



SUITCASES for AFRICA

News Letter

Fall 2011



Table of Contents

Page 2 ... SFA raises \$27,000 for famine & drought relief !

Page 3 ... Our emergency food distribution this Fall.

Page 4 ... Photos from our Feeding Programs.

Page 5 ... Joyful Visits to Completed projects.

Page 6... Pennies for Poultry tackles hunger.

Page 7 ... The John Jackson Memorial Well.

Page 8 - 9 ... A new Cow - Raising Project.

Page 10 - 11 ... Self - sustaining soy bean farming begins.

Page 12 - 14 ... We Visit St. Paul's Primary School, a school in need of help.

Page 15 - 19 How Canadians are helping.

Page 20 ... bed mats for street kids.

Page 21 - 22 ... Coming Events.

Page 23 ... Joy & Hope in Africa

Page 24 ... How You Can Help.

Famine & Hope in the Horn of Africa



Vulnerable children of Itegero Primary School were among the ten communities receiving our emergency food, recently delivered in October.

We Witness the Famine in Kenya



During our team visits this summer, the very real hunger facing Kenya was tragically apparent. Refugees from Somalia continue to pour into Kenyan refugee camps at the rate of 115,000 per day. The Daadab Camp, meant to house 90,000 has swollen to 400,000. Thousands wait quietly at the gates hoping for a place. A second camp has opened and it too, has been swamped. The crisis mounts daily and is expected to peak only this November or December. An estimated 7,000 die per day.

We saw for ourselves the impact of hunger in our Kenyan communities. Due to food rationing and soaring prices, obtaining enough food for our Feeding Programs was a struggle. Food ran out before the long lineups of hungry people ended. They came seeking anything we could spare and it was heartbreaking to see them quietly leave.

The Federal Government Doubles the Donations of Canadians

Our donors have responded with open hearts and close to \$27,000 in funds have been raised to assist during this unprecedented humanitarian crisis. These funds have been matched by the Canadian Government's Initiative. In early Oct. Emergency Relief Food was trucked into 10 at risk communities. With this funding we are also increasing future food security through new self-sustaining projects now getting underway. Please read on to learn more about them and to be introduced to our two Major New Projects for 2011/12.

This Fall Emergency Relief Food Arrives In the Communities at Greatest Risk

Our Administrator David organized the distribution of food to the hungry in prioritized schools, orphanages and communities. Special food was chosen for the children who reside in schools for the physically or intellectually disabled who have specific food needs.



Photos from our Feeding Programs July 2011

Shamberere, Chevoso, and Shitochi Communities



Joyful Visits to Completed Projects



The new installation of eight latrines for the girls at Itegero Primary School will help ensure better sanitation and health. The boys received new latrines last year. There were many smiling girls that day!

Pride of Poultry!



Members of Shanyinya community show off their new poultry project

Members of the struggling community of Shanyinya were proud to show us their new poultry project funded by an anonymous donor. It will help with food security and diversification. It is running successfully after training in poultry management was given to some members by an "animal officer". There was much celebrating of both this project and the new well also installed there this year.

Pennies for Poultry Tackles Hunger!



John Abbott College Pennies for Poultry Project in Emalindi is thriving. It is helping Fr. Paul in his efforts to care for his community where hunger and illness are his biggest challenges. He is shown above with John, our driver. Fr. Paul even brings eggs to the sick and mixes them into their food when they are too sick to cook. He also sells the surplus and uses the funds to pay for hospital treatment for those most in need yet unable to afford to pay for it. Seven young men in the community have been trained to run the coop.



The original Pennies for Poultry fundraiser has now turned into a club! The students and faculty of the college have ongoing plans to continue to raise funds for more coops in Kenya and thereby encourage self-sustainability. SFA is proud to be the recipient charity of this program. We are inspired by these dynamic youth who put their time and effort into changing life for the better for those whom they have never met.

Students are nearing their goal of installing a third Poultry Project. Building on the success of their Spring Cocoa Camino Café; they will Host Tea & Scones in the JAC Faculty Lounge, room H101 on Oct 27. **Well Done! Good Luck!**

The Story of The John Jackson Memorial Well



In the course of the last 6 months, SFA has installed four new wells and none has ever been as difficult as the John Jackson Memorial Well in Mukomari, Kenya. The community is located on the rocky escarpment of the Great Rift Valley and rock became a very big hurdle for the well diggers. Usually a well takes approximately 21 days to dig. This well took 6 months. Solid rock was encountered at 10 feet. The rock had to be blasted in a procedure known as parooting which would split the rock. A man would then go down the hole and chisel out gravel sized pieces by hand. These pieces would be lifted up by bucket load, hand over hand. It was a very dangerous process. It is very cold and damp down in the narrow three foot diameter hole and standing in the cold water and working for four hours at a time can cause pneumonia. The nurse in the nearby dispensary found this to be the case for one very sick worker. In all it took 3 different digging crews to complete the work as one after another gave up and left the job. Still the company did not give up and despite the odds they obtained the depth and a good water column. This ensured it would be a plentiful well for the community and the soon to be rebuilt medical dispensary it will serve. We were fortunate to be there to see up close the heroic effort involved. The engineer Stephen told us that only one young man had stayed the entire 6 months to work and dig this well showing up **every day**. We took his photo and thanked him. You can imagine our stunned surprise to learn his name was "Jackson"! We know that the family took this to their hearts and it made the well even that much more special. The well is in Loving Memory of a very good man.....**Mr. John Jackson.**



A New Cow Raising Project for Maisha Mapya

There is great excitement among the members of the Maisha Mapya Self Help support group as this new project is being implemented. This group is made up of widows and widowers who suffer from HIV/Aids. The name means "New Life" in Kiswahili and this program is full of hope for a sustainable future.



Members of the group meet with the SFA team in July to draw up a working proposal.

The first stage of the project will begin with SFA funding the purchase of two cross breed dairy cows. A group of 5 members will care for each cow. The cost of \$500.00 will supply a cow, necessary vaccinations and deworming, and a wooden shelter for the animal's protection. The goal is to supplement the orphans in this group with nutritious milk and generate income from the sale of surplus milk to the local community. Each year when a calf is born it is given to another member of the small group to expand the project. An added bonus will be the cow dung which will be used by the group as fertilizer for the Napier grass they will plant for the cows to feed on. The first phase start-up of two small groups will be expanded also as more donations for this project come in. We will have donation gift cards for those who wish to contribute to this project as a gift to someone in our new Christmas Cards for 2011.

The Cow Project is Up and Running!



Our administrator Susan visits the animal market with the groups to research and choose the cows. The women in the photo on the right are showing the Napier Grass which they have grown in preparation for the cows to feed on. Below the first two cows are set up in the constructed shelters where the groups will care for them.





Self-Sustaining Soya Bean Farming Begins

The devastating famine and drought currently gripping the Horn of Africa continues to show us the importance of

sustainable projects we can fund. Soya beans are a good crop solution as they are more nutritious than the traditional maize grown and the crop needs little rain. There is also a need to return to good organic fertilizers that do not ultimately ruin the soil as the chemical ones do. Thanks to a generous donation from [Alveda Pharma Co.](#) in Toronto we were able to fund 45 families to farm this summer while we were still in Kenya. The crop is doing well with the small amount of rain that has fallen and these families will be able to reserve seed to plant again next season. Self-sustaining projects such as this farming and poultry-raising will help in the long run with food security.

Apart from the 45 families being funded, SFA also has a project for Fr. Paul's parish land in Emalindi. The 2 acres of parish land have been planted with a nutritious soybean crop. The food harvested and stored will be given to the poorest in the parish who will need assistance. See photos on the following page which show the excellent progress of the crops. Our Administrator David oversees the projects visiting the scattered plots over a wide area by motorbike with a local woman as a guide over the terrain.



David setting out to monitor the planting.

More photos of Soya Bean Farming



Jane, a widow, admiring her crop.



Beatrice weeding in her funded 2 acre plot.



Noah, shown with her crop which is growing well.



Dorah had to plant a second time as this first planting was struck by hail.

Thank you Alveda Pharma!

*“If you cannot feed one hundred people, then feed just one”
Mother Theresa of Calcutta*

Introducing St Paul's Primary School

The little school that stole our hearts!



Located in Mwirembe, this school of 500 children completely captivated us all. We went to visit it as the site of a new SFA well installed last winter. We were unprepared for the warm welcome. As we arrived they were all singing and cheering with joy over their new well. The school was a shock! Filthy, collapsing, overflowing latrines

were the first sight we encountered, only 3 shacks for 500 children. A total of only 48 desks existed. Not one book! The teachers chalked their lessons on the mud walls. Crowded classrooms of 70 -100 students must sit on the dirt floor. The preschool classroom had 95 children in one 10' by 10' room...no supplies just one empty table. The teachers amazed us. They had even repaired a collapsed latrine by themselves earlier in the day. All in a day's work!

Despite ALL of this they were delighted to welcome us. The children sang songs and recited poems that broke our hearts with the stories of their lives, many as orphans, many going hungry. We sat, tearstained and fighting for self- control. We tried to comprehend the large scale deprivation that we saw there. The silent and respectful students burst into shrieks of delight as 5 suitcases full of school supplies, library books, and the beloved soccer balls came out. To say we were inspired by them would be an understatement. Before our feet left the ground to climb into our van that day, we were all percolating with ideas to transform this school. It will be a major project for SFA in the coming year. Look for more photos and video of this school on our website at www.suitcasesforafrica.com We were totally smitten by these children and we left only after singing for them....."Skinnamarinky dinky do" Much laughter ensued and they joined in on a second rendition. How fortunate we all felt to share this incredible day with them. We could hardly wait to share it with all of you

Photos of St. Paul School July 2011



Broken down, dangerous latrines meant to serve 25 students per cubicle were in use by a staggering 125 students per cubicle. Illness proliferated due to poor sanitation. We agreed that construction should begin on 8 new latrines that very day.



The classrooms are without desks books or supplies and 70-90 students per teacher is the norm. Only 4 are permanent classrooms, the others being mud & dung rooms built by parents. Even with this heroic effort many are taught outdoors under a tree in all weather.



We felt very privileged to meet these amazing students. The dedication of their teachers gives new meaning to the word. We definitely left our hearts there and hope we can give them the educational support they deserve. There was a lot of laughter as we danced with them and taught them the words and actions to.....
Skinnamarinky Dinky Do.....

Breaking News!

**St Paul's
School's
new
latrines
are now
completed!**



**Four new latrines
for girls**



**Four new latrines
for boys**

"The boys & girls are excited beyond description and don't believe their eyes. Their excitement makes me get excited as well and I just love it so much."

David Eshihuula

How Canadians Are Helping In Their Own Way!

Optometrist Lynn Landry and her colleagues at **Clinique Oeil pour Oeil** spent several months last winter & spring giving of their time and expertise to



make a difference for those with poor eyesight in the village of Shanyinya. They worked on their coffee breaks and lunch hour to refit donated eyeglasses from their customers. They wrote the lens prescription on each pair. We took them in our suitcases this summer. Many villagers with poor eyesight were then invited to be fitted with them. The glasses were received with great appreciation.

THANK YOU for sharing your talents & time to aid those less fortunate.



This member of Shanyinya community is happy with her new glasses

A FUNDRAISING SUCCESS STORY

On August 27 SFA member Edwina Mattinson held a Garage Sale to raise funds for SUITCASES FOR AFRICA's campaign for Drought & Famine Relief in Kenya. It was a huge success in raising funds as well as getting the word out. Many, many people came and listened to the SFA story. Thank you to all the SFA members who were able to spend some time spreading the story of the ongoing drought and resulting famine in East Africa. Thank you also to Edwina's friends and family members who worked tirelessly throughout the setting up, the sale and the clean-up! This was truly a neighbourhood event. The sale raised over \$2600 and this was deposited into SUITCASES FOR AFRICA's East African Drought & Famine Relief Fund account which meant that the Canadian Government sent a matched amount to CIDA's East African Drought Relief effort.

This is Edwina's story:

"I was so moved by the plight of the people in Africa due to the famine/drought that I decided to try and raise funds and hold a garage sale. I have held nine garage sales over the years with the proceeds going to charity, so I knew what I was in for !

I was overwhelmed by the generosity of friends and Suitcases for Africa ladies who donated so much that my porch, front hall and garage were filled to capacity with "treasures" to sell. The day of the sale was glorious and it became a community affair. I had a great deal of help from family and SFA volunteers who helped get rid of just about everything and made the day a great success."

THANK YOU EDWINA!

Children raise funds at Edwina's Garage Sale



Above (left to right): Ashley Buchanan, from Dundas Ontario (Wendy Buchanan's granddaughter), Ariane Séguin and Sydney Rozon, Beaconsfield neighbours, who decided to help raise money for the poor in Africa. Missing from the photo is Kaitlyn Rozon & Rose-Marie Séguin. The girls sold cupcakes, muffins, coffee & lemonade. They were thrilled to have collected over \$105.00. **What great entrepreneurs!!**

"5 FOR FIVE" - A Five Year Old's Story

Five year old Joshua and his family spent some time at their family camp this summer and one of the main components of the camp experience was for everyone to tune in with their local communities. Being aware of community needs allows one to have a greater impact on others in the world.

Upon arriving back home the images of the devastating famine in the Horn of Africa was very much in the news. Joshua and his parents had many conversations about how they could use their local community to help the children suffering in Somalia. They came up with a strategy they called "5 FOR FIVE" - to hold lemon-aid stands in and around Dorval with a goal to raise enough money to help at least 5 children suffering from malnutrition in Somalia. (Joshua added the comment "5 or more" children!).

They called this campaign "5 FOR FIVE" because Joshua is 5 years old. This is a challenge that they would like others to take on as well. "5 FOR FIVE" is based on the concept that children can use their age to set fundraising goals to help that number of children: a 5 year old will help five children; a 9 year old will help nine children....

To demonstrate the effects of drought and famine the family planted 3 pots with bean seeds. The first pot was watered everyday (nourished), the second pot was watered initially and then the watering was stopped (famine), the third pot was never watered (drought). The impact of the experiment was powerful. A library book re-enforced the fact that every living thing needs water to survive!



Joshua's Story cont.

Joshua asked his parish priest, Fr. Fred at St. Veronica's in Dorval, if he could have a lemon-AID stand after mass one weekend. Permission was given and the "Homecoming Mass" on September 11 was the chosen date. Three of Joshua's friends were invited to help: Gerry (11 yrs. old), Madeleine (9) & Isabelle (6). The parish community was very generous and supportive and asked if this could become an annual event - a very nice tradition for all concerned.

Joshua and his family hope to continue this fundraising initiative at Dorval Elementary School and to encourage other families to take the "5 FOR FIVE" challenge - raising funds for local or international charities that help children - like SUITCASES FOR AFRICA.

Thanks to Joshua, his family and friends, a cheque for \$220 was donated to SUITCASES FOR AFRICA. The money was deposited into the East Africa Drought Relief Fund. The amount was matched by the Canadian Government through CIDA to go to the Somalian/Kenyan area so devastated by the drought



Joshua (sitting on right) with friends and Mom (in purple)

THANK YOU ALL WHO HELPED MAKE THIS HAPPEN!

Soccer Shirts & Balls Delight Kenyan Children



On behalf of the Pincourt Soccer Association David LaRivière donated hundreds of soccer uniforms and some soccer balls to SUITCASES FOR AFRICA.

The SFA team took the articles with them in July and the students of Itegero Primary School were thrilled to receive such an exciting delivery. Some of the boys donned the shirts right away and ran off playing with one of the balls. Orphans at many other locations were also grateful recipients of t-shirts, shorts & socks.



**Asante - Thank you
Pincourt Soccer Association.**

Bed mats for Street Kids A New Project for those who crochet!



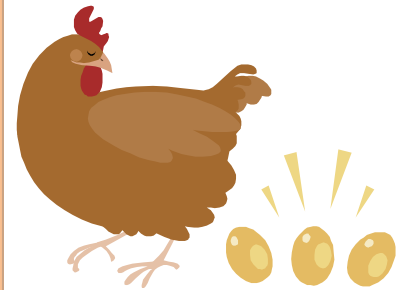
Susan Nanjala, SFA agent in Kenya, receives a bed mat that was crocheted out of milk bags from Wendy Buchanan. Ms. Nanjala is connected to the street children of Kakamega and she will disburse as many mats as we can supply to the homeless youths. If you are interested in learning how to make "bed mats from milk bags" please get in touch with Wendy and a date will be arranged to have an instruction workshop.

To reserve a spot call: **Wendy 514-697-5588**

Coming Events! Please come out and join us at the following events to raise funds for our projects.

John Abbott College " Pennies for Poultry Project"

The John Abbott students will be serving TEA & SCONES in the College faculty Lounge in room, on Thurs. Oct 27 from 9am- 3pm. Come out and enjoy a tasty treat and help raise funds for another Poultry Project. The next project will be installed at an orphan hostel in Emalindi which struggles to house and feed 113 homeless orphans. We met Sr. Salome who helps run this program along with Sr. Beatrice and their situation is grave. They were recipients of some of our Emergency Famine Relief Food delivered this fall.



• Suitcases For Africa Open House Night

November 9th, 6:00-9:00pm
 Beaurepaire United Church,
 25 Fieldfare, Beaurepaire Village.



Come along and join us for an evening to meet and talk with Fr. Paul, who will be visiting us from Emalindi, Kenya. See our videos and slides of the July 2011 trip on the screen, Enter our African Sculpture Contest, do some early Christmas shopping at our tables of Kenyan jewelry, clothes and crafts we brought back. We will also have baked goods for sale and several local entrepreneurs will be on hand with their items for sale as well. These include Epicure, Tupperware, Precious Delights & Pampered Chef.



St, Edmund School Christmas Fair.Sat.Nov.12

We will be selling our new 2011 donation cards which make a satisfying Christmas gift to friends & family. We will also have Kenyan jewelry, crafts and jackets. Stop by and say Hello.

Dix Milles Villages Fundraising Night

Thurs, Nov.17th, 6-9pm



If you are planning to visit or shop at this wonderful fair trade shop, now is the time. It is full of gifts, coffees, music, toys and handicrafts made by artisans from around the world, including Kenya. A 20% of all sales made on this one evening will be donated to John Abbott College's Pennies for Poultry Club in support of Suitcase for Africa. It will bring them closer to their goal of installing a third Poultry Project in Kenya so your purchase there will have a double effect. Our members will also be at the store and be available to answer your questions.

Corpus Christi Parish Christmas Bake Sale & African Sculpture Contest

To be held at Corpus Christi Parish,
16 Pacific Ave. in Senneville,

Sat. Dec. 10 after the 5pm Mass & Sun Dec.11 after the 9:30 am Mass.

- Come purchase delicious baking for the Holidays and support the parish volunteers who will donate the funds to life saving projects for orphans.
- Christmas Gift Cards will be on sale as well as Kenyan jewelry, crafts & clothes.



At this event you will also have an opportunity to enter a contest to win a beautiful African Sculpture of a young girl (see photo on right).

This is a genuine work of Shona Sculpture by Zimbabwean Artist - Peter Kananji, valued at \$450 - hand carved Fruit Serpentine - titled "Leaving Childhood Behind".



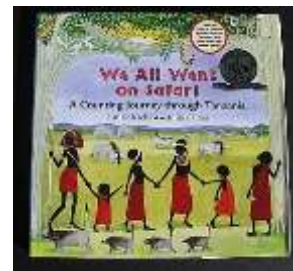
There is Always Joy & Hope in Africa



“Africa is a joyous place, despite the ravages that natural disasters and political unrest bring to it. There is a resilience and fortitude in the people, and they have the ability to overcome intense hardships, never dwelling on what has been but on the present moment which after all is all we have.”

Julia Cairns

*Julia Cairns is an artist & the illustrator of several beautiful children's books
Such as: Mama Panya's Pancake, & We all went on Safari*



HOW YOU CAN HELP

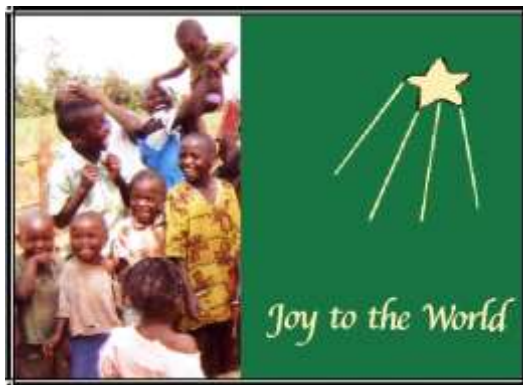
- Join us in raising funds and awareness with your own ideas or events.
- Make a donation to support our projects. A tax receipt will be issued for all donations of \$25.00 or more.
- Purchase our donation cards (see below).

Looking for a Special Gift this Christmas?
We have three Donation Christmas cards this year. For each card you can choose an insert describing the project you wish to support. Then give the card as a gift. We have had wonderful feedback from those who receive them.

Cards can be purchased for \$10.00 and up and are great as a



gift for a teacher, a business contact, or for friends and family.



To Purchase call **Wendy** at **514 - 697- 5588** or **Darlene** at **514 - 457- 3786**.

Coming this November.....

2 new cards designed for the Holiday Season and a new "Thank You card".

Check our website for the new designs next month.

www.suitcasesforafrica.com