



Our Valentine Thank You Edition

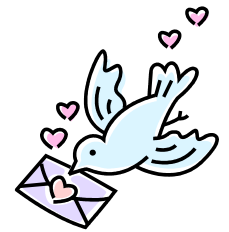


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Exciting new projects for 2012 will make a huge difference in the lives of young orphans and vulnerable children this year. It is thanks to your support and encouragement!



SFA Secretary, Charlotte Marcella, is currently on a Six Month Working Visit to Our Projects

We are very fortunate indeed to have Charlotte working on the ground with our Kenyan team on some exciting new projects for 2012. In our last newsletter we introduced you to a struggling little school in Mwirembe called St. Paul's Primary School. With your support we are slowly improving life and also educational access for the students there. In 2011 a new well was installed on school grounds and eight high standard latrines were built to replace the over used, illegal and dangerous ones we discovered in use last summer. These are huge gains to health and safety. The over-crowded conditions are currently being addressed with the construction of a beautiful, large new classroom that will accommodate 90 students. This will provide space for the level 8 students who would remain learning under a tree without it, hardly ideal when the rainy season hits! The newsletter cover photo illustrates the joy and appreciation they feel. **THANK YOU!**



The Building of a New Classroom for St. Paul Primary School Brings Joy and Hope



Bricklaying of the classroom



plastering over the brickwork



Painting the plastered exterior



Ready for learning!

On Feb4, the newly built classroom was commissioned by Charlotte. The building was blessed by Fr. Paul and a wonderful celebration was held in the community. Charlotte presented them with a new Kenyan flag to replace their original one which was in tatters. 2012 is off to a great start!

Thank You for this Joyful Gift



"With this generous grant for constructing one classroom, Suitcases for Africa is improving teaching and learning conditions at St Paul's Mwirembe Primary School. The school serves 470 pupils half of whom are totally vulnerable and come from homes that wallow in extreme poverty. Education for the students was previously conducted under a tree or in one classroom hall shared by multiple classes, not conducive to learning and contributing to low student and teacher morale. Now there is great happiness and new hope."

David Eshihuula project administrator



A New Poultry Project Provides Better Nutrition for Orphans



Sr. Beatrice and Sr. Salome are shown above with the arrival of some of the chickens for the newly-constructed Poultry Project in Emalindi which was funded by the efforts and activities of John Abbott College students and staff. The "Sisters of Mary" run a small Orphan Hostel for local children who have no means available to them and nowhere to live. They depend upon donations from the local community. Due to extreme poverty, donations are sporadic and unreliable. Eighteen homeless children live in the small building but the nuns struggle to provide a daily meal for 113 orphans who would otherwise not eat. Charlotte recently visited the site and found it to be already up and running. It is thriving with many baby chicks running around.

Our First Seamstress!

There is great reason to celebrate this winter for all of us at SFA as we just received word that the young woman we have been funding with a scholarship for tailoring has just completed her program. Many of you will remember the story of young Phylis. Her 96 year old grandmother Anastancia is head of their family of 11 dependents. The entire middle generation of her children passed away from HIV/AIDS. Phylis, as the oldest grandchild, will support them all and it was vital she learn a skill for employment. SFA started a women's sewing co-op project in 2009. Jackets made by these women were sold at home here in Canada and the funds raised paid the fees for young Phylis to study. Now as the mother herself of a little girl named "Blessed", Phylis will have a skill to support the family. SFA is celebrating her success with the gift of a sewing machine and a start-up stock of material. She will begin making school uniforms for children in our Ed. Sponsorship programs. Thanks to everyone who helped with this project. Knowing this may you....

WEAR YOUR KENYAN JACKETS WITH PRIDE AND JOY!



Grandmother Anastancia



Phylis and baby "Blessed"

Father Paul Ndasaganwa Visits Canada



Photo courtesy of Ian Howarth, The Suburban Newspaper

We were delighted to have a visit from Fr. Paul in Nov.2011. Fr. Paul came to Canada at his own expense in order to meet and personally thank supporters who are making a difference in his poor, rural community. It was a trip with many "firsts" for him...first time flying, first time outside Kenya, first experience of cold and snow! He took it all in stride and enjoyed each person or group he met with great enthusiasm. He served tea to seniors. He spent a day in Ottawa visiting Parliament courtesy of Liberal MP Francis Scarpaleggia. He visited and spoke at many churches and school fairs. We thank you all for hosting him or sharing your time to make him feel so welcome. He took back many stories, photos and memories to share with his community sure in the knowledge that Canada cares!

....a few photos of those memories follow.....



St. George's Church Fair volunteers



Fr. Vincent, Bishop Dowd, Fr Joe



Serving tea at St. John United/
St. Edward the Confessor RC



First snowy day!



With Francis Scarpaleggia in Ottawa



Remembrance Day in Ottawa
..receiving free hugs!

Creating Bed Mats for Street Children

Many thanks to all those who have been busy knitting and crocheting all fall and winter long to make bed mats for street children in Kakamega. The mats are made from long strips of cut-up milk bags. They are sturdy, lightweight and waterproof! They also repel insects due to the dye in the plastic. They will be taken to Kenya in April by the next team going over and our administrator Susan will make them available to those in need. Pictured below are just a few of the volunteers making them! Thanks also to those who collected the hundreds of bags that were needed for this project.



Patricia Jackson, Helga Hobday, Maura Tieman, Marguerite McKinnon

Patricia, Helga, Maura & Marguerite have obviously enjoyed creating their bed mats for the homeless children in Kakamega.

“Happiness requires something to do, something to love, and something to hope for”a Swahili saying taken from “The Little Book of African Wisdom”, compiled by Patrick Ibekwe

“Pennies for Poultry Club” John Abbott College Does it Again!



Volunteers recently sold delicious scones, baked goods and tea in the faculty lounge of the college to raise funds for more poultry projects in rural Kenya.

They also hosted an evening at Dix Milles Village with a percentage of sales donated to SFA. Fr. Paul, on his visit from Kenya, is seen below with some of the JAC staff and students on the evening. Many thanks to the club and to all who came out to shop for a cause!



Kids helping Kids....A Hockey Team Gives Back

"Every year, those of us involved in minor hockey try to do something special to give back to the community in some way. Last November, I attended an SFA presentation held at Corpus Christi Parish that described a struggling school in Kenya. Support for the school was to be the next project for Suitcases for Africa and so our team project was then clear. The Lakeshore PeeWee BB Tigers hockey team consisting of 17 boys and their families from the West Island would get together to help with needed school supplies. In fact the planned support of a school could not have been timelier. Our children were either starting high school or writing exams to get there next year. The right to education in Canada is not only a right but an expectation. So, there it was. Our Mission, to help other children in Kenya learn and one day be able to do something great. **Education is power.... the power to become more, the power to do more.**

The families on our team embraced the idea completely and we managed to collect supplies to get the kids started on what will surely be life changing. Thank you for allowing us the privilege of making a difference." Kindest Regards,

Donna Keough, on behalf of the 2011-2012 Lakeshore PeeWee BB Tigers



1st Row (L to R): Julian Zompa, Tyler Alexander Nickson, William Torriani, Jack Lepage,
Matthew Toporowski, Daniel Ruscio, Christopher Coré

2nd Row (L to R): Michael Stachowski, Evan Kaklamanos, Tyler Lalonde, Zachary Scarfo, Karl Hunger,
Charles Argento, Delano Brown, Noah De La Durantaye, Caelan Van Olm, Jacob Herauf

West Island Dentist, Dr. Weary, Helps Out



Dr. Anne Weary of Pointe Claire, Qc. collected some refurbished dental instruments and presented them to Matthew & Ashley Buchanan to give to SUITCASES FOR AFRICA. They were taken to Kenya this past summer. The hospital administrator of St. Elizabeth Hospital in Mukumu gladly accepted the instruments on behalf of the dental program at the hospital.

Thank you very much Dr. Weary.

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world”

-Anne Frank

Vanier College Students Get Involved



While in Montreal in November Fr. Paul spent an afternoon with some students from the Early Childhood Development program at Vanier College. While there he assisted the students in making educational material for their teacher, Charlotte Marcella to take to Kenya. They made games, story boards & manipulatives that were to go to St. Paul's Primary School in his Emalindi district.

A great time was had by all!

The students also led a campaign to collect underwear for children and young adults in Africa. Dozens of sets of underwear were purchased from money collected. New women's underwear was also donated and Charlotte was able to take it all with her to Kenya.



Thank you Vanier students!

St Edmund of Canterbury Church Still Turning Toys into Food!



Many thanks go out to Joanne Murray and her wonderful volunteers at

St. Edmund Church, Beaconsfield for their hard work and dedication. The Annual Toy Sale has been funding food for hundreds of orphans in Kenya for several years now. The 2011 Toy Sale raised just under \$1300.00 this year which will go a long way to relieving hunger during the continuing famine in the region.



Corpus Christi Parish Christmas Bake Sale

Many thanks go out to the parishioners of Corpus Christi in Senneville. Under the enthusiastic leadership of parishioner Patricia Jackson the parish bakers turned out a huge array of delicious treats. Thank you to everyone for the great support which raised an astonishing \$1,455.00. The funds will be put towards the building of the Corpus Christi Parish Community Poultry Project that will be built in the coming months.



Kerry -Anne Kutz and her talented students Sing for Africa !

On October 15th, 2011, many of Kerry-Anne Kutz's voice students gathered at the Lakeshore Unitarian Church in Lachine for a concert to benefit SUITCASES FOR AFRICA. The audience was treated to an evening showcasing Kerry-Anne's extremely talented students.

Close to \$800 was raised in just a few hours. The money was sent to Kenya to purchase emergency food for those suffering due to the drought conditions in East Africa.



**A BIG THANK YOU GOES OUT TO KERRY-ANNE KUTZ &
HER TALENTED, GENEROUS STUDENTS**



Shopping for a Cause

We would like to thank Michelle Shepard and the staff at Soko in Pte. Claire Village for hosting a... *shopping evening to benefit Suitcases for Africa* last December.



The store donated 20% of sales that evening to SFA which raised over \$400.00. Many thanks to all who came out in support.

COMING EVENTS!

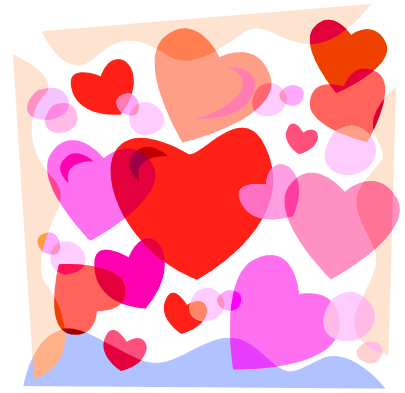
Pasta Supper in 2012?

We have been receiving inquiries about this year's Pasta Supper and the answer is YES we will be holding it again this year so stay tuned. We will send out an email bulletin to our Newsletter mailing list when the date is chosen so you can reserve a ticket for this popular event which sold out last year.



You can also check back on our website from time to time to see what is coming up at www.suitcasesforafrica.com under Coming Events. Contact us at suitcasesforafrica@yahoo.ca if you wish to be added to the Newsletter list.

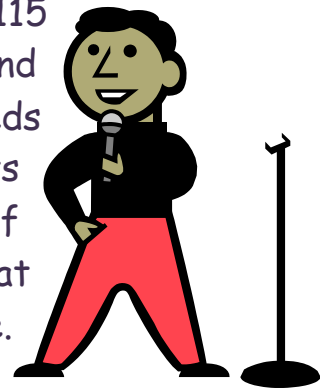
The Bernadette Short School of Irish Dancing.....



Will be holding their 8th Annual St. Valentine School Competition at John Abbott College on Sat. Feb 18, 2012. Every year as part of this event a charity is chosen to receive funds. The funds are raised during a "Dance-Off for Charity" competition open to all the dancers. We are honored and grateful to be this year's recipient of these funds and would like to take this opportunity to extend our thanks to the school and to wish all participants a wonderful experience. Admission: adults \$5.00, under 16 free. For info refer to www.irishdancemontreal.com/School_feis.html

St. Edmund School Comedy Night

March 23, 2012, St. Edmund Elementary School, 115 Beaconfield Blvd. will host a Comedy Night with Neil Janna and Friends. **Joey Elias will be the headlining act.** All proceeds will go to Suitcases for Africa to help us fund new projects planned for this year. You can reserve a table for 8 people if you wish or come on your own for an evening of great entertainment. There will be beer and wine available for sale. Tickets are \$20.00 with which you also get a free drink! To purchase tickets please call Wendy at 514 697-5588.



They are selling fast! The doors open at 7:00 pm.

HOW YOU CAN HELP



Join us in holding fundraising events for special projects in Kenya. What is your idea?

Sponsor a project as a church, company, group, family or individual.

Purchase our gift cards for birthdays, a memorial or as a thank you to someone.

Make a donation as a charitable tax deduction for \$25.00 or more.

Sponsor a Suitcase



We are looking for sponsors
To fund a suitcase!

If you are a business, an organization or a group who would like to fund one or more we would love to hear from you. Each time an SFA team goes over to work in Kenya we take with us many suitcases filled with precious items needed but unavailable to the poor communities we assist. Library books, school and medical supplies are examples. We take large oversized suitcases or hockey bags which can hold a lot. Each suitcase costs approx. \$225.00 to reach its destination. We would be happy to feature our suitcase sponsors in our newsletters and on our website. Contact us at suitcasesforafrica@yahoo.ca

Looking for a Special Gift?



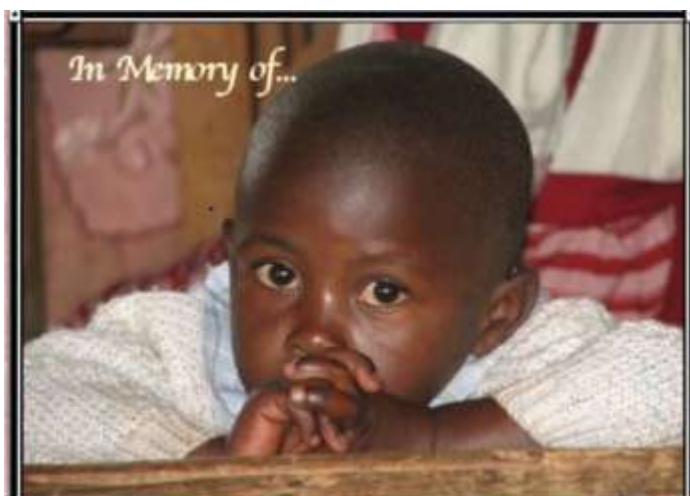
We have All Occasion, Memorial and Thank You cards available all year.

For each card you may choose an insert describing the project you wish to support and then give the card as a gift.



We have had wonderful feedback from those who receive them.

Cards may be purchased for a minimum \$10.00 donation. They make a great gift for family or friends, as a hostess gift or as a thank you for a business contact.



Call Wendy: 514 - 697- 5588

or

Darlene: 514 - 457- 3786