



SUITCASES for AFRICA

News Letter

Spring/Summer 2014



Introducing our Special Needs Children

Table of Contents

Pages 2 - 6

.... Special Needs
Children Have a
Special Place in
our Hearts

Pages 7- 9

.... Updates on our
Current Projects

Pages 10 – 18

.... Thanks to you,
SFA is Making a
Difference

Page 19

.... Coming Events

Page 20

.... HOW YOU CAN
HELP



In this newsletter edition we would like to share with you some of the photos and projects featuring Special Needs Children. We all agree these children are close to our hearts and the days spent with them are always among the happiest.



Special Needs Children Have a Special Place in our Hearts.

If you were to ask any of the SFA members who have travelled to the projects or any of the young people who have accompanied us there, this simple question...

"What was your favorite day?"

We are sure for most the answer would be:

"Visiting with the special needs children of St. Ursula, in Chamakanga or St. Joseph the Worker in Malava"

The joy and excitement of the children at receiving visitors warms our hearts, especially knowing that visitors are rare. Due to old superstitions and the stigma of shame, these children are often marginalised by society and literally hidden away. Thanks to dedicated community healthcare workers who actively search for these children and who also educate the community about their needs and potential that dynamic is beginning to change. On the following pages we will introduce you to some of the projects and the children. Prepare to lose your hearts to them also....

St Ursula School in Chamakanga

We first met the children of St. Ursula on our very first trip to Kenya in 2006. It was heartbreaking to see the conditions these children lived in. Thanks to our donors, this facility has come a long, long way since that time.

We had learned from the caring staff that often after carrying the most severely disabled children a fair distance to the stream to bathe them, they would be turned away by angry community members who did not want them in the water with them.



One of our first SFA projects involved the creation of a dam at a nearby stream. A pump house was installed and a piping system was able to bring water all the way up to the dormitories for bathing the children with dignity. This was a turning point. Life began to improve with each passing year.

The head teacher Mr. Karani and his dedicated staff provide love, care and stability for the children. Their goal is always to help the children reach their potential.



- Over the years SFA completely renovated the dormitories and supplied new beds and mosquito nets.
- Colorful artwork, done by Canadian high school students, helped to brighten their living conditions.
- We began to bring over desperately needed wheelchairs so bed ridden children could get outdoors.
- Books and toys for special needs children as well as physiotherapy equipment followed.

Special Needs Assistance continues throughout 2013-14

The uniforms funded by SFA in 2013 were made in class by the students in the dressmaking course. The children who are able are trained in various vocational programs to help them prepare to become self-supporting in the future. The school teaches wood working courses, housekeeping and child minding courses.



At the present time we are funding the construction of desks and chairs for a preschool class at Itegero Primary School. The work is to be carried out by the children in the wood working program at St. Ursula. We hope to encourage more and more local area schools to begin to link up with this resource which will benefit all.



Once again in 2014 Emergency Food is high on our priority list for these children. We regularly fund deliveries of staples like maize, beans and rice to St. Ursula School each year and the purchase of medicines and food at St. Joseph.



Thank you for making all of this possible!

St. Joseph the Worker, Malava

When we travel to Kenya we usually have a jam packed schedule of visits and meetings. One of our favourite activities, when time permits, is to spend some time with the children at St. Joseph the Worker in Malava.

In October 2013 Michele and Wendy took some bubbles to the orphanage to play with and the children were thrilled to see all the colours in the bubbles and to watch them float up and up on the breeze. Squeals of laughter rang out as we all enjoyed being together for as long as our schedule allowed.



Special Needs, Special Moments & Special Memories..... 2006-2014



The Latest Updates on our Current Projects

Mwirembe Primary School Banana Plantation, We are Ready for Expansion!



We are very excited to report that the Pilot Project to grow bananas at the school is going very well. The students and staff of the school have been tending the banana plants under the guidance of an agronomist since they were planted in September of 2013. The 100 plants are doing very well. We expect the first crop of bananas to feed the children will be ready to harvest this Autumn. We are pleased to have received the funding to double the plantation to 200 plants thanks in part to the generous members of St. George's Anglican Church in Ste. Anne de Bellevue. Their Lenten Project "Going Bananas." held this spring made this expansion a possibility. Please read all about their creative and fun project later on in this newsletter. As this plantation matures and extra bananas are grown they can be sold to purchase other food staples such as maize and beans for a Feeding Program. To read the back story of the great need at this school please read our Winter 2014 Newsletter at www.suitcasesforafrica.com



The Maisha Mapya Cow Project is Expanding!



We were happy to hear from Susan Nanjala of the the safe delivery of 3 more calves since Christmas. This group of HIV/Aids widows and widowers are managing the project well and are on their way to self-sufficiency. Pictured at left is a healthy bull calf to be named "Barney" and below left is newly arrived "Lizzie" at 3 days old. Christmas calf "Noel" below rt. is growing quickly at 5 month's old. **Congratulations to All!**



Happiness is a Warm Meal

Recent photos of three on- going Feeding Programs at **Shamberere, Shitochi & Chevoso** are shown below. This is a time of year when Hunger is a constant companion. It is long after the last harvest and food prices are high. From April - September in Kenya these feeding programs make a difference more than ever. Thank you for all your donations to these life saving programs.



A Feeding Program for preschool children (below) was also added in the community of **Shanyinya** for these next few "hungry" months thanks to an extended family who donated to



SFA as their Christmas gift to each other.

Thank you for this thoughtful gift. The faces of the children show their gratitude in ways words can not match.



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. Asante Sana!

St George's Church Goes Bananas!



"This past Lent, St George's Church in Ste Anne de Bellevue went Bananas for Suitcases for Africa. Each year we raise funds during this time to support a project. This year we wanted to assist with the planting of a second banana plantation at Mwirembe St. Paul's Primary School in Kenya. Lenten Banks were given to the congregation to collect change, money was collected at coffee hour and a cupcake & muffin sale was held. The youth group helped keep the enthusiasm going by leading us in a "crazy Banana Song" (actions included) every week. We also asked the congregation to write messages and sign paper bananas that we could pass along to the children in Kenya. This project proved to be great fun and it was with great pleasure that we were able to pass along \$1,701.96 for this worthy project."

Mary-Anne Chapman



COMEDY NIGHT 2014 - ANOTHER GREAT SUCCESS

It is with deep gratitude that we thank ST. EDMUNDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL in Beaconsfield for once again hosting our COMEDY NIGHT in support of SFA Kenyan Projects. This was the 8th. Comedy Night and as in years past everyone had a great time. This is always such a festive evening it is sometimes difficult to remember that we are gathered for such an important task - to raise money for SFA and raise money we did. Over \$6,000!

The gymnasium was transformed thanks to Louise Cavaliere and the Daycare staff who came through once again with imaginative, creative decorations. Asante to everyone who helped make the African theme decorations to set the mood so perfectly.

An evening like this requires a large team to put it together so successfully:

Kelly Fraser and the organizing team worked for weeks to prepare - and seemed to enjoy the whole process.

Thank you also goes out to all the supporters who donated great raffle prizes.

Neil Janna was once again a great host for the evening and this year he outdid himself with the comedians he brought with him! Thank you Neil - your continued, enthusiastic support is appreciated.



THE SUCCESS OF THIS WONDERFUL FUNDRAISER IS ALSO THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO PURCHASED TICKETS AND CAME OUT TO SUPPORT THIS GREAT COMMUNITY EVENT.

St. James Anglican Church Women's Group



On May 7th. Darlene & Wendy were welcomed by the St. James Anglican Church Women's Group in Hudson. We enjoyed a very pleasant evening making new friends for SFA. The women listened attentively as we shared the stories of our trips to Kenya and the friends who we work with there.

It is not just a cliché that church women know how to put on a great spread - following our presentation we were treated to delicious goodies, coffee & tea.

Imagine how thrilled we were to also receive a hot pink suitcase over-filled with amazing school supplies!

Thank you to Linda Cobbett for inviting us to spend some time with this great group of women and we hope to return for another visit sometime soon.



The Power of One on CTV News



THE POWER OF ONE - THE POWER OF MANY

SUITCASES For ARFICA is so fortunate to have hundreds of great people working together & sharing a common goal - to help bring some assistance to our friends in Kenya who have so little while we have so much.

Once again SFA was the focus of a POWER OF ONE segment on CTV. This time we shared the spotlight with the Aid For Seniors Program - a city of Pointe Claire initiative. On April 9th. Wendy Buchanan & Sharon Cuttell spent a few fun-filled hours with the CTV crew, Kathleen Finn, Aid For Seniors Section Manager with the city of Pointe Claire, and the wonderful "recycled teenagers" who take part in the city activities. The occasion was to celebrate all the knitted squares and milk bag bed mats that the various Pointe Claire seniors groups had made for distribution in Kenya. Wendy had previously spent a couple of information sessions with the seniors teaching them the knitting and crocheting techniques. It was really surprising to see how many articles had been created in a short period of time. It is amazing how one person meets with another person and they meet with another couple of people and before you know it we go from THE POWER OF ONE to the POWER OF MANY. Thank you to everyone for a great day filled with plenty of laughs and a lot of ideas shared. Thank you Kathleen and Natalie Nanowski from CTV - it was great to spend time with you.

[To view the CTV segment please click here.](#)

Canadian Students Create Picture Books for Kenyan Students to Enjoy



Students at both Beaconsfield High School in Beaconsfield & Birchwood Elementary School in St. Lazare recently worked very hard to create wonderful books that will be taken to students in Kenya. As well as writing their books, Jesse Hayes' Core Plus students at BHS have been collecting money and milk bags since Wendy went and spent time with each class early in May.

Cathy Roberts' two grade 5 classes at Birchwood enthusiastically wrote and illustrated their books while asking questions about students in Kenya.

All the books have been translated into Swahili, by Florence Kibagni, laminated and spiral bound in preparation to be enjoyed by students in Kenya. Thank you all for your hard work and animated participation in this project.

The Kenyan students will definitely enjoy reading your books for many years to come.



Thank you for the Corpus Christi Parish Mini Jumble & Bake Sale

SFA would like to thank all who baked delicious treats and those who donated wonderful treasures. The children especially enjoyed purchasing Mother's Day gifts at the "Little Jewelry Shop" table. We raised over \$800.

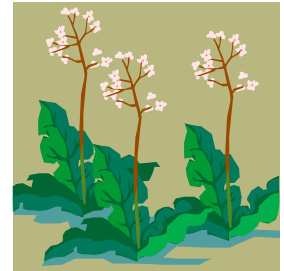


At the 2nd Annual SFA Plant Sale we all enjoyed a beautiful sunny day in good company as always.



We met so many gardeners and SFA supporters who came out to shop for new plants. Thank you to all who donated plants and baking to make the event a success. We raised \$750 for more 2014 projects.

We send a special thank you to Joe and Edwina for lending us their perfect driveway for yet another year! Cheers!



Children Helping Children



"This year the Pincourt Cooperative Preschool wanted to help Kenyan school children in some way. We collected small school supplies and simple story books. The children also decorated their handprints to send along to the children in friendship. Thank you SFA for allowing us to help sensitize young children to the needs of others."

Mary-Anne Chapman, teacher

Thanks to Amanda P. a senior at the Maxwell Residence

Amanda spent many hours over our long Canadian winter lovingly knitting woolen baby sweaters and little dolls for babies in Kenya. They will be gifts for babies born at the Beraldo Medical Centre in Emalindi. We are inspired by the many ways our supporters connect to our work with their own talents and time.



Joshua & Friends Working towards a 2nd well!

Joshua Morin-Saurette & his pals Logan & Theo enjoyed the opportunity to sell lemonade, ice cream and baked goods to their school community on Friday June 13th. The occasion was to celebrate the talent of the student body of Dorval Elementary School's Talent Show. Performing definitely developed a thirst and an appetite. All proceeds from the sale will be deposited into Joshua's Water Project account - where the funds are accruing for a second well.



Thank you to Mr. Douglas Stewart, Principal of Dorval Elementary School, the staff and the parents & friends who baked and to everyone who stopped by to help Joshua in his quest to bring clean, accessible water to rural communities in Kenya.

SINGING FOR : SUITCASES FOR AFRICA

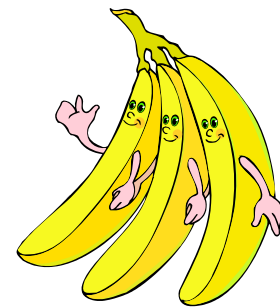
On April 26, 2014 the rafters of the Lakeshore Unitarian Church were ringing with the sounds of music. The vocal students of Kerry-Anne Kutz put on an inspiring concert for



family & friends with the evening's proceeds going to SUITCASES FOR AFRICA & the Unitarian Church. What a treat. Kerry-Anne and her husband Michael Cartile also entertained the audience with a lovely ballad. A reception followed the concert which was a great opportunity for everyone to chat and learn about SFA while enjoying refreshments supplied by the congregation and SFA members. This is one of the highlights of our fundraising activities - thank you Kerry-Anne, Michael & all the talented students.



From Iced Tea To Bananas



Catherine & Andrew Trepanier and their friends Amelie, Eva & Elody Bentler recently raised close to \$100 manning an iced tea stand and the money will be going towards the costs of expanding the Banana Plantation at Mwirembe/St. Paul's School.

Way to go guys!

Coming Events... Save these Dates!

SFA's 2nd Annual Walk-a-Thon. Saturday, September 27th at Centennial Lake in D.D.O.

We are very excited to let you know this wonderful outdoor event will take place again in 2014. Put on your walking shoes and help us to raise funds and awareness about the challenges facing orphans in Kenya. Closer to the event we will have sponsor sheets available for you to download from our website at www.suitcasesforafrica.com Come on your own or organize a walk with friends and family, church or social club. SFA will host a BBQ on site afterward for all the children who have helped SFA over the years. A flyer will go out to give you all the details in late summer.



The SFA Pasta Supper Event November 8th at St. John Fisher Church

Come join us once again for a great meal knowing it will assist us in funding Feeding Programs and other worthwhile projects at the same time. Delicious food prepared home-made style by our members and good fun and fellowship with friends and families. Details to follow in the same flyer.





How You Can Help

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

- 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