



**SUITCASES for AFRICA**

**News Letter**

*Winter /Spring2015*



## Celebrating the First Banana Harvest

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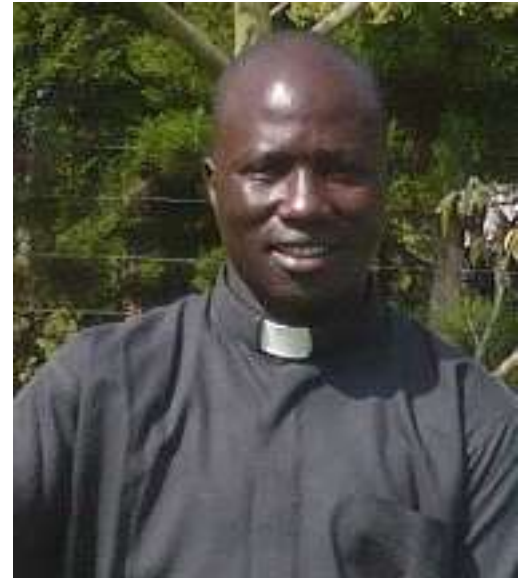
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HOW YOU CAN HELP



In this newsletter edition you will hear the voices of our administrators on the ground in Kenya. They share their thoughts and views on the impact of our projects in the communities we serve.

## Letter from Fr. Paul on the importance of the new cow project for Emalindi community in 2015



The mission statement of Suitcases for Africa stands for nutrition, education and health care. In the Emalindi Community there are cases of malnutrition. Thanks to the Beraldo Family Health Centre on the ground, identified cases from vulnerable families in the community will receive some milk rations. We also have a hostel for vulnerable and orphan children who will receive some milk as a subsidy.

Grade cows produce more manure so Napier Grass will be grown using the manure. The milk from the cows will be sold for the viability of the project thus a source of income.

### **BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY:**

1. The project will encourage residents to abandon the old native animals and venture into grade animals for high milk production.
2. Create some employment in the farm.
3. Reliable source of income.
4. Dairy cow wastes especially cow dung is used as a source of bio gas.
5. Wastes will be used as farm yard manure hence cutting down the costs of purchasing fertilizers for planting maize for silage.
6. Milk is a rich source of protein, hence it will slow down malnutrition in identified homesteads for affected children.

Thank you very much for your generosity and for being kind to me and the Emalindi community.

Pass my regards to all my friends. May God bless you abundantly.

**Fr. Paul**

# SFA & the Beraldo Medical Centre Aid in the Fight Against Jiggers

By  
Peter Röser-Ott  
Diocesan Medical Coordinator  
Catholic Diocese of Kakamega



"Twenty four hours a day, every day of the year, the employees of the Beraldo Family Medical Clinic and Resource Centre are available for all the Mothers, Fathers, Grandparents and children of the Community surrounding them. It is very often frustrating for them to see, that the people are so poor, they can't even afford the basic needs for their children. Almost no one can afford shoes and the ensuing infections and infestation of Jiggers are a result. Jiggers are very aggressive sand fleas who burrow into feet, legs and sometimes all over the body. It is sometimes life threatening due to multiple painful infections of the body.

The Nurses and Clinical Officers of Beraldo Family Centre visit the schools regularly to educate families about "How to avoid Jiggers" and of course they treat children who are infested as well. It is tiresome work, first to clean the infested areas and then to treat the infected areas, but the employees still enjoy their work. This Outreach work affects the whole community in a very positive way and the people are very grateful because they and especially their children are able to have a normal life and a future. SFA has helped a lot in the last few years with donated money to buy much needed drugs and have even assisted with shoes for the children to prevent re-infestation. 2015 will become another year in which the Centre will continue to do their outreach clinics at schools but will also extend the program by doing JIGGER Campaigns within the Medical Clinic. This will mean whole families, not just children will be helped with this debilitating problem. You know, I could talk a full day about Jiggers without getting exhausted!"



**Peter Roser-Ott & Sr. Susannah at the  
Beraldo Medical Clinic & Resource Centre.**



## Bananas Sweeten Children's Lives

**“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”**

By

**David Omukuba Eshihuula**

Children at St.Paul's Mwirembe primary school are happy children. Once upon a time the children in this school were victims of extreme hunger and poverty but now their lives are changing for the better due to a tissue culture banana project initiated in September 2013. The Banana Project was agreed upon after deliberations between the St. Paul's Mwirembe primary school administration and Suitcases for Africa. The project's main goal was to mitigate the extreme hunger of the most vulnerable children in the school.

The implementation of the project was like the Humming Bird Story.

Everybody within the school got involved in the best way he/she could,

inspired by the belief that a coalition of individuals each working for positive change can have a great impact in the school. The children prepared land, dug holes, mixed top soil with manure, watered the holes, applied fertilizer and helped in the planting. The school administration, the teachers and a hired agricultural expert guided the planting process. After planting, the children watered the plantlets daily until they got anchored in the soil. The project administrator together with the school administration monitored the project.



Today what began a year ago is changing lives at St Paul's Mwirembe primary school and the community at large. Thank you to the generous people of Canada for funding this banana project initiative. The goal of cushioning the children from extreme hunger is being met. The project is also going to be an income generating activity for the school that will fund the purchase of other food staples. In addition the school has plenty of plant suckers and intends to pass on suckers to three other schools and 10 households with vulnerable children. The process of 'passing on' will be ongoing.

The feeding program as the main goal of the project has been met well. The school has shown measurable accomplishments such as:

1. Increased enrolment of vulnerable children at St.Paul's Mwirembe Primary school.
2. Decline in chronic absenteeism.
3. Children have developed a love for the school (education).

The success of this livelihood project at St.Paul's Mwirembe primary school is a true testimony that together we can help to fight and kick out extreme hunger in the areas Suitcases for Africa works.

## The Joy of the First Banana Harvest



Asante  
Sana!





## The Educational Sponsorship Program

By Susan Nanjala, Administrator

**COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR  
TRANSFORMATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM-(CCTD)**

“The education sponsorship is an established intervention that began in the year 2011 through the Khayega widows group in Western Kenya, Kakamega County. In partnership with SFA, support for Khayega group began as a monthly feeding program for several years. Though we were running the feeding program, the beneficiaries felt that their most felt need was education for their orphans & vulnerable children. The care givers were unable to fully address the education needs of their children in Primary level. Though education is declared free in Kenya, the government only address tuition fee and there are other levies charged by schools that are more expensive than the tuition fee. With these heavy levies on the guardians who are mostly grandmothers, widows, separated parents and those living with HIV could not afford the burden of education for their loved children. It became more difficult when the children approached the upper grades of 6 to 7 because of increasing payments. This resulted in school drop outs, early marriages and some children opted to go to the streets. We also realized that apart from school levies, there were other needs like school uniforms, exercise & text books & school lunch program. It was not easy to come up with this program because of the cost involved.

SFA and the administration team in Kenya had several discussions and consultations to look into possibilities of setting up the project. We later came into agreement to give it a trial. The initial aim was to support the children holistically and ensure that they go through the 8 year of Primary education. We then set up our target to begin with 15 students in 2011. SFA executive team lobbied for sponsors in Canada and surprisingly, the project attracted several sponsors and the project kicked off. In 2012, more sponsors came up to support the project and increased the numbers. The trend continued and we set a target of increasing the number by 10 each year. By end of 2014 we had reached 51 students. In the year 2013, our 2 first students completed primary level after sitting a Primary education Council examination. They both passed the exam and were to proceed to High level which was not in our plan. We then realized we needed to continue with the assistance rather than abandoning them. The SFA executive worked extra hard to convince the sponsors see the importance of continuing with the support beyond primary. We were very lucky and the sponsors had no problem.



The 2 students were enrolled in affordable local day school high schools. In the year 2014, we were able to present 12 of our students to the Kenya certificate of primary education. 10 out of 12 qualified to proceed to high school but later 1 of them opted to pursue a vocational training. This year, 2015, the number has increased by 9 and we now have 62 students in total of which 11 are in high school, 2 will be pursuing vocational trainings in dress making and motor vehicle mechanic and the rest are in primary.

### **PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS:**

1. SFA team has been able to attract more sponsors over the years.
2. Funding for the project has been timely.
3. Students school register show regular attendance by all students unless they are sick.
4. The school lunch program has contributed to regular school attendance by students since they are assured of a meal on all school days.
5. School drop outs are very minimal and those that have occurred are due to uncondusive home environments.
6. The general school performance of all students has greatly improved and competition among students is observed.
7. The students are becoming better performers in their final council exams.
8. We have been able to add another component of support by providing solar lamps to all upper grade students (7 & above ) to enhance home study.
9. We are in plan to supply our students and their families with treated mosquito nets in prevention and control of malaria. This project has become number one among all SFA sponsored projects.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

1. SFA executive, the board and members to have come up with this noble idea of supporting the less- fortunate children and ensuring funds are available and disbursed.
2. All our esteemed sponsors in Canada and beyond.
3. The Canadian government for recognizing the work of SFA.
4. The administration team in Kenya by constantly keeping the SFA partnership strong.
5. Well- wishers and friends in Canada and Kenya.

### **CHALLENGES:**

1. The project is not able to provide adequate school fees for students who qualify to go to better high school due to high charges.
2. Boy children are very delicate to handle especially those who have lost their mothers or are total orphans. By nature, a boy child is dependent to the mother and becomes difficult for a boy to cope with the society in the absence of a mother. The few drop outs we have had are boys.
3. We lack project means of transport.

**Knowledge is a vital human development. Let us all join hands in supporting this project and make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate who need others to speak and act on their behalf”**



**.Some quotes from the students' letters to their sponsors:**

**"Here in Kenya I am doing well and life in school is good."**

"I am happy to receive your letter and thank you very much for your academic support and may God bless you abundantly and I am working very hard so I can excel."

"I hope that you are happy for me - the way that I am doing well in school"

" ... me at school I am favouring well. This time I am busy reading to achieve my goal of being a pilot."

**"May the Lord give all your family more days on earth to see good things on earth"**

"I know this year is tough but I will not be nervous. For the support you have given me, I will not let you down - I know I can do it!!"





## SFA Trip to the Projects in October 2014



Michele and Wendy's trip to Kenya started on October 1st. with a full calendar of events already scheduled. Meeting all of our friends and colleagues in Kenya is always a highlight of the trip – as well as seeing the students and children year after year. This year we were fortunate to have a friend's apartment to stay in for two nights while we conducted some business in Nairobi. Thank you Mélisa Lavoie – a transplanted Quebecker who works for the Canadian Government in Nairobi. It was a real treat to be in an apartment instead of a hotel.

Then it was off to Kisumu by bus – an eight hour drive through the most beautiful landscapes of the Rift Valley. We always feel so welcome at the Mill Hill Guest House in Kisumu where Fr. Alois and Fr. Gerry are such gracious hosts.

It is difficult for us to choose just a few highpoints of our trip but we think that we can narrow it down to a manageable number.

First would have to be spending a delightful day with Susan and Esther learning how to make Mandazi – something like a small doughnut or a Kenyan Tim Bit! We mixed and kneaded and cooked over a charcoal fire in a mud/dung hut until we had over five hundred Mandazi that were to be given to the students in our Education Sponsorship Program the next day. Yum - what fun.

Another highlight would be our visits to the Kazuri Bead Factory and Ocean Sole – both amazing local Kenyan companies that employ local artisans to create beautiful products. In preparation for the African Market events that had been planned to take place back home we also purchased a lot of great treasures at two Masai Markets.

We spent a delightful day with the Maisha Mapya Support Group as five baby calves were delivered to their new owners. The women were so proud to receive a calf of their own it was wonderful to see. It was a joyous celebration with lots of laughs, singing and great food!

Both of us were in awe as we witnessed the success of SFA's first banana plantation situated at Mwirembe/St. Paul Elementary School. What started as a discussion last year with Danson the school's headmaster, has now become a field full of grown banana trees, each laden with almost ripe fruit. This is such a successful project that will bring nutrition to the students and the community.

One last experience we will not soon forget was getting stuck in the mud while on our way back to Mukumu following a visit with Fr. Paul and the staff at the Beraldo Family Medical Centre in Emalindi. Thankfully Peter, the Medical Co-ordinator for the Diocese of Kakamega, was behind the wheel or we might still be there! It created quite a spectacle for the community youth who came to our rescue with their muscles.

We are both thankful that we had the opportunity once again to represent SFA in Kenya. It was a privilege for us to carry the best wishes of all of our members and supporters to our Kenyan friends and colleagues.



**PHOTOS** Top left: The Cow Project, Top rt. The Great Rift Valley

Bottom left: Menazi cooking lesson,

Bottom rt. Market place mystery lunch!



# Fr. Paul's Visit..... Thank you for the Memories







# 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!



## Joshua's Well Second Well Update



Thanks to a legion of supporters & "well-wishers" Joshua's second well is slated to be completed this spring. The well is to be situated at the CHEVOSO DISPENSARY in Kenya. To quote Susan, our on the ground administrator:

*"The health facility depends on water from a stream and they have to hire someone to collect the water for use which is not enough" ...."The*

*project will not only serve the health facility needs but it will also serve the neighboring primary school and the surrounding families".*

Joshua is often out in his community spreading the word about the need for clean, accessible water in rural Kenya & raising funds to support his cause.

We are very proud partners in this project and we thank everyone who has supported water projects thanks to Joshua's efforts as well as through SFA's water/well donations.

## Kenya - Bound Container Update

The container for Kenya is rapidly filling up with many medical and school supplies. Among other things, there are dozens of wheelchairs, 2 hospital beds and 21 bicycles donated by the town of Beaconsfield. The bicycles are destined for community health care workers in rural areas. There are also 8 dental chairs donated in Toronto. Each chair weighs over 200 pounds and each one is an actual dental system with drilling and suction equipment built in. Many thanks go out to The Veterans Hospital, CHSLD Bayview Hospital and The West Island Palliative Care Residence for donations. Thank you to all the individuals schools and churches who donated school supplies as well. The Beraldo Family who are sponsoring and organizing this project in Toronto expect the container will set off on its journey to Kenya in mid -April.



**Alex, Lucas & Joshua Beraldo are pictured here moving the dental chairs during a snow storm**



## Connecting Children Across the Miles



The children in the Corpus Christi Faith First Class created a beautiful wall hanging to go to Kenya. It was created for the recently renovated girl's dormitory at the Emalindi Orphan Hostel.



Sr. Beatrice at the Orphan Hostel admired the workmanship and gratefully accepted the gift on behalf of all the orphans.

## St. Georges Anglican Youth Group



The church youth group entertained Fr. Paul last November with a rendition of their "Go Go Bananas" song complete with hand actions at a Spaghetti Lunch they held during his visit. Sunday school teacher Mary Ann Drolet and family created the wonderful tree to inspire their mission to fund the Banana Plantation. The congregation sang the song each Sunday and had a great deal of fun in the process.

We can't thank them enough for all they do to support our work. This past Christmas Season St. Georges Church sold hundreds of Donation Gift Cards. The funds will go towards several upcoming new projects but especially a new Cow Project slated for Fr. Paul's community. They were bowled over when someone came forward to buy **a whole cow!** This sustainable project will help the community immensely and we will keep you posted as it is now getting underway.





## The SFA African Dinner and Market

SFA would like to thank the many, many people who worked together to make this evening happen. Thank you to our Kenyan cooks, Florence and Nancy who not only cooked most of the meal but also taught our members how to make the Kenyan dishes in the busy kitchen. Thanks to Pat and Katie for organizing the kitchen and working all night so



cheerfully. Thanks to the Loyola Boys and Kaitlynn for serving with a smile. Thanks to our members and friends for setting up and manning the market stalls full of lovely Kenyan items for sale. The biggest thank-you goes to all our friends and guests who came out in support of the event and made it so enjoyable while raising over \$5,000.00. Astonishing!







## Corpus Christi Parish Bake Sale

December 7th was a cold day outside but we were cozy and warm at the Corpus Christi Bake Sale. Thank you all who participated in this enjoyable fundraiser.

## Kerry- Anne Kutz Student Concert



On November 1, 2014 the Beatles were in town thanks to a tribute concert put on by the talented vocal students of Kerry-Anne Kutz. It was a benefit concert for the Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Congregation and Suitcases For Africa.

Everyone enjoyed the evening's entertainment followed by refreshments and an African Market. Thank you once again to Kerry-Anne - we always enjoy a magical evening with you and your students.



## John Rennie High Girls Rock

Our names are Emma Strudwick and Kinu Kai McCalla and we go to John Rennie High School in Pointe Claire. We recently participated in "Girls Night In" at our school. "Girls Night In" is when a bunch of girls come back to the school at night and have a sleep over. The girls participating were 12 and 13 years old and we had some 15 & 16 year olds (senior student mentors) helping out. At the sleepover we cooked, we had guest speakers, we played games and we watched movies. We also all got really nice purple T-shirts that we are happy to share with students in Kenya through Suitcases For Africa. We thought the students there could use the T-shirts more than us. We hope they enjoy them and ... "Girls Rock!"



Photo: Mrs. Sara Birks Emma Strudwick Elle Guerin Michelle Tam Jordiandra Leis Mrs. Elaine Fraser(front row) Kinu'Kai McCalla Michelle Birks(Mrs. Birks daughter)

## Creative Boys make Survival Bracelets to Help Children in Kenya



In November, at the St Edmunds Elementary Holiday Fair, Andrew Trepanier, William Gillespie and Mark Mancini set up a booth to sell Survivor Bracelets. The grade five boys made the bracelets out of para-cord rope, 6 to 15 feet each, depending on the size and style. They donated a portion of their profits to Suitcases for Africa. They chose Suitcases because it was a local charity that both Andrew and St Edmunds had been involved with in the past. The boys like that it helps children in Kenya.



## CORE FITNESS Craft Fair Fundraiser



During the week of November 17<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> 2014, the CORE Fitness Club on Elm Ave., in Beaconsfield hosted a Craft Show and Bake Sale. NOVA West Island and Suitcases For Africa were the lucky recipients of the profits from the weeklong event. It was a great time of visiting with friends - new and old. Fr. Paul enjoyed the experience of visiting a Women's Fitness Club!

Thank you to Cori-Ann & Cal for once again putting on a great show and making us feel so welcome!



## Soko Shopping Night Fundraiser for SFA

A great time was had by all at SOKO in Pointe Claire Village on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Michele opened the shop for a special shopping evening for SFA friends and supporters. Fr. Paul was on hand to meet and greet as a special guest. Michele donated

twenty-five percent of the evening's sales to SFA.

**Thank you once again Michele - it is always such fun gathering at your beautiful store.**

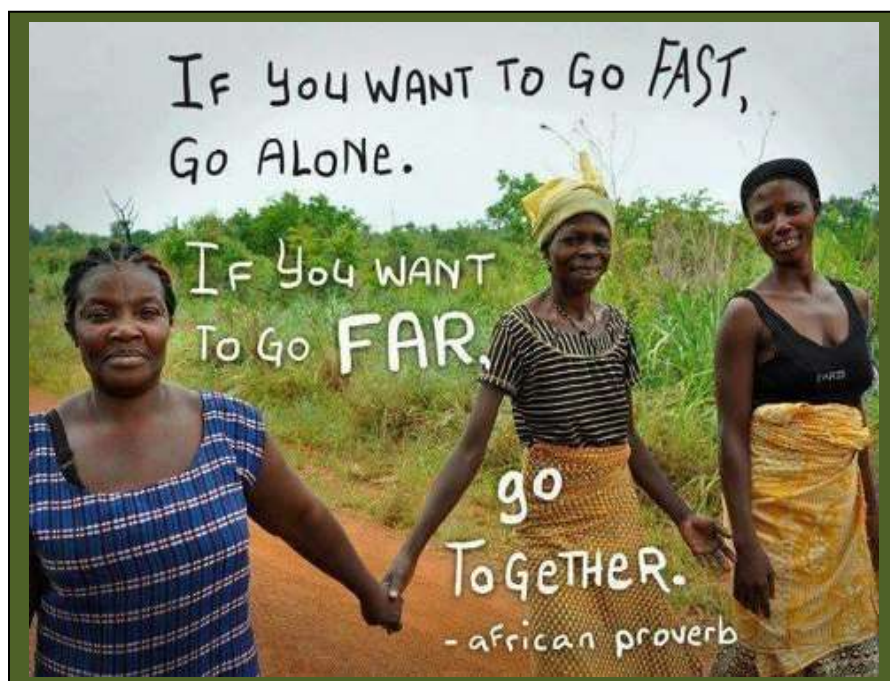


## The Gift of Better Eyesight



**20/20 or at least close to it .....**

These lucky community members from Shanyinya were the recipients of eye glasses that were donated last year by generous Canadians.



# Coming Events....



**SAVE THE DATE**

**FRIDAY APRIL 17, 2015 7PM**

**NEIL JANNA WILL HOST**

**the 9th. Annual Comedy Night  
to benefit SUITCASES FOR AFRICA  
at St. Edmunds School in Beaconsfield**

**The Headliner will be: David Acer  
with comics: Gino Durante & Steven Levesque**

**Tickets will be available in March**

**To reserve your tickets call:**

**Wendy 514-697-5588**



## A Musical Evening.....

### “Songs from the Movies”

Presented by the students of  
Kerry-Anne Kutz



April 25th. 2015  
Doors Open at 6:30pm  
Show Starts at 7:00pm



**Location: Lakeshore Unitarian Church**  
**5065 Sherbrooke St., Lachine, Quebec**

**Cost: Suggested minimum donation of \$10.00 at the door**

**Refreshments & Bake Table following the concert**

**Information: Kerry-Anne (514) 624-2307 or Wendy Buchanan (514) 697-5588**

## SFA 3rd Annual Plant & Bake Sale

9:00 am, May 23

61 Beaconsfield Court, Beaconsfield

Edwina and Sharon are back for another great perennial sale in 2015! Donate your extra garden bounty and baking 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!

**Contact: Edwina 514-695-4945 or  
Sharon: 514-696-9664**



# 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](http://www.suitcasesforafrica.com)
- Contact us at [suitcasesforafrica@yahoo.ca](mailto:suitcasesforafrica@yahoo.ca)

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!**