



SUITCASES for AFRICA

News Letter

Summer/Fall 2015



Joshua & Friends Do it Again!

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In this Newsletter edition we are happy to share some of the latest stories of 2015. Among them, Joshua's second well is installed at a community medical dispensary. Also included... the beneficiaries of the Maisha Mapya Cow Project share their happiness and their gratitude for the positive change this project has brought to their lives. We also share with you some moving and delightful quotes from the letters of our sponsored children. Enjoy!

Container of Medical & School Supplies Update



The journey of the container (pictured arriving at the hospital) continues to unfold with its many twists and turns. We would like to thank the Beraldo Family in Toronto, the SFA donors who sponsored this shipment, for their patience and generosity in completing this project despite all of the frustrations that have occurred along the way. We had the unfortunate experience of having our container held up in the port of Mombasa where it was subjected to many delays, much red tape, added costs and an “Inspection” which was destructive to say the least. Fortunately it has now arrived in Kakamega at the Mukumu Hospital a full two months after our team had to leave Kenya! With the help of the Beraldo Family, the team will return at some point to help disperse the much needed medical and educational supplies it contains.

Some items were damaged during the “Inspection” but fortunately the Kakamega Diocesan Medical Coordinator Peter, the hospital manager Stanley Kinuthia, and a few medical technicians, were able to repair most of the items. These items included four operating room beds, and a patient lifting machine. A few of the many bicycles and wheelchairs were damaged or missing wheels which they also repaired. Many hours were spent working on them. The arrival of the container was much anticipated by all. The large items have now been dispersed to local hospitals and clinics who are appreciative of the hard- to- come- by medical items.



A few items still remain to be repaired, such as seven dental chairs. Peter has engaged a medical technician from “Mediquip” in Nairobi to repair them.

The remaining items including medical supplies, school supplies, library books, soccer balls and equipment, bicycles for healthcare workers and wheelchairs will be dispersed by the team when they return.

We have been assured that these items are under lock and key in the Hospital compound. Rest assured Suitcases for Africa will be addressing these issues with the Kenyan Port Authority once we have compiled a full report.

We will keep you posted as this unfolds.

Below is a portion of Peter's report, expressing his gratitude for all the perseverance that was involved.

Two beds were included of which ONE I used more than one hour to repair. The whole lower substructure was -in pieces-



The four Theatre beds are the MY stars



But the patient lifter as well found already FANS

We are really happy that -This trip around the world- which was consuming many hours and could only be achieved through the undivided alertness of all the people involved, came to a good end. I am really grateful that you never wavered even when the big waves came crashing on you.

I remain sincerely yours



Peter Roserott

Kenya Trip 2015

Our 2015 trip to Kenya was partially based on the premise that the container that was shipped in April would be delivered in Mukumu before we arrived in late June. The anticipation of distributing all the wonderful items in the container was energizing. So many people had collected, sorted, created and shared imaginative treasures. Both Montrealers and Torontonians took part in filling the rather big 40ft. space and we were really looking forward to seeing the benefit it was all going to bring to so many people.

The second component of the trip was to visit many of our wonderful projects. Joshua's second well was ready to be officially opened.



The Maisha Mapya Support Group had updates for us on all the new calves that had been born since we were in Kenya last fall. The dental x-ray equipment that had been funded by Pointe Claire's Dr. Weary and her staff had been installed at St. Elizabeth Hospital and we were anxious to see it and take photos. Fr. Paul's cow shed in Emalindi already had

one inhabitant and we knew that Peter and Fr. Paul were going to give us an enthusiastic tour. We always look forward to seeing as many of the students in our educational sponsorship program as possible. This year we welcomed students from two new schools from the Malava district.



Meetings with Susan and Peter are always on the agenda as well as visits with our many friends and colleagues.

We were so disappointed to learn that the container had not been released as our arrival time approached but we were repeatedly assured that it would only be a matter of days before all the paper work would be completed and it would be on its way from Mombasa.



Unfortunately this did not happen! Each day or two the arrival date would be extended until we finally had to accept the fact that we were not going to receive the container on time for us to carry out our initial goal. The container finally arrived a few weeks after our return to Canada and has since been emptied and all its valuable contents are locked in a secure storage area.

The up side to this turn of events is that we had plenty of time to meet with more people than we originally planned for.

We are happy to report that everyone is doing well. As you will read further in this newsletter the projects are also doing well. Thanks to our generous donors we were able to purchase almost 2,000 mosquito nets for distribution and each recipient was most appreciative.

Malaria is very widespread in Kenya and in fact both Susan and Esther – our on the ground colleagues – contracted malaria while we were there! Malaria claims many, many lives each year and anything we can do to assist in its prevention is invaluable!

It was very distressing not to have had the container to empty but the trip was a success and we certainly enjoyed catching up with all of our friends.

Thanks to the Beraldos in Toronto we will be returning in the near future to distribute everything that is waiting for us. Thank you Albert & Emanuela.



Celebrating the New Well at Chevoso Dispensary funded by Joshua & Friends

There was much joy in Chevoso community with the arrival of clean accessible water. The new well is located at the medical dispensary. Before the well was installed, the dispensary hired a person to bring water for their use from a nearby stream. It is hard for us to even imagine such a situation at a health facility.

According to Susan Nanjala our administrator ...

”The dispensary carries out integrated services that include: maternity healthcare, child welfare and curative services. This calls for the provision of sufficient water that is available 24 hours a day. The project not only serves the health facility needs but also now serves the neighboring primary school and surrounding families. Approximately 3,000 people will benefit! We are really happy that Joshua has raised funds for this second water project for the needy.”



Celebration Day in the Chevoso Community

A very special day for us on our trip this past July, was to attend the official grand opening ceremony for Joshua's Second Well, located in the Chevoso community.

We were lucky enough to attend the grand opening in the fall of 2012 for Joshua's first well in Malava. We felt very privileged to be able to take part in a celebration along with the people of Chevoso who came together in thanks for their new water supply. This well will serve the people of the community and it has been strategically located between a small clinic/dispensary and a primary school to benefit both. It's hard for us here in Canada to fathom that these two facilities existed without a source of clean water but unfortunately this is most often the norm in rural Kenya. We witnessed how much it means for the community in terms of easing their daily chores by providing them with a clean and safe water supply. This confirms that wells are very important projects for SFA to undertake.



As part of the celebration, we were treated to some wonderful entertainment in the form of singing and dancing and poetry recitals by some of the students. They wore traditional kitenge (scarves folded and tied around the waist to enhance the dance moves) and tribal style makeup! Very impressive! They were so talented and proud to show off their skills.

Next the entertainment continued with more song and dance from some of the healthcare workers of the community, led by the beautiful Judith. They are truly amazing and we so enjoyed their performance!



We were honored to be in the company of the Chief of the community, who was impressed to learn that Joshua himself is still such a young boy with so much compassion and a will to help others. He spoke elegantly and reiterated the community's thanks and appreciation to SFA and all the people who supported Joshua and helped him to once again attain his fundraising goal. The community wanted us to take the message back to Canada that they truly appreciate what SFA is doing for them.





l to r : Rachael, Ezna, Wendy, Susan Nanjala & the Chief

L to r: Rachel, Ezna, Michele, Susan,
The Chief, Esther and Yaphet of Susan's team,
and Judith crouched in front



A Word about Mamma Susan....



Susan Nanjala our project coordinator, Mamma Susan to the locals, standing proudly by her latest accomplishment, Joshua's Second Well.

Susan's projects are well run (no pun intended!) and she's a joy to work with. She's passionate about her job and it's clear to me that the people of the community love and respect her. Her new venture which started up in late 2014 is titled, the CCTD (Community Centre for Transformation and Development).

We wish her along with her assistant Esther and her entire team, great success. We are looking forward to working on many more SFA projects with them. She is the one who identifies communities such as this where the need for assistance is the greatest. Susan is an invaluable partner and so knowledgeable and professional that it makes it a pleasure to work together with her.

Joshua's second well is another wonderful success story for SFA, one that we can all be proud of! I know I was very proud to be there representing the group. Thanks to all of our supporters that make important projects like this possible!

Michele Shepard



Emotional and Financial Support Reap Priceless Rewards

On their 2015 Kenya Trip Wendy & Michele managed to fit in a quick visit with Maisha Mapya – an HIV/Aids Support group. As many of you know, SFA has been funding the purchase of cows for members of the group thanks to our many generous donors. This is a very important project and means a lot to many on both sides of the world. Below you will have the opportunity to read some of the heartfelt testimonials that the group members shared – it was an emotional celebration day. Our administrator Susan has been an essential component in creating and maintaining this successful and valued support group.



Mud Puddle the Cow

Our Visit to the Maisha Mapya Group Cow Project

Caroline welcomed us to the group and highlighted the path to this point. She pointed out that it was not easy getting established. We all worked together to find just the right project for this amazing group. It was difficult for many members because it took time to start producing calves for each of them. Now they all see the value of waiting.

Testimonials

- 1) I am no longer sick – I am busy and healthy and my husband is also doing well. All of this is due to Maisha Mapya. We have even started a poultry project and all is well.
- 2) Jennifer who owns Veronica
I am happy now – getting milk from Veronica and now I am a healthy woman who can work. My husband died – some say from witchcraft because I have survived HIV/Aids so it must have been witchcraft that took him and spared me.
- 3) Pacifica who owns Mud Puddle
In town everyone admires Mud Puddle and her calf. Everyone in the family is doing well. I am the first person in my family to have a cow & now everyone wants one.
- 4) Matanit owns Josephine who has produced 3,500L of milk which is enough to pay for a caretaker. She usually produces approximately 4,000L each month.





5) Alice is very happy that she gets to host us each time we come. It gives her prestige and station within the family. She is the third wife in the family and the youngest. People in the community and family respect her because she hosts international visitors. She is now healthy and everyone is wondering how come she is well.

6) The chairman of the group is very grateful for the opportunity to help everyone in making the project so successful. He is known as "The Man of the Cows". We pay him a very small stipend which makes it easier for him to get around as needed. 1,000ksh per year (approx.\$13.00). As a show of gratitude he will get Veronica's calf when it is born.



Mud Puddle's calf



Many, many members were adamant that if not for this support group they would not still be alive and functioning as healthy members of their communities. Susan's support and counselling is what made this group into such a success story.

Each member of the group received 2 mosquito nets – we also left some for other community members. They were really appreciative to be recognised like this.



Shanyinya Sanitation Project 2015



SFA has been working for several years to bring help to this community. In past years a Well, Poultry Project and Cow Project improved the situation. The livestock projects continue to fund a feeding program for the students. Over the last several years we have been assisted with funds from a family who wish to remain anonymous. With their support we started an early childhood education project. School uniforms, tables & chairs & school supplies have assisted the 58 children in this program to get off to a good start. The children range in age from 6-10 years old. This year SFA supplemented the funds to address a serious sanitation problem. The single latrine was dilapidated to the point of being unsafe. It

was contributing to the high incidence of sanitation related diseases. The new 2 door latrines will contribute to better health for the children and to better awareness of hygienic standards.



Mwikhomo School Hearing Aid Project 2015

SFA is delighted that in 2015, 12 more hearing impaired students have received hearing aids, bringing the total so far in this program to 48 children. The children

were tested by specialists to determine those in the most immediate need and who would benefit the most. We wish we could bring the joy of being part of the hearing world to all of the children. We will continue to add more children as funds allow. This program impacts the child in many ways...improved educational performance, improved self-esteem and confidence, improved communication and interpersonal skills and greater integration into the wider community. Our Donation Gift Cards which are available at Christmas or other special times in the year are a good example of how these funds are raised for specific programs. Why not consider giving such a life changing Gift/Card to someone you love on a special occasion? Please visit our website to learn more.

www.suitcasesforafrica.com



*Education
breeds confidence.*

Confidence breeds hope.

Hope breeds peace.

- Confucius -

We are so proud of the 62 students in our **Educational Sponsorship Program**. With every passing year we see them going from strength to strength. The children have many challenges and difficulties to overcome but most are working very hard and know this is a gift that will change their lives and their futures. Sadly from time to time we lose a child from the program, sometimes there is an illness, a move to a new community or a troubled home life that results in a runaway. Our administrators Susan & Esther care deeply for these children and search for solutions or appropriate support systems for the child. The new students who were added to the program this year are also doing very well. They were chosen from two schools new to us and it was a treat to see their pictures and read their letters.

We thank all the sponsors who support this program which we believe is one of our finest. We find the letters written by the students to their sponsors both moving and delightful and would like to share some excerpts with you below.

... I am proud for your support and continue to do that because God will bless you. You know that I come from a poor family. I am staying with my grandmother who is a half blind. I will not surrender to get education. My career I will like to be a Priest which I will make.

...I hope you are well. I am as happy as a King or Queen in the palace. I thank you for giving me everything that I need to have in school.

...I am fairing well. I am looking forward to pass with flying colours to achieve my dream of being a pilot.

...I would like to see you one day here in Kenya. I have no problem because of your support.

...I would like to greet you because I was lonely at first but now I am smiling all over the world. Then I would like to thank you for sponsoring me for I was a poor child but now I am learning.

...Thank you for your lovely letter. Here in Kenya the rain has reduced and it is now hunger time in our community. I always work hard in school. Last term I was position two out of one twenty nine and I will continue working hard. Pray for me and my family as I pray for you.



...I take this opportunity to tell you that I am working hard at school and I have started putting more effort.

...I am greatly moved to have this golden moment at least to share with you a few things here and there. ... that I am carrying on well with my education despite the challenges.

...After my secondary study I wish to become a nurse so that I can help people in my community – so that I can improve even. Nothing I can give you but just telling you thank you and may God bless you.

...Now I am at High School and struggling to achieve my goal – my goal is to become an engineer. ... Apart from performing well I also thank you because you have improved my way of dressing as a student.



Kingsley's Story (center)

Kingsley is one of our students who was at risk of dropping out of school last year. He was in an abusive situation at home and thanks to Susan for recognizing the need to get him to a safe environment he is now happily ensconced in a boarding school and he is flourishing. Wendy & Michele visited him at his new school and were very pleased to see how well he is doing. His teachers are thrilled to have him in their school and he is performing at the top of his class. He is participating in all activities and usually leads

the boys in songs of praise. Kingsley's fees are being shared by a few donors and for this we are grateful. It is heartwarming when people here contribute to the "communal pot" thus allowing SFA to assign funds where we feel they will have the greatest impact.

To view a video of Kingsley singing and happy with his new friends at his new school please visit www.suitcasesforafrica.com and click on **the featured video** on our **home page**.

Distribution of Mosquito Nets 2015



The incidence of Malaria is on the rise in the Kakamega area. Even while we were there two of our colleagues were stricken with Malaria. Thanks to our many generous donors Susan was able to order almost 2,000 mosquito nets. We disbursed nets to many many people on our travels on this trip.



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!

September 1st ...The Launch of our New SFA Website!

We are sure many of you have heard the voice of Jason Mayoff delivering the news on your radio for many years. Jason is a journalist at CJAD. One of the things he loves doing in his spare time is developing websites. When he learned SFA needed a new website he graciously contacted us and offered his services. Jason has put in many, many hours sorting through SFA's extensive collection of photos, projects, press articles, newsletters and videos from the last 10 years. He has come up with an attractive, organized and user friendly new website. We launched the new website on Sept. 1. We hope you enjoy it. We will be fazing- in our new email address over the coming months.



Please note you can now reach us at info@suitcasesforafrica.com

We are always amazed when people offer their own special talents and the gift of their time to help make this world a better place.

THANK YOU JASON!

Tiny Teddies for Kenyan Children



Jesse Hayes and her students at Beaconsfield High School gathered in June for a few sewing sessions and created "Comfort Teddies" for orphans in Kenya. The boys and girls sewed the teddies from colourful material, stuffed them and added a message of encouragement to the pocket on each teddy. Their creations brought smiles to the faces of each child who received a teddy to take home. Thank you to all the inspired sewers at BHS.

Children of all ages were excited to choose teddies from a friend in Canada.



The Second Annual SFA Walk/Run

On September 12th 2015, the 2nd annual walk and run was held at the Centennial Park in Dollard des Ormeaux for the benefit of orphans and vulnerable children in Kenya.

Despite the inclement weather, the event raised \$3,400 which will assist many projects we are currently supporting such as

educational programs, the purchase and distribution

of mosquito nets to help in the prevention of malaria, water projects such as wells and support of the Medical Centre.



Thank you to all the generous donors and supporters who attended this event and made it a great success!

Thank you also to our sponsors:

Marché Adonis in Roxboro for the food and beverages

Babar Books, Espa Beauty and Style, Maison Fusion- Home Decor, Soko Gift Shop, Synergy Cycle from Village Pointe-Claire &

The Dairy farmers of Canada in Montreal for the gift certificates

Thank you to Rhian Wilkinson of the Canadian Women's Soccer Team, who came out to support us and for her donation of a new pair of autographed trainers which we will have as a fundraiser at the Pasta Supper on Oct. 24.

Congratulations to the sponsors' door prizes winners:

Richard Caron, Éline Daoust, Marie-Claude Delarue, Martin Guay, Sophie Lavoie, Sharon Cuttell, Andrea Lavoie.

Looking forward to seeing you next year!

Julie Caron

A few photos from the day!



A Big Comedy Night Thank You



St. Edmund's Elementary School was once again transformed into "COMEDY CENTRAL" for our Annual Comedy Night. Neil Janna was a stellar host and brought three of his funniest friends to entertain us all. Everyone went home with sore sides from laughing so much. Not only were the comedians great but the raffle table was laden with great prizes.

Thank you to Louise Cavalier and her daycare staff for the great room decorations – always a treat to see what they come up with! Thanks to Kelly and the organization team for once again putting on a great show.



*"All kids need is a little help,
A little hope and someone
Who believes in them"*

Earvin "Magic" Johnson

A Thoughtful Gift for Our Administrators



Beaurepaire United Church Prayer Shawl

Many thanks go out to the Prayer Shawl Knitting Group of Merging Waters of Beaurepaire United/ Union Church for this thoughtful gift of prayer & support. We know Susan & Esther will appreciate it very much as they go about their daily work serving those in most need in the rural communities we assist.

Susan & Esther proudly wearing the prayer shawls knitted by Wendy and blessed by Rev.Vicki Cowan.



Youth Taking Action

The members of the Social Justice Club at **St. John Fisher Senior School in Pointe Claire** chose to learn about Suitcases for Africa and the plight of many children living in poverty in Kenya. Their latest fund raising effort was to hold a raffle at the end of the 2014-2015 school year and they raised \$2,500. In total \$3,262.05 was donated to the education fund. The money will go to assist students who are at risk of dropping out of school due to family poverty or an abusive home situation. If an abusive situation exists and mediation has not been helpful the authorities recommend removing the child from the home and placing him or her in a boarding school for a period of time. This is an expensive endeavour and to date we have helped financially with this intervention for three students and all are flourishing in their new, happy & safe environments.



Soko Garage Sale

Summer is a great time for a garage sale – like the one that was held in the SOKO parking lot in Pointe Claire on May 30, 2015. It was a wonderful opportunity to talk to people who wanted to know more about Suitcases For Africa, as well as make some money for our Kenyan Projects. Thanks Michele & Gordon for providing such a good venue!



Spring Plant & Bake Sale Thank you

May 23, 2015 dawned a very cool but sunny day – perfect for our annual Plant/Bake Sale. Once again Edwina & Joe Matheson's driveway was the festooned with hundreds of plants and tasty morsels for sale. Everyone pitched in to make it a successful fundraiser – thank you Edwina & Joe. Thank you to all those who donated plants and to all those who baked and bought for a good cause!





SUITCASES for AFRICA

47 Bras d'Or Avenue, Pointe-Claire, QC, H9R 1W6



NOAH'S ARK

Contest Tickets: \$5 each or 3 for \$10



Winning ticket to be drawn December 2015

A skill testing question will be required.

THANK YOU FOR CARING

www.suitcasesforafrica.com

call 514-697-5588 or 514-457-3786 for information

Coming Events! Don't Miss Them!

Pasta Dinner Oct 24th
Enjoy a delicious homemade
Soup, Salad, Pasta casserole
and Dessert.

Come & shop in our African
Market for treasures and
treats from Kenya. Would
anyone like to donate items
for our Silent Auction? Get
in touch with us at....
info@suitcasesforafrica



Suitcases for Africa present the
Pasta Dinner & African Market

Cash Wine Bar - Silent Auction - Raffle - Gift Ideas

Come and join us for a scrumptious, authentic Pasta Dinner
and shop at the African Market. This is a great chance
to get a head start on holiday gift shopping!

Saturday October 24th, 6:30pm
St. John Fisher Church
120 Avenue Summerhill, Pointe-Claire

Tickets: Adults \$30 6-12yrs \$20 Under 6 Free!

For tickets and info 514-697-5588 514-457-3786

Soko Shopping Night



Pointe Claire Village

Nov.19th, 5-8pm

Once again Michele & Gordon will host an evening of shopping with a percentage of sales going to SFA projects. This year Soko will be raising funds for a community Posho Mill Project in Chevoso. This self-sustaining project will help the community

to fund a feeding program for their young children. Come meet some of our members to learn more and to browse in this beautiful shop.

St. Edmund Elementary School Fair

10 am-3pm, Saturday, Dec. 5th

SFA will have a table at the Fair, selling items from our African trip including Christmas decorations and nativity scenes made in Kenya. We will also have our Donation Gift Cards available which make a lovely gift that gives special meaning at Christmas. Stop by and say hello, we love to see old friends and new.



Corpus Christi Parish....Christmas Bake Sale & African Market

To be held in the parish hall after Masses on Sat. Dec 12 & Sun. Dec.13.

(approx. 5:30 pm & 11:00am)



The talented parish bakers will offer their delicious baked goods for you to purchase and get a head start on your Christmas supply. African ornaments and nativity sets as well as our Donation Gift Cards will also be available.

Please call those below if you can donate baking or require it to be picked up.
Patricia at 514 457-3544, Darlene at 514 457-3786 or Wendy at 514 697-5588

Why not Consider our Donation Gift Cards this Season?

You may choose from several cards & projects to support and give it as a gift to someone on your list. To see the cards & learn more about the projects, please visit our website. A new card will be added to the collection this year.



Please share our stories with friends and family. Together we can make a difference in this world. There is an African saying....

"If everyone helps to hold up the sky, then no one will get tired"



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.
- Share our stories on social media & spread the word. Suitcases for Africa has a fb page to share.
- View our website for more information.
www.suitcasesforafrica.com