



Empowering Young Kenyans

# Newsletter

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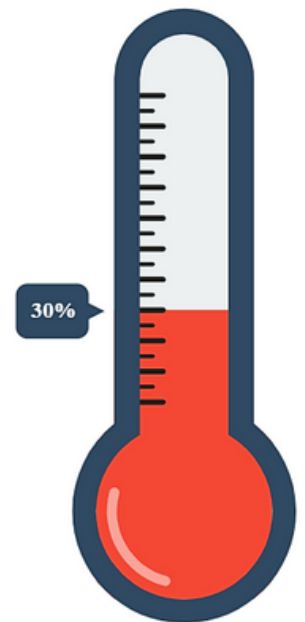


## KEEF'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY: PROJECT KUIMARISHA

As we commemorate our 20th anniversary at KEEF, we're thrilled to embrace the spirit of Kuimarisha, meaning "to boost positively," with the Kuimarisha Project at Rosterman Secondary Day School in Kakamega, Kenya. This special anniversary project aims to replace the school's unsafe temporary kitchen, where daily lunches for 379 boys, girls, and 23 staff are prepared. This initiative is a crucial step in ensuring the provision of healthy meals, establishing safe storage, and protecting the health of food preparation staff through improved ventilation.

For more information on how you can contribute to Project Kuimarisha, check out the article on page 7! Your support for Project Kuimarisha is greatly needed and gratefully received. Asante sana – thank you – for your continued support as we work together to make a positive impact on education in Kenya.

**GOAL: \$20,000**



## THANK YOU, SPONSORS!

You are truly making a huge difference.  
The lives and dreams of over 150 secondary and post secondary students,  
their families and communities are being realized.  
Life changing..... Thank you!

# STORIES FROM OUR ALUMNI: *Caroline*

## *From students to professionals: Our alumni give back*

I am honored to share my gratitude to KEEF as we celebrate this 20th anniversary. Thank you KEEF for the opportunity and privilege you gave me to be part of this great family. I joined KEEF as a beneficiary of post secondary education in 2008. I remember with nostalgia how I felt like the world had crumbled on me, I felt the rejection and had very low esteem, I know what it means to be miserable from that experience.

Getting a scholarship to pursue Clinical medicine and surgery was literally picking me up from a dump site and my life has not been the same again, the thought of someone who has no family ties with me sacrificing their time and money to get me through school while I worried less of fee payment gave me the urge to work hard till I graduated.

KEEF is an organization that does not just plant, but waters and weeds its beneficiaries, I have kept contact with the KEEF Kenya office and they have held my hand in my career as a Clinical officer, I am also privileged to be one of the facilitators during workshops and mentorship for the past 9 years, I am proud that today my mentees are doing great!



To sum it up, I celebrate KEEF for making me this great clinician, I now have a voice to speak not only for myself but for others too, I have the confidence to stand out, I came lost but now I have focus and direction in life.

You opened doors and brought opportunity to my life, I look forward to pursue a degree in medicine and surgery, thanks to the workshops where I have learned the 21st century skills, communication collaboration, creative thinking, critical thinking among others, a key component for career and day to day life.

I celebrate our sponsors, KEEF Kenya and KEEF CANADA boards, all institutions that educate us our parents and guardians and my fellow alumni, long live KEEF!

# STORIES FROM OUR ALUMNI: *Nicholas*

My name is Nicholas Ndakalu Atanda, I am now 38 yrs old, happily married with five children.

I am an Accountant by profession working as a branch Accountant with National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF-Kenya) Kakamega Branch. I hold A Bachelors Degree in Commerce (Accounting Option) Technical Diploma in Information Technology and CPA.

I graduated in 2004 from high school, 2009 from Technical University and then 2013 from Mount Kenya University.

The journey to my successful career began in 2002 when I met KEEF through the late Norah Harrison. I was a form one day scholar student in Shikunga Secondary school, having been joined almost two years later due to lack of school fees. I was struggling and almost dropping out of school, I used to walk 15km everyday from Khwisero to shiukunga. It was not easy.

I had a good friend Hudson Wereh (we are still good friends until now) in school, he introduced me to the late Norah Harrison- the school administration recommended me because I was disciplined, a performer and assistant head boy. Norah took me though she was heavily burdened; she introduced me to KEEF where I met the late Marie Mackey, Rod and Pat, Alinda and the late John and many other People. It was such a big family.



I later met my sponsor Nancy Carson; she took me as her grandson. She came to visit me in School with her daughter Nila and we are now a big family full of love.

Life continued and the young man, from poor and humble background, without hope and family became hopeful and with bright future.

Today I am a responsible husband and father, with a successful career and touching many lives in my capacity. I am also a Senior Pastor in Repentance and Holiness Church (Makunga Altar).

I pay fees for Godwin Malenya, an orphan from Homabay and a second year student in Masinde Muliro Universty. I met him through the church and partially support many other needy children with fees and school needs.



# Kenya: More Than Just Safaris

By Matt Glassford

My Dad and his wife Janice have been going to Kenya for over 10 years to volunteer for KEEF. On their first trip in 2011, they started with several safaris and sent back some great pictures. Subsequent trips were just to work in Kakamega at the KEEF office. We didn't know much about what they were doing other than working with the students at workshops and interviewing and selecting new students for donors for the upcoming year. We knew they loved the work, challenges and making a difference in the lives of young Kenyans and their families.

A couple of years ago I started to get involved with KEEF on the technical side of running electronic meetings and assisting with the new CRM (Customer Relations Management) administration system. I started thinking about the work being done in Kenya and mentioned to Dad that I might like to go over with them sometime. When my brother Blair also showed interest in making the trip, Dad decided this would be an opportunity to have a family trip and do some safaris at the same time. Janice was not going to be going over until December, so Dad, Blair and I started planning the once in a lifetime trip, with safaris!

After two fun-filled days in Amsterdam on the way over, and 2 more in Nairobi to get acclimatized, we were off for 6 days of safaris. They were absolutely amazing! Blair and I had never imagined how gorgeous the Kenyan landscape could be. The safari resorts were 1st class, and we were treated so well. We saw the Big Five animals all on our first day, and the remaining days included exploring other National Parks and seeing every animal imaginable. It was truly an experience of a lifetime and one that we will never forget!



After the safaris we headed back to Nairobi for one more night before boarding the plane for a 45 minute flight to Kisumu. When we had flown into Nairobi it was dark, but now we could see the full lay of the land with high rises, farms, and slums everywhere. What a contrast in types of living!

Once in Kisumu we were met by our driver for the 60-minute drive across the equator to Kakamega. Although Dad had been explaining all about the living conditions we were going to experience, neither my brother nor I could have prepared for what we were about to experience during the week we were there. As we drove into Kakamega, the traffic got thicker with motorcycles everywhere, tuk tuks (3-wheeled 3-person carriers) and bicycles all over the roads, which did not have lanes marked anywhere. It was a free-for-all, and when you add in the pedestrians stepping out into traffic whenever and wherever they wanted, it was quite the sight. Without traffic lights and only one roundabout to control traffic, it was everyone for themselves!

Once we got settled in our small apartment at Sheywe Guest House, where the KEEF office is located, we started to get oriented to our new living conditions. Basic would be an understatement to describe our apartment. The only hot water was in the shower when it worked, there were holes in the mosquito netting and no screens on the windows. With temperatures hovering around 30C each afternoon, it got awfully hot in the room! We were lucky to have a large one-size-fits-all food, appliance, clothing, electronics, mattress, and “everything else” store two blocks away from our home away from home. We stocked the kitchen and started to get working on the tasks that needed doing before the workshops commenced.

We arrived at the school by 8:00 a.m. Thursday morning and didn't leave for another 12 hours! I was responsible for setting up the audio-visual equipment and coordinating the use of the microphones. Blair got right into meeting the students and signing them up for the workshops, and I was then tasked with taking photos of students. Once everything got under way, we assisted with whatever needed doing.

Not surprising, the lunch and dinner were Kenyan foods and interesting to say the least! I quite liked the various tastes, but my brother was a little more cautious with what he ate. And unlike a lot of the Kenyan facilitators, we ate with knives and forks, not our hands.

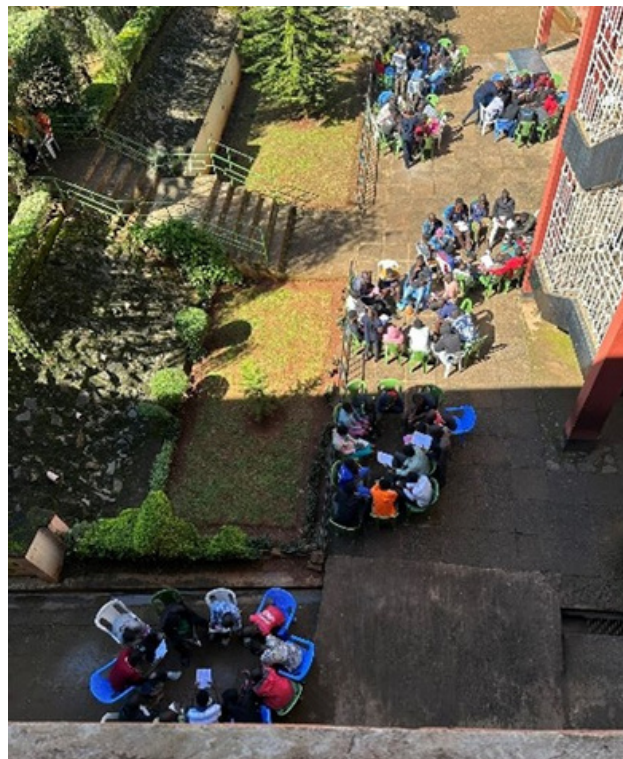
Friday commenced at 8:00 a.m. and we didn't leave until after 10:00 p.m.! The workshops were amazing. What we found so different from Western learning was that so much of the program was based on lifestyle learning, not just the 'ABC's.' For example, there was a session on composting. All the students were shown how to make a simple, but very efficient compost container to provide fertilizer for their families' crops. It was amazing how the students got involved with making the compost. Fertilizer is quite expensive in Kenya and this method of making it is worth the effort and costs very little to put together.



**Typical Street Scene**



**Movement Everywhere**



**Students Working on Composting**

There were two sessions on health and wellness: one on basic first aid including CPR, and the other on sex education. Both sessions were very well received and included topics on which the students had no previous training. There were also sessions on math skills, study skills, resume writing and preparing for an interview. These were equally interesting and valuable to the students.

After supper on Friday, the "talent" part of the workshops got underway. The students formed groups and worked together to come up with something to present. Some individuals took it upon themselves to go solo by singing or dancing. There was a lot of talent in our students!

The workshops ended at noon on Saturday with a hearty lunch to send the students home for the holiday break. Upon reflecting on the whole program, it truly was enlightening and made us proud to be part of the event. Throughout the whole time you could see the commitment and honest interest coming from the students. This was a real learning experience for everyone. Both Blair and I went to college in Vancouver, and these presentations were college level. A lot of the material is never taught in school in Kenya and is important for the students to understand.

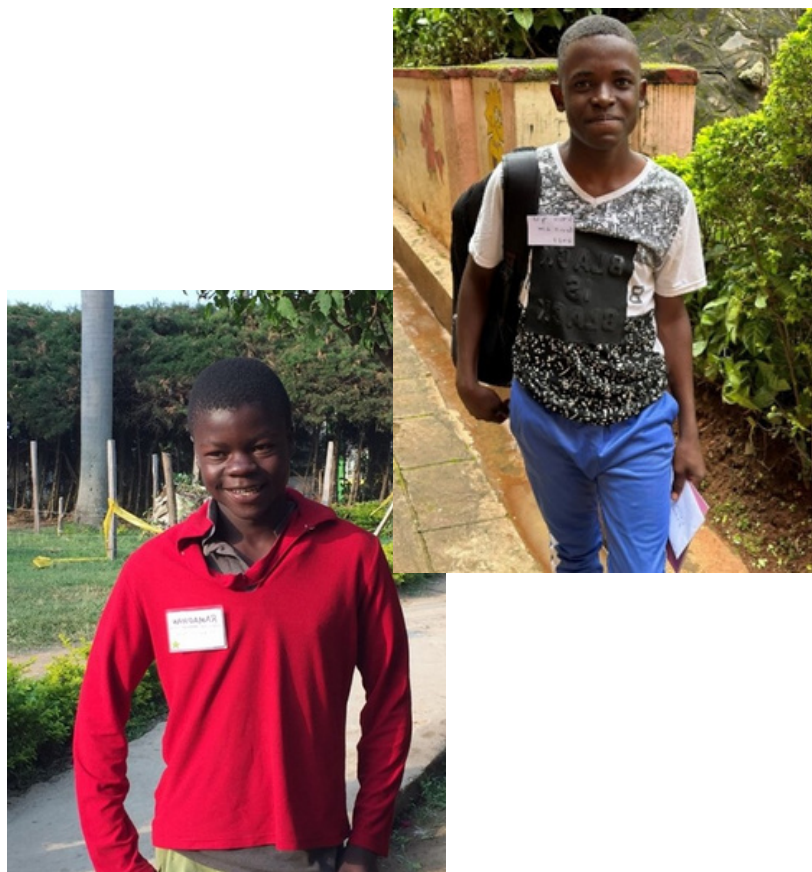
So many things made us smile as we saw how KEEF is making a difference. There were about 16 facilitators; all of them were volunteers and many were KEEF alumni. They were college or university graduates, dedicated to their fields and they did an amazing job of presenting valuable lessons to the students. They were truly giving back!

We had a great time at the workshops. From assisting in many areas and working with the other facilitators, to spending hours talking with the students, it was truly heartwarming. We exchanged contact information and continue to be in touch with some of our new friends. In fact, we were so impressed with the work KEEF is doing that my brother and I each decided to sponsor a student for the 4-year secondary education program. And we are hoping to return to Kakamega and volunteer with KEEF again soon.

The safaris were out of this world and our experiences were once in a lifetime. But the visit to KEEF and working with the students was equally rewarding. To observe how resilient and committed these kids are to making something of themselves is truly amazing. Not only will an education assist them in the future, but they will also be able to give back to their families and to their communities as well.



**Workshop Gathering**



**Happy KEEF Students!**

# Supporting Project Kuimarisha



## Call to Support KEEF Sun Run Volunteers

By Shelagh Armour-Godbolt

2024 marks the 40th year of the Vancouver Sun Run and the 20th of KEEF's "Opening Doors to the future" in Kenyan secondary and post-secondary schools. Again in 2024 a number of KEEF volunteers have registered to take part – walking or running the 10Km Virtual Sun Run in their home communities in BC and Alberta at their chosen times over the weekend of April 19-21. KEEF supporters and the folks in the home communities of these volunteers will be encouraged to make a donation to KEEF's 20th anniversary Kuimarisha Project at St. Augustine Rosterman Secondary School in support of the efforts of our walkers and runners. Kuimarisha (koo-e-ma-ree-sha) is a Swahili word meaning "to boost up positively".

The Rosterman school kitchen serves a daily school meal and tea breaks to some 379 girls and boys, 23 teachers and staff in a temporary, poorly ventilated iron sheeting kitchen with very smoky old cook stoves. This space compromises the health of the food preparers/cooks. The limited security of the building risks the safety/spoilage of food supplies. This can mean food-borne illness for school members and disease taken into the wider community. Rosterman staff and Board of Management have identified a healthy, safe, secure kitchen as their top priority.

Will you consider a donation honouring the energy and efforts of our 2024 Virtual Sun Run volunteers? All proceeds go to the Kuimarisha Project. Donations \$20 and over are eligible for a tax-deductible receipt. Please put 2024 Sun Run in the donation's message line. E-transfer to [keefcan2010@gmail.com](mailto:keefcan2010@gmail.com); post a cheque, payable to KEEF, c/o #414-3388 Morrey Court, Burnaby, BC V3J 7Y5; or make your Sun Run donation online at [www.kenyaeducation.org](http://www.kenyaeducation.org). Please share the story of our 20th anniversary Kuimarisha Project on your social media and with others you know who value education. Asante Sana! Thank you! for helping to "boost up" Rosterman Secondary School positively.

# A Message from KEEF Canada Board Chair

By Alinda Ware

I arrived in Kakamega October 31 and hit the ground running as we immediately began preparing for the 3 day Leadership Lifeskill Workshops on November 23-25. The 2023 theme was Surviving, Thriving and Excelling in Life with a focus on reflective/active listening as well as the regular activities like first aid, study skills, improving math strategies, etc. The office staff, facilitators and I met two weekends to make sure we were all aware of our roles during the reflective/active listening activities and scenarios and with the workshops they were each facilitating. The workshops were very successful.

The workshops were followed in December by interviews for new students for KEEF Canada and KEEF Kenya. Canadian sponsored students are sent to boarding schools and Kenyan sponsored students are sent to day schools. We interviewed about 200 students and sent 30 form 1's (gr. 9) to boarding schools and 12 form 1,2,3 or 4 students to day schools. 3 of the 12 were sponsored by the KEEF alumni, one by the KEEF Board, one by an individual and the rest by the interest from the Kenyan Board's endowment fund.

In January we held the form 4 leavers workshop. We had 3 A-, 6 B+, 5 B's, 8 B- , 5 C+, 3 C's, 1 C - and 1 D+. We had someone from the local national polytechnic and someone from the local university come and explain the procedure of applying for post secondary training at either university or polytechnic. Polytechnics are similar to our colleges and BCIT.

We have just finished visiting the schools, meeting our students and paying their fees for the whole year. Schools are happy to see us and receive their cheque!

On February 29, we have a meeting with the patrons. Each school has a teacher who is in charge of KEEF sponsored students. Patrons come in once a year so we can discuss issues, build our relationship with their school and enjoy a lunch. They return to their school, Sarah and Mary return to the office and I start packing my bags, closing down my rented house, and flying out of Kenya on March 5. Hopefully I can return in November.

## Photo Gallery



**Left: Principal Mary Mushira with Grade 12 Students**  
**Top Right: Board Chair Alinda with baby Joddy**  
**Bottom Right: Student Recipients of Summer Holiday Small Business Loans**