

February 23 2019

Jambo - from Lubao Kenya,

We are going to open this note by expressing our profound disappointment for having missed that great snow storm that hit Montreal the day after we began our amazing journey to our adopted homeland. We really miss all the shoveling & the ice. We also sincerely hope that is the last big weather event of the winter. Seriously we hope you are all well and no one suffered unduly.

It was a real treat for us to once again begin this year with a couple of nights at the Mill Hill Guest House in Nairobi. This is a real international stop off for so many travellers and we are always thrilled with our meal companions. This year we missed seeing a couple of Quebecers by mere hours! We will end our trip with another couple of nights in Nairobi.

Once we left Nairobi we spent a couple of days enjoying the hospitality of our friends Peter, his wife Jasmine & his mother -in-law Karen. The three of them have developed a beautiful compound and are virtually self-sufficient. This is thanks to all their animals, vegetable gardens and fruit trees. This is a tremendous achievement in only two years since they built their amazing home. Asante Sana to them all.

Now we are staying at an Airbnb in Lubao which is a small journey outside of Kakamega. We feel very spoiled to be here. We have just about every amenity that we could possibly need! The setting is beautiful on the edge of the rain forest with the Nandi Hills in the background.

Our first official visit of this year was to see the caregivers and goats in Shitochi. My goodness there is something special about seeing baby goats prancing around. The project is going well and we will share more information in our next newsletter.

Do you all remember the Masha Mapya Cow Project? This is a project that is near and dear to our hearts as it provided a support group of 40 HIV/AIDS survivors with their own cows to take care off. The cows provide a sense of purpose for their owner as well as some milk for their families. We are always really happy to see these very special people & realise what a difference Suitcases For Africa has made in so many peoples lives.

The Chevoso Community Projects were our second official events for this year. We were thrilled when we found Joshua's #2 well is in perfect condition and serving the whole community. The well is used daily by the staff at the Dispensary, the school of over 700 students and the community at large. There is a small monthly user fee associated with the program and this enables the governing committee to maintain the well. This project has attracted the attention of the local government and is held up as an example of how people can come together to work together for a better community. Bravo to all the members of this wonderful hardworking group of people.

Our next stop of the day was the Chevoso Posho Mill Project. Although the two projects are close to each other it took us quite a while to get from one to the other – due to the horrendous condition of the roads. As usual we received a royal welcome that only this group of Volunteer Community Health Workers can give. Their voices blended in perfect harmony as they sang an original song of welcome. We had the pleasure of assisting with the distribution of maize to each group member thanks to the profits from the Posho Mill!

Then it was on to shop for some of the needs of our students who will be with us on Sunday. One would think that shopping should be a quick and effortless exercise but this being Kenya of course it seemed to take forever!

The last and very special event of the day was a quick stop at St. Peter's Seminary to see Kingsley – one of our very special sponsored students. Kingsley's goal is to one day be The Pope! We are thrilled and thankful to his generous sponsors that he is now enrolled in the Seminary. He has grown into a dashing young man full of confidence. What a pleasure to witness his maturity. The Director of the Seminary, Fr. Anthony, reported that he is very pleased with Kingsley's efforts in the classroom. Well done Kingsley!

We have very limited access to Internet so this will probably be our one and only official communication for this trip. If we have time once we are back in Nairobi we will gladly attempt another update. In the mean time we would like to thank all of you who reading this for your support and encouragement. We thank you for your confidence in us as we travel around representing Suitcases For Africa. It is our pleasure and we look forward to sharing these and more stories with you in the near future.

Kwaheri From Kenya – Until we are back on Canadian Soil

Wendy & Michele