



SUITCASES for AFRICA

News Letter

Winter 2014



Things are Getting Better

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Thanks to our donors & friends

The Banana Farm Pilot Project 2014

The community of Emalindi is a place of hardship and insecurity. It is also the location of Mwirembe St. Paul's Primary School which is attended by approximately 500 local children. Over the last few years, SFA has installed a well, 8 new latrines and built a beautiful large classroom for the level 8 class. The yearly donations of school supplies, library books and the painting project of 2013 have done much to lift the educational level and morale of staff and students. However, there is still a huge worry to all of us at SFA. **Hunger** is a relentless problem here. The children come from very poor families. Many are malnourished and suffer because of it. One meal a day would make a huge impact on their health and ability to study at school. Unfortunately, to fund a feeding program at this school of 500 students would require more funds than SFA could muster. It is a problem we have been pondering over since our first visit there in 2011. At that time we learned that many attend school all day with little more than tea in their system until they return home for a meal.

A possible solution?



In 2013 SFA learned from our administrator David about the Kenyan government's initiative to promote the growing of banana tree plantations. He attended a seminar in Nairobi to learn more about this possibility. It was necessary to determine the project's suitability, the fast-growing tissue culture plantlets available, and the procedure to ensure a successful harvest. We have hope that this may be a partial solution for addressing the hunger problems of these school children.

The fast growing plants will mature in one year and bear fruit. The productive and nutritious bananas would be available for the children to eat. If the plantation was then enlarged, the excess fruit could be sold. With the income generated by selling bananas, the school could then purchase staples of maize and beans to support a feeding program. The banana plants would be tended by the older children and staff under the guidance and training of a field extension officer. Proper applications of fertilizers, mulching and watering will be supervised. SFA agreed to fund a pilot project of 100 banana plants to determine the project's viability. If successful we would move forward with the planting of a complete plantation as funding allows in 2014.

The Project Kicks Off

In September the project kicked off with the older children working and involved in preparing the large tract of land surrounding the school. Very large deep holes were dug to receive the soil, organic fertilizer and plantlets. SFA received these photos of the children. Their excitement at being part of this project was evident.



Tragedy strikes

Then came news of a tragedy that moved us all to tears and reminded us exactly how hard life is for those children we assist.

One of the young girls who had been involved in the planting preparations was Loice. Fourteen year old Loice left school one day to return to her home as usual. Feeling very hungry she detoured into the forest to search for some fruit in order to assuage her hunger even though knowing the fruit was still un-ripened. While searching, Loice found a dead bird on the forest floor.



Taking it home she prepared, cooked and ate the bird before her family returned. Tragically Loice was taken very ill almost immediately. Within 3 hours of consuming it, Loice was in a hospital fighting for her life. Everything possible was done to save her but to no avail. Loice passed away. It was determined that the bird she had consumed was killed by a poisonous snake and that the poison in its carcass is what took her life. How can we in Canada even conceive of such a thing? Life is hard in rural Kenya and very fragile.

In Memory of Loice

This event was heartbreaking for the school, the community and for us at SFA too. We sent our condolences and our prayers to the community. We also requested to name the Banana Tree Project in memory of Loice. We hope that future children in this community will not be so hungry they view a bird found dead on the forest floor as a potential meal.



We thank all those who have already donated to this project in 2013. We are happy to report the plants are taking well and growing quickly. We will keep you posted on this special project as the year unfolds.



A TRIP TO REMEMBER!!

..... for both the highs and the lows.

On September 14th, 2013, Michele Shepard and Wendy Buchanan left for Kenya on a trip that promised to be a visit filled with joy and celebration.

We were fortunate that so many wonderful projects had been completed and were ready to be officially opened while we were in Kenya. It was certainly a privilege to be on site and to witness the power of positive change that SUITCASES FOR AFRICA is bringing to numerous communities.

Below we will share a few of our favourite photos and stories with you.

It was abundantly clear over and over again that SFA is making a positive difference. When at home in Canada we often feel overwhelmed with the sheer scope of great need in Kenya and repeatedly feel that what we are doing is like just a small drop in a huge bucket of need. We witnessed numerous times that the drops do add up and lives are being changed for the better.

The Education Sponsorship Program is empowering children with a sense of accomplishment as well as a valuable education. Who knows what they will accomplish in the years to come and how many lives that in turn will impact and improve?

Both Joshua's Well & Gaetano's Mill of Love have changed their communities in the most basic, positive ways. The Well has brought water to a remote community that up until then did not have the luxury of clean accessible water! Children in the community at Sacred Shrine now have a feeding program thanks to the proceeds of the Mill. The opening celebrations at both facilities brought tears of joy to our eyes as we listened to songs of praise and gratitude.

Just being with friends and acquaintances in Kenya is a privilege we do not take lightly. Our Kenyan contacts have a lot to teach us about resilience and grace.

We experienced the confusion and heartache of being in Kenya when the Westgate Mall terrorist attack occurred. It is hard to come to grips with such a cowardly, senseless act. We shared the shock and then outrage of the nation.

The world is changing and thanks to our many Canadian friends and donors SUITCASES FOR AFRICA is proud to be playing a small but effective part in improving conditions for many communities in Kenya. It is because of the commitment of like-minded people in Canada that we are able to join our two worlds for our mutual benefit.

Thank you to everyone who has shown their confidence in the SFA team and empowered us to attain so much more than we ever thought possible.

A Photo Gallery



Smiles and waves from everyone!

Each day we crossed the equator many times. These children were on their way back to school with their teacher and they were thrilled to wave and say Hi.



The boys from Mwirembe/St. Paul's School had to come to our rescue to push our van out of the mud – not once but three times. They ran behind the van laughing, cheering and pushing as needed as we struggled to make our way to the school.



A fond farewell from
the students at Itegero
Primary School as
they sent us on our
way.

CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS LOOKING AFTER CHILDREN.



**A little goes a long way – a toy can
be made from anything!**



Special Friends

Susan & Esther enjoying a quiet moment & a smile!



Doreen & Michele share a hug.



Wendy and John, our trusted friend & driver, waiting for a special lunch at the Bull's View Restaurant.



Elizabeth and her grandson enjoy having their photo taken.

Donated Soccer Uniforms Bring Joy



Our administrator Susan wrote to describe the great excitement brought about by the arrival of the team uniforms.....

"Be blessed our friends. Yesterday was a busy day for us as we went to three schools to distribute more Soccer uniforms. The suitcases left by the visiting team had even more Soccer uniforms. We therefore selected three local schools to benefit from the

donation. The Schools that received a set of Soccer uniforms were Shitaho Primary School, Museno Secondary School and Malimili Secondary School. When we arrived to the schools and shared our visiting objective, the school management received the information with excitement. Before we arrived to the schools, we did not know that Soccer uniforms are golden and precious to the Schools and are difficult to be obtained by schools because they are very expensive for both parents and schools to purchase. For Shitaho Primary School, learning came to a standstill when the team wore the uniform. The school team has never used a soccer uniform during soccer activities. All the children came out of the class rooms just to have a look at their fellow school team in soccer uniforms. The School management, teachers and pupils could not hide their appreciation"

SFA would like to thank all those teams who donated a complete set of team uniforms at the end of their playing season in 2013.



Thanks to you, SFA is making a Difference: One Child at a Time... One Community at a Time...



How Canadians are Helping in their Own Way

SFA would not be able to realise the wonderful projects taking place without the help of many Canadians who are finding ways to get involved. We thank them for sharing their ideas, their time and talents in many simple and creative ways. We are proud to introduce some of them to you today on the following pages. THANK YOU!

The Ste. Anne Veterans Hospital Donation



SFA would like to thank Lorraine LaFrance and Helene Lewis of the Veterans Hospital for their thoughtfulness in organizing the donation of several wheelchairs, hundreds of hospital bed sheets and many stainless steel utensils. These items will be much appreciated at the Beraldo Medical Centre in Emalindi and the St. Elizabeth Hospital in Mukumu. The Beraldo

Family is organizing a container to be shipped to Kenya in 2014. Enthusiastic Toronto volunteers are now busy organizing the donation of more much needed medical equipment.



*"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others" ~
Mahatma Gandhi*



CURVES BEACONSFIELD

275 Elm Ave.,
Beaconsfield, Qc
514-694-2044

SUITCASES FOR AFRICA would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Cori-Ann, Cal and the extended family at Curves Beaconsfield for permitting us to participate in the 4th. Annual Craft Fair and for sharing the proceeds of the event with SFA and NOVA West Island. This fair has evolved into such a wonderful community event. It was certainly our pleasure to participate for the three days and spend time with so many friends and acquaintances.

The cheque that we received as our share of the proceeds was deposited in the Joshua's Well Account and we have already commenced the search for a second location.

Thank you very much - Asante Sana.

What a great gift suggestion!

Only \$10.00

Cooking For Kenya

A wonderful compilation of family friendly recipes.

This cookbook became a reality thanks to the dedication of community and friends coming together to assist Joshua in his quest to raise funds for a second well.

To order your cookbook contact:

Cal or Cori-Ann at:

curvesbeaconsfield@gmail.com

or

Wendy at:

suitcasesforafrica@yahoo.ca



only \$10.00

Corpus Christi Parish, Senneville



SFA would like to thank the children in the level 6 Faith First Program at Corpus Christi. The class recently spent an evening learning about the challenges faced by children their age who are orphaned and living at the Emalindi Orphan Hostel in Kenya. They watched a presentation about the difficult living conditions and the subsequent renovations done on the Girls Dormitory in 2013. Thanks to our donors life is much better for these children. Now that the dormitory has been repaired, freshly painted and furnished with new beds and mattresses for the girls it was decided that a cheerful wall hanging would be an enjoyable project to brighten the walls. The Faith First children used their creative skills to send messages of love and support to their Kenyan peers. We know it will be received with great joy when it travels to Emalindi with the next SFA team going over to visit.



Beavers at Valois United Church

The Beavers were thrilled to see pictures of children in Kenya enjoying the FRIENDSHIP HANDS that they had made for them.

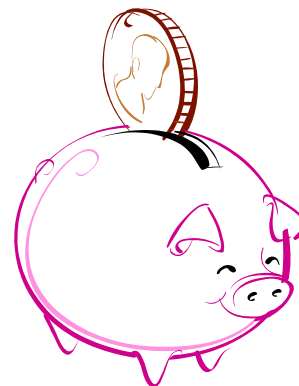


Students at St. Joseph the Worker Home and School for the Mentally and Physically Challenged were the happy recipients of the messages from Canada.

Everyone enjoyed listening to ENORMOUS ELEPHANT - a story about how the elephant got his long trunk!



Penny Collection Update



Many thanks go out to all those who have been donating their pennies over the last year. Those pennies have been adding up and will help fund important projects in 2014. To date the tally has reached.....

\$1,531.00

We will continue to collect them as long as they are still around, so keep them coming! Thank you also to the great volunteers who roll them for us.

and the ark goes to



Marion Daigle was thrilled to receive an early Christmas surprise when she got the call that she had won the Noah's Ark Contest.

Stephanie Zampini (on the right) had sold Marion the winning ticket at the indoor Market at St. George's Anglican Church in Ste. Anne de Bellevue.

Congratulations Marion!

Thank you to everyone who participated in this
great fundraiser!

Coming Events...don't Miss Them!



SAVE THE DATE

THE 8TH ANNUAL COMEDY NIGHT FUNDRAISER

FOR

SUITCASES FOR AFRICA

WILL BE ON

FRIDAY APRIL 11TH 7 P.M.

at:

St. Edmunds Elementary School

115 Beaconsfield Blvd.

Beaconsfield, Qc

FEATURING

FRANCO TADDEO

TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN MARCH

Reserve your ticket now –

contact Wendy

suitcasesforafrica@yahoo.ca

Corpus Christi Parish..... Mini Jumble & Bake Sale

Sun. May 4th. 11:00am 16 Pacific, Senneville



Come out and indulge your sweet tooth! The talented parish bakers will offer their delicious baked goods for you to purchase.

There will also be tasty "breakfast sandwiches" for sale and a mini jumble sale of treasures and plants to tempt you. If you can

bake for us for this event or have items to donate for the tables please contact...



Patricia Jackson at 514 457-3544

Or

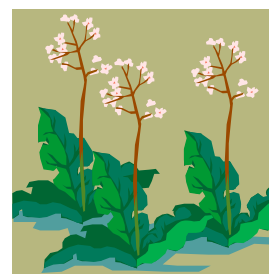
Darlene Anderson at 514 457-3786

for drop off locations

SFA 2nd Annual Plant Sale

9:00 am, May 24

61 Beaconsfield Court, Beaconsfield



After a very successful and enjoyable time organizing this event last spring, Edwina and Sharon are back for another great perennial sale in 2014! Donate your extra garden bounty knowing it will raise funds for orphans in Kenya. Perennials and houseplants are needed. For those avid gardeners searching for new additions to their gardens please come shop! There is no better way to expand your collection. See you there! Location:

Contact: Edwina 514-695-4945

or

Sharon 514-696-9664

Follow us on Facebook for the latest news and photos. "Like us" to spread the word on social media. Thank you!

How You Can Help



- Join us in raising funds and awareness with your own ideas or events.
- Sponsor a project with your school, church, company, family, or friends.
- Make a donation to support our projects. A tax receipt will be issued for all donations of \$25.00 or more.
- View our website for more information.
www.suitcasesforafrica.com
- Contact us at suitcasesforafrica@yahoo.ca