to a public university about February 2011. They will be eligible for a student loan called HELB (Higher Education Loans Board). The loan may come late the first year but once the student receives it, he can manage on the loan with little or no outside assistance. This means that, with a kick start of \$500, the student can survive on the loan for the remaining years. It would be wonderful if our high school graduates could obtain post-secondary training. I'm sure if we all put our minds to it, we can find a way.

I'll be returning to Canada in March and Marie returns in April. Thanks to all the Board members who carried on the work in Canada. We all hope to meet many of you at our AGM. Details about it will be sent via e-mail and posted on our website when they are finalized.

Alinda Ware, March 1, 2010

KEEF Receives Major Donation from Global Change for Children Society

This past January, Global Change for Children (GC4C), a registered charitable foundation formed by a group of professional women involved in international mining, launched a fund raising campaign to support the Kenyan Education Endowment Fund (KEEF), which



provides financial aid to gifted students who can't afford all or part of the fees and costs required to attend most secondary or post-secondary institutions in Kenya.

The board and members of GC4C diligently researched registered charities that weren't aligned with political, religious or ideological causes before deciding to support KEEF, a non-profit fund launched by a group of retired Canadian teachers, nurses and other professional women. They were greatly impressed with the low-overhead, hands-on approach of KEEF, which operates in Kenya's rural Western Province, where most families eke out a living from subsistence farming and can't afford the \$500 required to send their children to fee-based high schools and universities.



KEEF Treasurer Peg Klesner receives donation of **\$18,325** from GC4C

KEEF provides aid only to male students with highest grades and examination scores. Why only young males? Several programs are already

in place to support bright female students, with four girls funded on average for every boy. GC4C and KEEF are striving to correct this imbalance, mindful that young educated women naturally hope to meet and marry educated men to help them support their families.

Established in 2008, BC-based GC4C is a volunteer organization with 100% of its net proceeds donated to worthwhile children's causes. To learn more, visit www.gc4c.org

From GC4C Society, Jan 18, 2010 Vancouver

Thank You, GC4C

On behalf of the Board Members of KEEF (two of whom are presently in Kenya) we wish to extend our deep gratitude for choosing to support our organization so generously. We are proud that our volunteer organization, composed of board members who have years of experience in Kenya, provides us the opportunity to identify, select and channel assistance efficiently and effectively.

Thank you so much for adding to our abilities to help Kenyan students help themselves and their families. It is a local belief that each Kenyan student who is supported helps at least 100 other family members in their lifetime.

Your donation of \$12,325 for this year and a further donation totalling \$6,000 will provide for continuing scholarships for the years 2011, 2012 and 2013.

We understand that the money is to be used as follows:

- Scholarships for four secondary school boys at \$500 per year, totalling \$2,000 for 2010.
- Textbooks for 50 students times 11 courses totalling \$3,300
- Dictionaries, atlases, math sets and scientific calculators to be provided to KEEF sponsored students at a cost of \$1500.
- Student workshops provided by KEEF to enhance life skills, study skills, HIV/AIDS training and budgeting for a total of \$1500.

- Provision of furnishings for a library in the primary school [Bondeni] closest to the KEEF office with supplies of storybooks, shelves, desks and chairs costing \$4,025.

Margaret "Peg" Klesner, KEEF Treasurer

Bondeni Library Opening

The opening of the Bondeni Primary School library and tree planting day took place on March 9, 2010 at the school. Attending were the District Education Officer, the Area Education Officer, the chief of the area, two Kakamega Town Councillors as well as other invited guests, the Principal, teachers, parents and 800 pupils.



The day started with entertainment - poems, skits and dancing and singing by the students.



This was followed by many speeches, including mine which was given partly in Kiswahili - much to the amusement of Lynda Turner and Alinda Ware who were invited guests.

[Professor Lynda Turner is a Salt Spring Island resident who works with Masinde Muliru University in Kakamega. She got some money from a group called SOLID who are based on Salt Spring.]

After I spoke Lynda Turner announced that she would provide uniforms for up to 40 students who were unable to attend school for lack of same. She also pledged to provide maize and beans for the school feeding program. Gifts were exchanged and thanks given to all who helped make the project a success.



Following the speeches, the ribbon to officially open the library was cut by the District Education Officer, Alinda and myself. Then three of the dignitaries and I planted trees to mark the occasion.

Following this, the students planted their small trees in the school compound - there was one for each of them but at that point the kids had been sitting for three hours and there was organized chaos in the tree planting area. I will return this morning to see how that actually went!

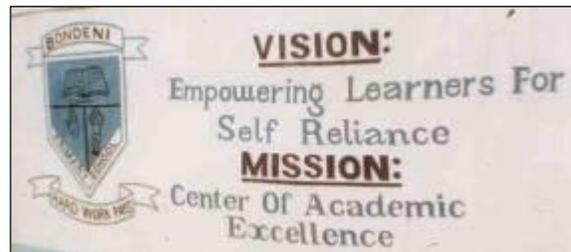


All the books were stamped with the Global Change for Children stamp and we are looking for a fundi [handyman] who will make a sign for the outside of the building.

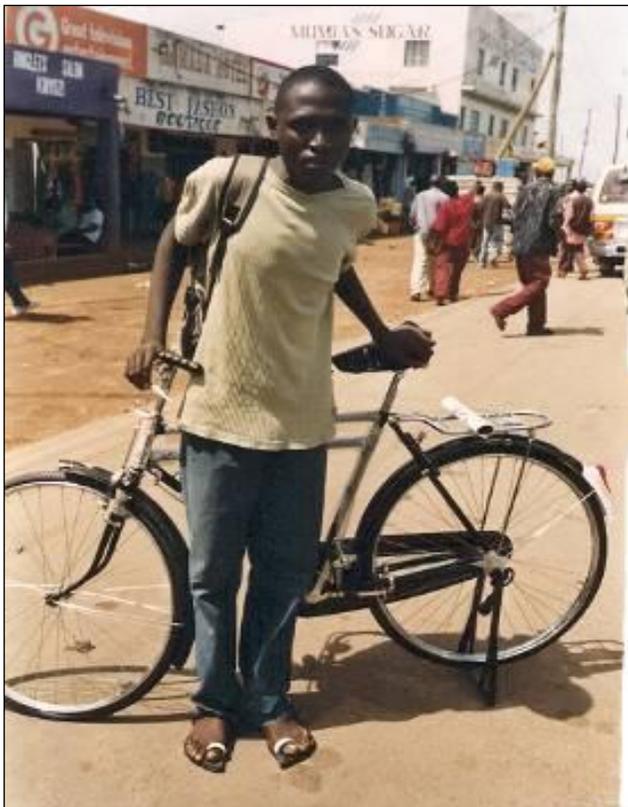


A very tiring but rewarding day and many thanks to Global Change for Children for making it possible.

Marie MacKay



Felix Okello's Story



Felix Okello is an 18 year old boy just starting high school, a little old for Form One (Grade 9). He has waited four years to find some way of paying his school fees after writing his KCPE exams (end of primary school) in 2005. He did well in those exams and was called to attend a high school near his home.

When he came to KEEF he was very shy and did not really believe he would find help from us but he had to try. His letter says "I wish to go to school and become a somebody in the future".

His first job was to get to Musingu High School where the workshops were to be held.

I don't think he had ever been that far away from home. He is much older than the boys just fresh out of primary school but he attended all the sessions.

He was thrilled to learn that, because he was going to a day school, he was eligible for a bike from the "Boys for Bikes" program promoted by Maureen Howard, one of KEEF's board members.

I think it must be against the law in Kenya to smile when having a picture taken. The seriousness he shows in the photos does not in any way reflect how pleased he was to have the bike.

He has gone off to school complete with textbooks and all the other items demanded - atlas, dictionary, calculator etc - all provided by donations from Global Change for Children.

We will know in April how he will do academically after being out of school for so long but I am betting he will be a "somebody" in the near future.

History of the Kenya Education Endowment Fund

KEEF was started in Kakamega, Kenya in 2001. A group of Canadian and Kenyan individuals, working in Kenya and interested in education, identified a need to sponsor boys in high school. Another Canadian organization was sponsoring girls only and bright boys had little help. In 2009, in Kakamega District, there were approximately 350 scholarships available for girls and 12 for boys.

The original idea was to raise money in Kenya and Canada for an endowment fund. Interest rates were high at the time and the plan was to pay fees from the interest earned from the fund.

Interest rates soon fell however and plan B was put in place in 2006 when KEEF was registered in Canada and received a tax exempt tax number from the Canadian Revenue Authority.

The original KEEF Canada board was composed of Canadians who had spent long periods volunteering in Kenya. Each board member approached friends and acquaintances to provide \$500 to sponsor one boy in high school. Recently, we have held several fund raisers to provide a discretionary fund for various situations where a small amount of money can mean a great deal, and to provide some administration money. We have also added a small program to provide bikes for boys studying in day schools which are a long distance from their homes.

The personal histories of the boys KEEF sponsors makes it very clear that they have overcome many obstacles to get an education. One boy we helped this year had been out of school for four years looking for fees.

We still have several deserving boys who are looking for sponsorship.

We currently have 50 boys in different schools - both boarding and day - and this year for the first time we held a three day life skills workshop for all our students.

The original Kenya Education Endowment Fund still exists and is currently funding 5 boys from accumulated interest. It is completely separate from the Canadian sponsorship program and features a Kenyan and Canadian Board of Directors with their own bank account etc. This group holds an annual AGM and fund raising lunch at Sheywe Guest House in Kakamega.

Marie MacKay, Kenya Liaison Feb. 28, 2010

Samson Eshipillah, Form Two, Kakamega High School

Unlike most students, it wasn't hard to get Samson to smile. He seems to have a joy for life.

A boy who walked over 15 kilometres to come to our interviews last year, he has more than demonstrated our faith in him.

Samson was number 2 out of 55 in his class and 30 out of 345 in all students of Form One. He is now in Form Two and continues to do well

He writes, "At school, all is well since my academic trend is soaring at very unexpected levels. I am also participating in the debating club for the purpose of improving my wit and English. I also joined the French club since I am particularly interested with [sic] the language. Okay, let's face it, I've been getting straight A's since I joined in Form one, in French."



After taking his picture I bought him a new sweater.

Marie MacKay

Samson Eshipillah

Life Skills Workshops 2010

The first annual life skills workshops were held January 29, 30, 31 at Musingu High School for our 50 secondary students.

Topics presented by Kenyan facilitators with assistance from Marie and Alinda, included assertiveness, financial literacy, HIV Aids Awareness, solar sterilization of water, making cow dung fuel, stewardship, study skills, and challenges.



Challenges are activities that require cooperative problem solving. The Kenyan school system is examination-based and students compete for the highest marks. Cooperative problem solving is not stressed; these activities are fun, challenging, and a learning experience for the Kenyan students and facilitators. They are also fun to plan.

Kenyans are very good at singing, dancing and drama so the students entertained us and each other in the evenings.





All KEEF students come from poor families. The stewardship session was training the boys to look at the assets they have (chicken, land, cow, etc,) and how they can utilize them more effectively to improve the family financial position.

The workshops were successful and enjoyable. Marie and I were exhausted by the end of the weekend but already planning for next year.

Funding for 2011 workshops has been provided by Global Change for Children, www.gc4c.org

Alinda Ware

Alvin needs a sponsor



Alvin Oucho begins his autobiography by saying he is “a male by gender born by his loving and caring mother.” He goes on to say he received 388 marks in his KCPE exams at the end of grade 8.

He has been admitted to Kakamega High School with a small down payment by his mother and “well wishers.” His

mother and father separated when he was in primary school and his mother supports them selling vegetables in the market.

His ambition is to become an engineer and he promises to pursue his ambition by hard work and intelligence. He closes by saying “my vision is to be a great engineer - the best the world has ever seen.”

Alvin needs a sponsor to ensure he will not be sent home for fees.

Do you know someone who might help?

We have several boys needing sponsors - one in his last year of school who lost the relative who was paying his fees.

Marie

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 Revenue Canada 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.

KEEF is also registered in Kakamega, Kenya as a Community-Based Organization. All funds raised in Kenya are designated for the KEEF endowment fund. Interest from the endowment fund is used for scholarships specifically for high school.

Current Board Members of KEEF are Alinda Ware, Marie MacKay, Maureen Howard, Susan Thompson, and Margaret Klesner.

Several members showed interest at the last AGM and we will add to the board at the 2010 AGM. Eligible members for the 2010/2011 year will have sponsored a student for a full year by then.

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 provide essential school supplies, or medical care or basic computer training for students who have not had computer access.

We also rely on donations and fund raising to cover our very low administration costs.

Tax receipts will be issued for all donations in Canada. Cheques should be made payable to **KEEF** and sent to:

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

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

Margaret Klesner, KEEF Treasurer at
lachaiam@telus.net Tel: 604-926-3018



KEEF - Opening Doors to the Future



This newsletter was produced from emailed files sent to me by Alinda Ware, Marie MacKay, Maureen Howard & Peg Klesner.
We hope you enjoy reading it.

Thank you all for your support of KEEF.

Don Reimer, Qualicum Beach, BC. dwdenman@yahoo.ca