

# KENYA EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND

## NEWSLETTER #1

VOLUME 1, NUMBER ONE, SEPTEMBER 2008

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As this year's president of the Kenya Education Endowment Fund I welcome all of you who have decided to accompany us on this journey to empower young Kenyans. Our volunteers on the Board bring many years of experience to our work in Western Province in Kenya where our scholarship students are chosen. Most of our members have other responsibilities and commitments but they still take the time to respond to the need to open doors to the future for these young people.

We have accomplished much in a little over two years since receiving our charitable status in December, 2006. Some of these include producing a brochure and having a website in progress. A gift certificate card will soon be available for those wishing to donate in someone else's name.

Surpassing our goal of doubling our scholarship recipients within three years, KEEF is presently supporting 53 students in secondary, post-secondary and special institutions, with five new scholarships already promised for next year. Two new members have recently joined us on the board.

Office space in Kakamega and a storage unit for our files has now been provided by one of the KEEF Kenya board members and a computer for that office has been donated by Afretech, a Canadian organization that provides computers and books for schools in Africa.

The need for educational support in western Kenya has increased drastically due to several factors. Half of Kenya's population is now under 15 years of age. Inflation has risen almost 30% since the political strife following the last national election in December, 2007, thus

increasing the cost of secondary education to new and often unmanageable levels for families already stretched to the limit. Many of these families are also supporting the orphans of relatives lost to AIDS, while other groups are headed by grandmothers or by the eldest child surviving after the death of their parents. The stories of hardship are many and some have been featured in this newsletter.

Kenyans, however, remain optimistic, saying again and again, we will persevere. The opportunity which is provided by your donations contributes to this hope in the future. The myriad of educational needs and unexpected medical problems affirm that no donation is ever too small and is always put to good use.

We look forward to next year, knowing that KEEF is making a significant contribution to the lives of many through the efforts of all of us.

**Nancy Carson, KEEF President**

### HARON'S SUCCESS STORY

In 1988 Jesse, a Canadian volunteer in Kenya, broke her leg while walking on the red clay roads. Her Canadian friends urged her to return home, but Jesse was determined to stay and continue her work choosing students to be sponsored. These students included four boys who appreciated the scholarships that had been provided for them to go to High School. They decided to return the kindness by helping Jesse. She was unable to cook, use the outside bathroom facilities, or get around much at all. These four boys made sure she had water, food and even carried out the 'honey pot' which was very much against the rules of their own culture. They also took turns visiting and keeping Jesse entertained throughout the weeks before her leg healed enough for her to get around on her own.

Haron Ogendero was one of the boys who assisted Jesse and she never forgot his kindness. Years later, when he finished Form 4 (High School) with marks which did not qualify

him for university, she offered to sponsor him at a local polytechnic school to learn mechanics. He also learned to drive, but not without nearly removing the retaining wall at Jessie's home.

Eventually, he passed his government exams and was apprenticed to a Kisumu car repair workshop in hopes it would prepare him for juakali (at the side of the road) work.

One afternoon, Haron stopped by the house because he was applying for a job with Kenya Tea Company. He was interviewing for a position as a mechanic in the Marigoli branch. He needed a little "chai" or what we would call a bribe in order to secure a job. Much as it was against our policy we and several of his friends came up with the money and Haron was hired and has now worked for Kenya Tea Company for 13 years, repairing and driving their trucks.

Haron now has a wife and three children. His oldest is named Belle for the woman who sponsored him in high school and his second daughter is named Jessie for the woman who gave him his post secondary education. He is very grateful for the opportunities he was given. Today his children live in a household that truly sees the value of education for boys and girls.

Jesse and Belle would be very proud of the Haron Ogendo they helped, through his own kindness! What better legacy for these two women!

**Peg Klesner, KEEF Treasurer**

### **JAMES AND BEN**

James is an African-Canadian who has been in maximum security prison for most of his life. A year ago a friend mentioned KEEF to him and told of the needs of so many deserving students in Kenya. James earns a few dollars in prison from time to time and he decided to contribute to the sponsorship of a student through KEEF. We chose Ben, a student in Clinical Medicine, as his student and we sent him photos and a letter from Ben.

His friend reports: "The photo of Ben has moved James very deeply. As he told me by phone, it reminded him of his own youth – his utterly misspent youth as he puts it – and of the potential in life which he himself once had. He wept in his cell over the photos, both out of regret for himself, and hope for Ben".

Again, he wants to help. James never knew his own father, and on learning from Ben's letter how Ben's father had worked to help his family, James wants to reach out to him as well.

What a wonderful lesson for us all – help from a man who has so little to a young man who has the potential to help many.

**Patricia Crossley, KEEF Secretary**

### **CHARLES MUSHIYI**

Charles came to KEEF at the end of elementary school as a result of his older brother Nicholas receiving a scholarship to attend secondary school - he was out of school for at least a year due to a lack of money for fees. The mother of these two boys left home after their father was diagnosed with AIDS and to this day they do not know what happened to her or if she is still living. After their father died Charles and his brother went to live with a paternal uncle but they eventually escaped an abusive situation and found a loving home with their maternal aunt. Their Aunt Esther places a high value on education, having not had the chance to be educated herself. AIDS has resulted in increasing burdens on the extended families of orphans and these children are often not welcome in a family whose resources are already stretched to the limit.

Following in his brother's footsteps Charles became Head Boy at the same secondary boarding school that Nicholas had attended and he continued to work hard at his studies despite his new responsibilities. In November, Charles, along with thousands of other Kenyan students, will write his final national exams, the results of which will determine his eligibility for college or university. When his brother and his classmates

wrote their final computer exam three years ago, they had to share the one school computer, a few being awakened in relays during the night to sleepily take their places in front of the screen. Despite these challenges Nicholas scored well!

Nicholas who is also a KEEF student, went on to take computer studies and he graduates this year from the Kenya Polytechnic in Kenya's capital, Nairobi. After entering the workplace he will be able to contribute to Charles' post-secondary studies and to help his Aunt who has been such a support for her two nephews all these years. Charles' sponsor is hoping that he will also go on to post-secondary training.

KEEF has made such a difference in all their lives.

**Nancy Carson**

### **KEEF STUDENTS, 2008**

We choose this year's students in difficult circumstances. For several weeks in January we kept close to home and even later travel sometimes became scary. Even so, the students found us and we chose the ones we thought would do well. One young man's mother sells fruit in the local market which meant the odd mango in appreciation!

The rewards came in April when the students brought in their marks for the first term. One of our boys at Kakamega High School was number one out 351 students! Another at Mukumu scored equally well. The rest are doing well. the end of year marks will be very important and we hope the sponsors will continue to fund these very deserving young people. As well as students in regular schools KEEF sponsors are also assisting a young girl in a deaf school and a young boy at Daisy, a school for the disabled.

**KEEF WEBSITE:** [www.kenyaeducation.org](http://www.kenyaeducation.org)

We now have a website. We think you will find it interesting and educational and encourage

you to pass on the url to others. You will find important information regarding fees and tax deductions as well as this newsletter. Please note that the web site will be updated infrequently.

**Patricia Crossley**

### **NEWS FROM YOUR STUDENTS:**

If you have tidbits of news of your students (like the ones above) you would like to share please send them to Marie Mackay (mariemackay(at)telus.net) or Peg Klesner

The school term for High School starts in January so it is not too soon to send your donation for next year.

To: Margaret Klesner

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You can also email her at [lachaiaam\(at\)telus.net](mailto:lachaiaam(at)telus.net)  
Let her know if you need a gift card