



SUITCASES for AFRICA

News Letter

Winter /Spring 2016



SFA Celebrates 10 Years Working in Kenya!

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**We dedicate this newsletter to Dr. Ebi Kimanani Johns.
It is hard to believe that 10 years have passed since the first group of women travelled to her Kenyan Village in Feb. 2006 to honour her memory and give thanks for her life.**

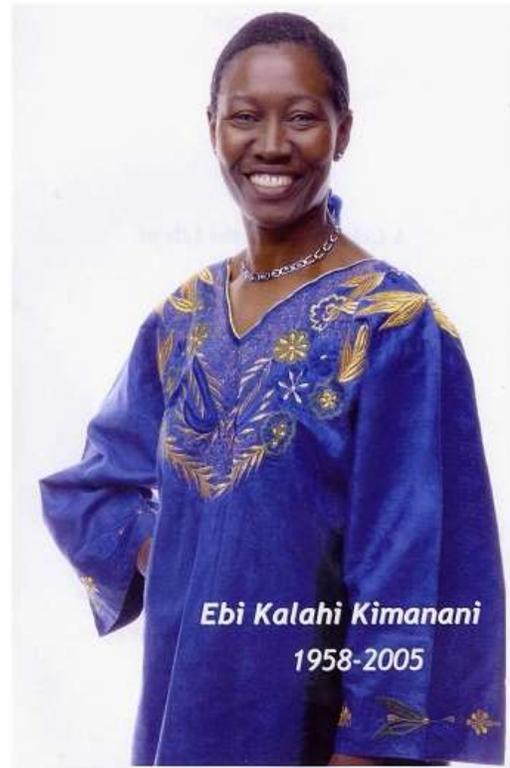
Dr. Ebi Kimanani Johns

In February of 2006, seven Canadian women made a trip to the village of Itegero, Kenya to honour the life of a dear friend and community member. They arrived at dusk in 2 separate vans after travelling for days by plane and by road to the home of Ebi's mother. Instantly they were overcome by emotion as a dozen women poured out of the home sweeping the visitors into their arms while singing and ululating gloriously.

Carried along inside they were treated to a moment none of them will ever forget. By the light of oil lamps in the darkening evening the group listened to songs and stories of their dear friend Ebi.

There was great emotion shared as the Kenyan women told of their joy that "Ebi's spirit had been brought back to Kenya" by the visitors because she had passed away so far from home in Canada a year earlier. We celebrated Ebi's amazing story with them and told them just how much she was loved and esteemed in Canada. Little did those present know where this moment, this trip and the weeks of volunteer work in her village that followed would lead. The groundswell of those who knew Ebi and those who came to know her story would develop into a fully registered charitable organization that would work to assist so many children, schools and communities in the years to come. It became a runaway train full of goodwill and kindness. We thank the many, many supporters who made it possible in her memory. By Darlene Anderson

On the following page is a list of the beneficiaries and communities served in Kenya over the last 10 years but in fact we are all beneficiaries thanks to Ebi's inspiration and example.



SFA PROJECT STATISTICS 2006 - 2016

Healthcare: Hospitals & Clinics receiving drugs & medical supplies: **15**;
Wells & Water Projects Installed: **13**;
Latrines: **8**;
Anti-Malaria/Mosquito Bed Nets: over **6,500** distributed;
Hearing Aids: **48**;
Dormitory Renovations: **3**;
Feeding Programs: 3 different programs: daily, supplemental, emergency. During the peak of the Famine in 2011 SFA was feeding approximately **1,000** children through feeding programs.
Locations of Food Programs past and present: **11**

Creation of a new clinic:

Beraldo Family Medical Clinic & Resource Centre 2012

Drug Shipments connected by SFA:

May 2010: **2** containers of anti-retrovirals & antibiotics distributed in Kakamega Region

Feb.2011: **6** 40ft containers of antibiotics, antifungals and anti-retrovirals. Treatment for 300,000 people distributed widely in Kenya.

Education:

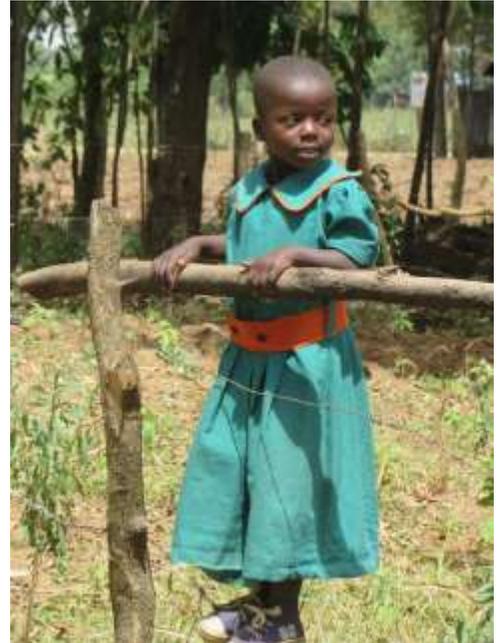
Classroom Construction: **2**;
Library Installation & Books: **12**;
Educational Sponsorships & Scholarships: **94** & **3** vocational apprenticeships.

Sustainable Projects:

Khayega Women's Sewing Group
Banana Plantation: **1**
Posho Mill: **1**
Paraffin Kiosk: **1**
Animal Husbandry: **8** Poultry Projects & **12** Cows & **12** Goats
Farming: **47** families & **1** Parish & **1** orphanage
Firewood Project: **1**

Schools & Communities

that have received assistance: 30



Thank You for being a part of it all!

2016 Trip to Kenya

This year found Wendy & Michele going to Kenya from mid-February until March 6th, a different time of the year from the usual fall trip. The overall impression was that it is sure is hot and humid in February and March!!



It was very exciting to see the boxes and items that had been shipped to Kenya in the container – some of which had been packed up in 2014. Thankfully Peter had delivered most of the larger medical supplies and bicycles to very grateful recipients. Unpacking, resorting and amalgamating the over two hundred boxes of treasures was a monumental task which at times was exhausting and yet also exhilarating. We send a big thank you to all the wonderful, caring SFA friends who collected so many great things for so many beneficiaries in Kenya.

It is always a treat for us to reconnect with our friends & colleagues and this trip was no exception. We found everyone well and anxious to hear our stories of Canada. Susan, Esther, Peter and Fr. Paul all extend greetings to all SFA supporters and donors.

We also had the pleasure of commissioning the new Firewood and Chain Saw Project in Shamberere. Another self-sustaining project that we “christened” was the Shitochi Goat Project. It sure was entertaining to try to contain 12 baby goats long enough to pass them on to their new owners. Both of these sustainable projects are replacing feeding programs and hopefully both communities will be reaping the benefits of their projects for years to come.

We were also fortunate to interact with most of our students in the Educational Support Program. Due to many valid & varied reasons some of the students could not make it to the celebration day. We now have over 60 students in the program and most of them have improved their academic scores significantly. Who knows what the future holds for all of these students thanks to their wonderful Canadian family donors?

All in all it was a tremendous trip and as usual it was very difficult to say goodbye and leave for home. We have so many wonderful colleagues and friends in Kenya – it is like a second home to us. Hopefully we will see everyone again in 2017.

We are extremely grateful for the dedication and hard work of so many people who contribute to the success of Suitcases for Africa - both here and in Kenya.



Wendy & Michelle



Proudly Waving Our Canadian Flag



Shitochi Goat Project

This is a self-help group created in the Khayega region comprised of members who are widows, widowers, people with HIV and Aids. There are twenty-two families caring for 75 orphans/vulnerable children. The guardians are mainly elderly grandparents who also require care and support.



SFA has run a supplemental feeding program there since 2010. In consultation with the community and SFA a proposal was developed for a sustainable project. A goat project was determined to be easily manageable by the elder members of the community.

Phase one of this project began early in 2016 with the purchase of eleven she goats and one male goat. The government partnered by supplying a Livestock Specialist for technical advice and support. Phase two will see these

numbers double once the project is running successfully.



The goal of this project is to have the community become self-reliant and no longer require the assistance of a feeding program.



Shamberere Firewood and Chain Saw Project

Shamberere is an early childhood nursery school that was initiated several years ago by community members. The enrollment of the school is sixty children. Eighty percent of the children are orphans or vulnerable children. Community health volunteers manage the school.



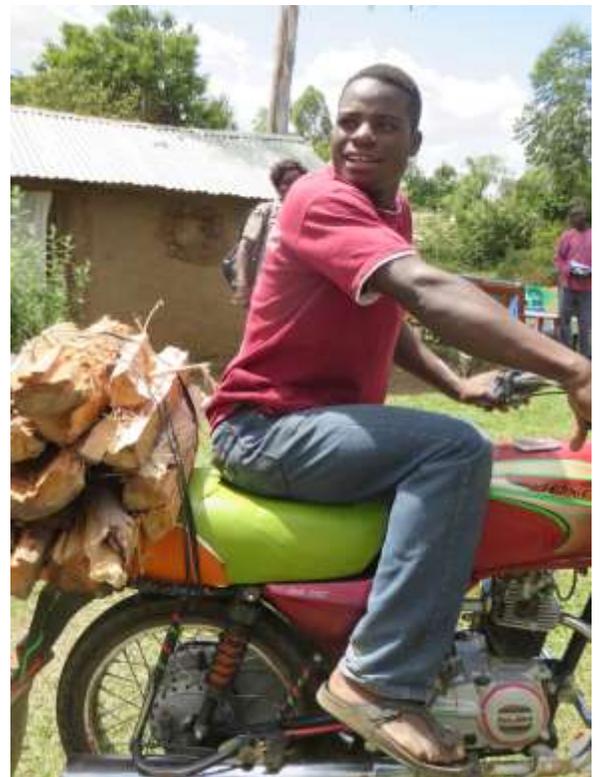
SFA has been assisting this community with a daily lunch program since 2010. The lunch program motivated the learners, and improved their general health.

In 2015 SFA was happy to have funded a sustainable project that will enable the management to address the school's basic needs. A large firewood structure was constructed and a new



power chain saw was purchased. It was great to see the shed filling up with wood. The chairperson explained to Wendy and Michele that they have trained one of their members on the correct use and care of the chain saw and that he goes out into the community for hire. This is proving to be very lucrative.

On the day that our team was there a young man came by on his motorcycle to purchase wood for his restaurant so that he could cook the evening meal. It is wonderful to see this community being empowered and growing in self-confidence thanks to their idea for this sustaining project. This group is now standing on their own feet and will carry this project as far as they need into the future. We wish them well.



Certificate of Appreciation

A certificate was presented to Suitcases for Africa during the team visit in February 2016
by

**SHUGULIKA
WAJANE GROUP
(SHAMBERERE)
Kakunga Kenya**

THE CHAIR PERSON
SPEECH: - 26/2/2016

Our guest of honor
SUITCASES FOR
AFRICA,



Ladies and gentlemen I am pleased to welcome you to this occasion I do hereby request you to be free and feel at home. Shugulika Wajane is a registered group with the government of Kenya.

On behalf of the Shugulika Wajane group and the community I take this opportunity to thank you, congratulate and appreciate Suitcases for Africa who have brought us a power saw machine (new) and initiated a firewood project - we are sure the profit sold out of firewood would enable us continue giving support to orphans and vulnerable children.

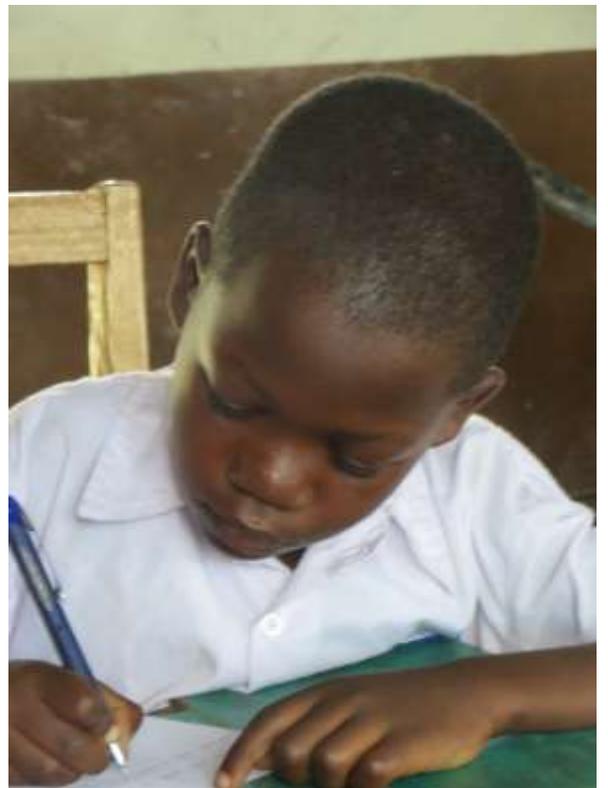
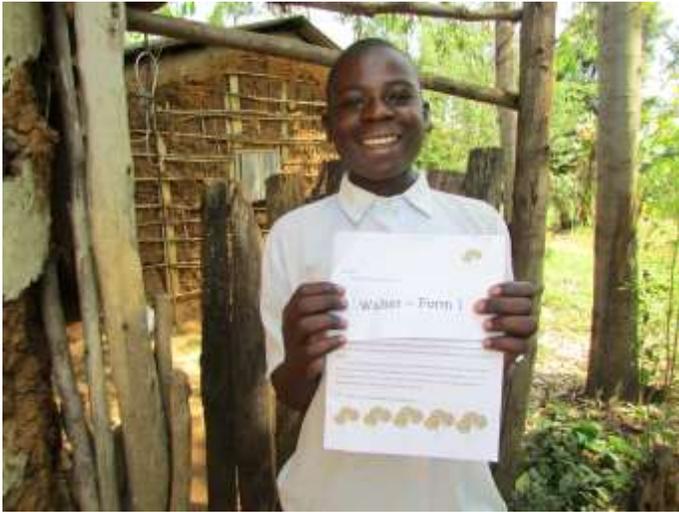
Guest of honor, ladies and gentlemen once again I thank you so much welcome again.

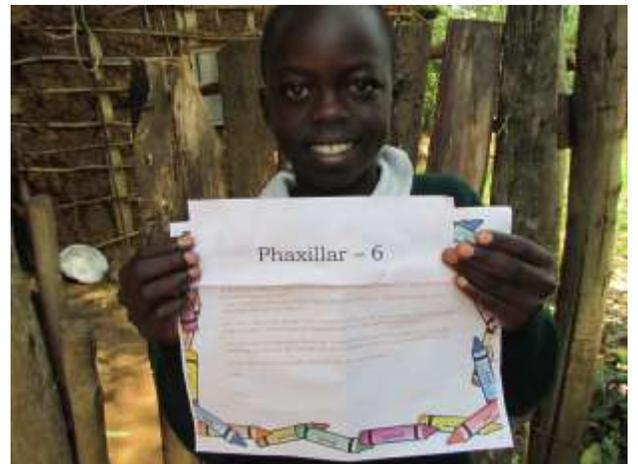
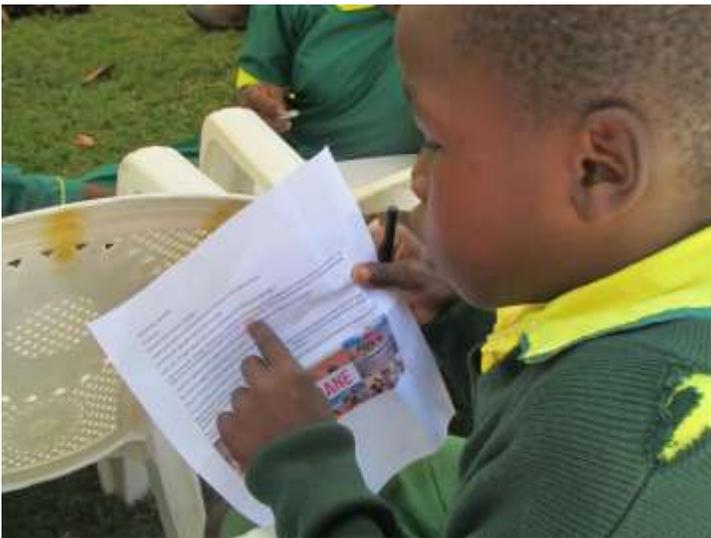
Thank you and may God bless you all.

Yours sincerely,
Elizabeth Ajema Zacharia

Group Chairperson

Happiness is a Letter from My Sponsor





Some Quotes from Recent Letters of Sponsored Students:



- I like to take this opportunity to write this letter to inform that first thank you very much to be with me during this time in my study. I am trying to do the best.

- I appreciate the way you are giving me support/ The promise and the good reward to you is by performing well in my exams.

- I am working hard to achieve my dream. When I will complete my high school I would like to be a lawyer. My life is good in Kakamega. Before you start helping me my life was not good but when you start to help me my life is good even in school.

- I also think of you whenever I look at your photo which I have kept in my file. I wish to come to Canada one day when I grow up.

- Thank you for your school fees and text books for your given me. I was performed well in school. My position was 2 out of 120. I promise that I will be position 1 next time.

- I have taken this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to your entire family for your endless support you have unselffully accorded me towards my education.

- The school is very importance in our lives and even one another. I wish you good luck.

- We are happy to see Suitcases for Africa. I am an orphan. My father dies in 2003. Thank you for choosing to be my friends.

- I will pray for your family. I hope you are enjoying your society too – even me so. I am staying close to Jesus.



Gifts for the Sponsored Children



Bags were given to each and every student filled with school supplies, a t-shirt, a rain poncho, sunglasses, a soccer ball, sweet treats and their letter from their sponsors - which the students really enjoy reading and responding to.



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



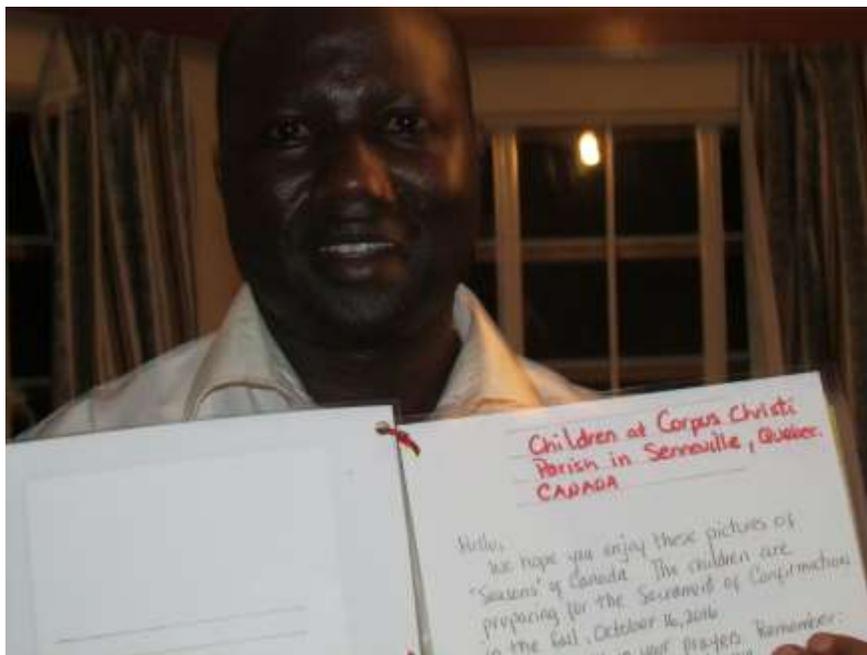
How Canadians are Helping in their Own Way

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!**

Connecting Communities Across the Miles



The level 6 children in the Corpus Christi Parish Faith First Class gathered to work on a project for their peers in Kenya. Following a talk and slide presentation on what life is like for children in Kenya the group wrote and illustrated their own book "The Four Seasons in Canada"

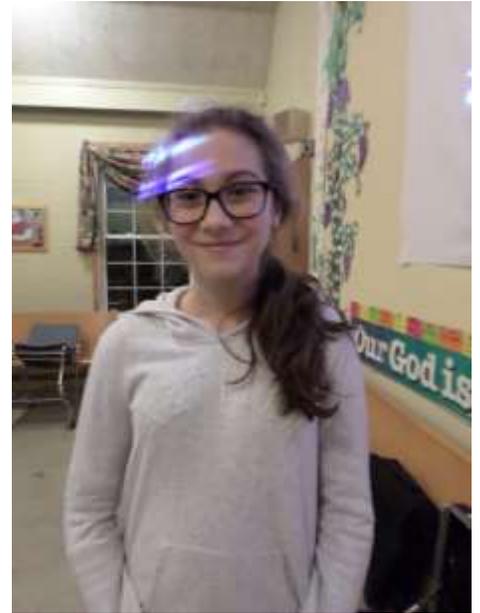


The book was taken by Wendy and Michele in February. Fr. Paul will share it with the children at Mwirembe St. Paul Primary School and the youth group of his Parish. The children on both continents enjoy and benefit by this connection and the sharing of their lives and experiences.



Kind Hearts for Kenya

SFA would like to thank Jenna Clahane. Jenna had the idea that she would like to bake cookies to raise money to help Kenyan children. After clearing it with her mom the two of them baked up a storm and sold the cookies to their visiting relatives at Christmas raising \$200.00 for the most needed projects.



Kaitlin's Fundraiser

In my English class we are learning about prejudice. For our second term presentation we had to do a project on someone or on an organization that helps people. So I chose Suitcases for Africa. For our presentations we were allowed a bonus. The bonus had to be something that we organized ourselves. I chose to do a fundraiser for SFA. This would be my second fundraiser for Suitcases for Africa. For my seventh birthday I decided that I would invite my whole class to my party and they would bring things for Africa instead of gifts for me.

But for this fundraiser it was a little different. Wendy Buchanan gave me many bookmarks that were made in Africa to sell. Along with the bookmarks my family and I made necklaces out of bobby pins and wine corks. We sold such things for 1\$ to 4\$. In the end we raised over two hundred dollars for Africa. I would like to thank my English teacher Mrs. Russell for pushing me to accomplish this fundraiser that was such a great success.

By Kaitlin Dunwoodie



Maxwell Residents Knit for the Little Ones



We would like to thank these kind women who put so much love into knitting teddies and baby sweaters for SFA to bring over. They bring joy and warmth to the children. Thank you Pat, Elsa, Dorothy and Amanda (not pictured). Sr. Bernadette was also happy to receive sweaters for the babies at her clinic called Pandepieri near the Kisumu slums.



*“The best way to find yourself
is to lose yourself in the
service of others”
... Mahatma Gandhi*





Loyola Student Stock Exchange Fundraiser

“The Loyola Student Stock Exchange Competition took place on April 28 and 29. 17 teams of Secondary V students created their own company and product, held a stock sale, and then sold their product to students, faculty and staff, and friends and family. Of each company's profits 50% are

donated to a charity of their choice, this year Golden Nuggets, a company selling chicken nuggets selected Suitcases for Africa as their charity. Golden Nuggets sold chicken nuggets paired with a variety of sauces and sold well during both days. The group is currently finalizing the project and all look forward to making their donation to Suitcases for Africa”
by Juliano Malizia

Thank you to the team of Juliano Malizia, Jack Pogue, Ryan O’Halloran, Giuliano Vertone, Justin Michaud, William Alves.

From Hudson:



To Kenya:



Thank you to **Nicky of the Clarence & Cripps Shop in Hudson and the Rotary Club of Hudson & St. Lazare** for your very generous donation last year of many brand new school bags and school supplies. The bags had been packed in the container and were finally unpacked on this trip. Three of the filled bags have finally found their new home with three of Ann’s five children.

John Rennie Donation

John Rennie students donated their "Girls' Night In" T-Shirts to go to needy students in Kenya.



Some of the lucky recipients.



Core Fitness Club Holiday Craft Fair & Raffle

In November Core Fitness Club on Elm in Beaconsfield hosted their annual craft sale. Mary enjoyed visiting with shoppers who stopped by the SFA table following their workouts. Thank you to Cori-Ann, Cal and the whole team for this great community event. Over \$1,700.00 was raised with a good portion of the money earmarked for Joshua's Third Well



Fundraising Shopping Night at Soko



Thank you to everyone who stopped by Soko in Pte. Claire Village for a fun evening of shopping in November for great holiday gifts. Once again Michele & Gordon were perfect hosts and close to \$1,100 was raised for our worthy projects in Kenya. It was great to see so many friends and supporters.



A very happy Noah's Ark Contest recipient.

Debra Tait was thrilled to get the call that her name had been drawn as the possible winner of the 2015 Noahs Ark Contest.

Following correctly answering a skill testing question Debra took home her new prized possession – just on time for Christmas!

Thank you to everyone who participated in this popular fundraiser.

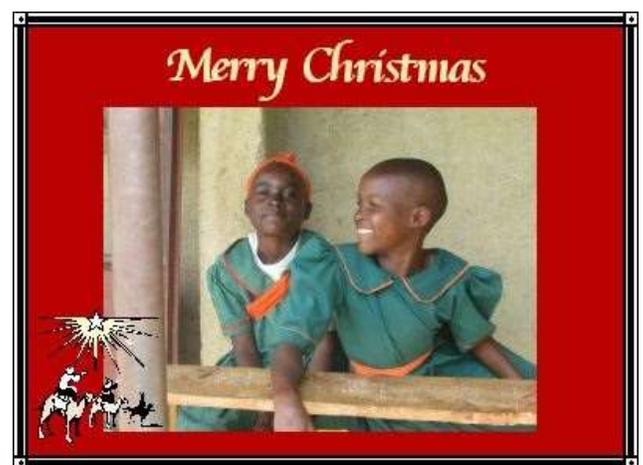


Corpus Christi Parish African Market & Christmas Bake Sale

Many thanks go out to the generous parishioners of this church who support this fundraiser every Christmas with their delicious baking and their high turnout. They helped to raise, \$1567.00 for some of the projects in this newsletter. See you next year!

St. George's Anglican Church Christmas Gift Card Campaign

SFA would like to thank this little church with a big heart. Their annual support of the Gift Card Campaign is life changing for Kenyan orphans. Special thanks go out to Mary-Anne Drolet & Stephanie Zampini who give up their Saturday mornings for the month of December to sell these cards at the Ste. Anne's Market in the church each week. This year they raised an amazing, \$1752.00 for various projects. Thank you also to Eric Winn who is the best ambassador for SFA. You will find him at the church each week selling books in The Book Nook for our projects and helping to spread the word about our work.



Coming Events....

SUITCASES FOR AFRICA

May 21, 2016 9:00 - 12:00

61 Beaconsfield Crt. Beaconsfield



Plant Sale

Just in time for
spring planting



Home Baking

Treats - Treats &
More Treats



African Market

Great opportunity to see
some of the treasures that
were recently brought
back from Kenya

ANNOUNCING THE 10th ANNUAL



Friday May 27, 2016 at 7pm

at St. Edmund Elementary School, Beaconsfield
To Benefit Suitcases for Africa

Neil Janna will once again host this evening of
laughs and will introduce headliner:

Sebastien Bourgault

Nick Brazao & Gino Durante will round out the
entertainment lineup.

Tickets are only \$25 which includes 1 free drink

For information & tickets call:

Wendy – 514.697.5588 or Kelly – 514.426.1283
rwbuchanan@videotron.ca or dillandfraser@hotmail.com

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
- How to Contact us: info@suitcasesforafrica.com

Follow us on Facebook for the latest news and photos at
<https://www.facebook.com/suitcasesforafrica>

“Like” our page to spread the word on social media.

Thank you!