



SUITCASES for AFRICA

News Letter



Spring/Summer 2020

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The New Year 2020 started with the unwelcomed arrival of the Covid 19 Pandemic and the up-ending of life as we knew it. Despite world- wide chaos, grief and stress there are many signs of hope. Some of those good news stories are to be found in this Newsletter. We hope it brings you happiness to learn about these latest completed projects and the February visit to the projects. Stay safe, stay kind.



Love in Action

Over the past couple of years we have revamped our philosophy for assisting orphans & vulnerable children in Kenya. To that end we are limiting any new projects to concise projects that have a clear beginning, middle and completion. This allows for clear fundraising goals so that as the money comes in the projects get the green light.

With this in mind, in October 2019 we added a new insert for our gift card campaign. It soon became obvious that the idea of purchasing shoes for children who have been treated for jiggers was going to be a very popular choice for the Christmas card campaign. Thanks

to our loyal, generous supporters we were able to purchase 237 pairs of shoes for children from six different schools & communities.

We partnered with Volunteer Jigger Africa who ran the Jiggers Clinic for 271 children. Once the children's feet (& sometimes hands) had been treated they received high quality brand new canvas shoes. For more info on this painful, debilitating and endemic condition please read more on our website link below.

<http://suitcasesforafrica.com/what-is-jiggers/>

Wendy & Michele were in Kenya for the Jiggers Clinic in February. They were amazed to arrive on the scene to find hundreds of children sitting on the ground with their feet soaking in a medicated solution. Following the treatment the students had Vaseline applied to their feet and then each one was given their new shoes.





Michele & Wendy were pleased to be on hand to give lacing lessons - a lot of the children had never owned lace up shoes! At the end of the day each child received a hand written message of love & encouragement that had been written by the students and teachers in the Faith First Program at Corpus Christi Parish in Senneville. It was definitely a wonderful end to a very busy & productive day.





Greetings from Kenya

By Martin Achero,
Director: **Volunteer Jiggers Africa**

We received the donation with gratitude. You have touched nearly 300 families in the Kenya villages. You have touched lives and you have warmed hearts. Dear children, indeed we thank you for your support and encouragement through the 300 love messages we received and read. We have felt the love you have shared in our hearts. These shoes will support these needy children to go to school every day for more than 2 years. What you have done in conclusion is simply love.... God's love and may he bless you abundantly!





The Shamoni Community Well. The Challenges, the Completion & the Joyful Celebration

What a happy day it was when this community well was completed. Fortunately the final finishing details were underway when Wendy and Michelle arrived for the SFA team visit in February ensuring they could join in with the celebrations. Those who follow our Newsletters and Facebook page will remember the exciting fund raising appeal that was launched during a great bicycle adventure by longtime supporters Gerald and Lenore. They were participants in the epic Cairo to Capetown Bike Tour in



2019. During the, at times, grueling 5 month endeavor we were all treated to an excellent and informative blog. To learn more about the many countries they travelled through and to see the magnificent photos and video clips please follow the link below, <https://africa2019.blog/2018/12/>

SFA was honoured to be chosen as their charity for a water project to give back to a Kenyan community. Gerald and Lenore experienced the importance of clean accessible water in the lives of those around them. The

Shamoni community was our targeted location. Both SFA and the community are extremely grateful for this life saving project that serves one school, two churches and a population of 1,050 people. Please follow this link to learn more about the challenges they faced before they had water.

<http://suitcasesforafrica.com/current-projects/shamoni-community-water-project/>



Installation of the hand dug well was set back twice due to the forces of nature. Construction of the well was due to begin in November after the normal seasonal light rains. However unusually heavy and persistent rain prevented them from breaking ground. Washed out land and roads caused the loss of life for both people and livestock before the rain passed. The digging of the well was finally commenced in early January but a second rain related challenge appeared.



The deepening hole began to collapse inward because of the overly saturated soil. Due to the extreme danger this presented to the workers, further digging was halted while tests for a new site began. Thanks to the diligence and persistence of Stephen Opunde - the engineer/contractor of the well company - a new site was chosen. The well was subsequently completed to the joy and relief of all involved. We have hired Stephen's Company for the vast majority of the 16 wells we have funded over the years. We are thankful that once again Stephen has completed a successful well project for SFA with safety in mind. Wendy and Michele were on site for the laying of the final layer of bricks. This was accompanied by the joyful singing of members of the community!



MAJI NI UZIMA

SFA wishes to thank Gerald, Lenore and their many friends who donated so generously to bring clean water to this community. It is now bringing better health and sanitation to the people of Shamoni, especially during this time of Covid 19.

Please read the Shamoni Community Letter of Appreciation which you can find on [page 19](#) in the Thank You section of this newsletter.

WATER IS LIFE



Timely Completion of the Kicker Academy Water Project



Kicker Academy is an Early Childhood School which serves 90 children. The school assists struggling parents who would otherwise be unable to educate their children. It admits orphans who are marginalised, forgotten and who live in lonely social isolation. SFA completed a water project at this facility to bring clean drinking water. Water is pumped up from a borehole well to an elevated storage tank. Pipes then deliver the water to taps and sinks for handwashing.

This will bring many benefits to the children and staff and improve their health immeasurably. Local river water is contaminated by toxins and infested with *Shigella entero* bacteria, staphylococcus, salmonella and e coli. Drinking river water is a reality for many Kenyans and causes many to die each year from preventable water borne illnesses. This water project can help protect these children from Hepatitis, Cholera and Dysentery. Thankfully with the completion of the project at this moment in time it will help with the prevention of the spread of Covid 19. Handwashing is essential now more than ever.

Wendy and Michele spent a great day with the children and staff on their February visit.



Raising the Canadian Flag at Kicker Academy, meeting the teachers, sharing a delicious snack and having fun!





Distributing mosquito nets, soccer uniforms and knitted dolls was possible thanks to our wonderful volunteers and donors!

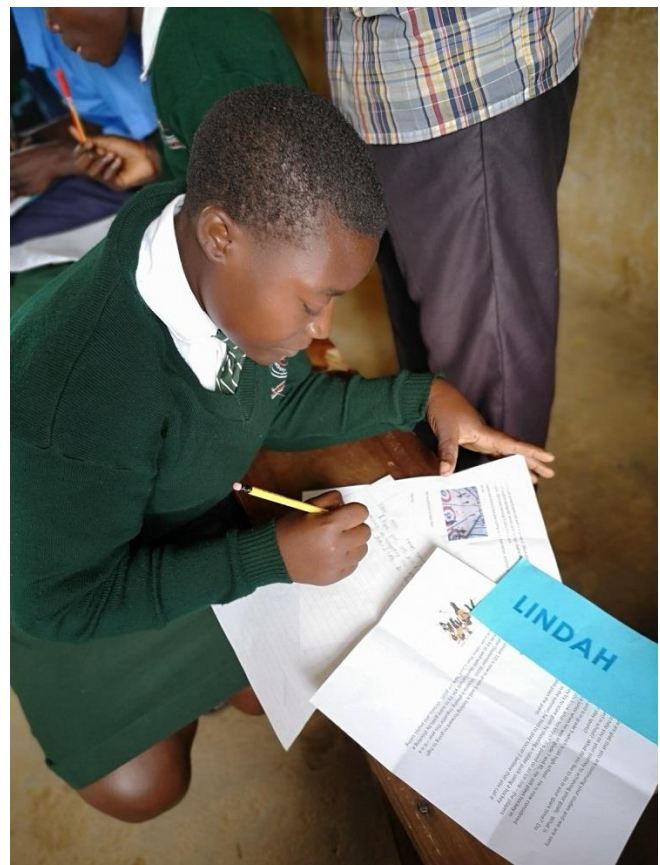


Thank you for Caring!

The Educational Sponsorship Program Promotes Success



The 2020 visit with the students in the Educational Sponsorship Program was the enthusiastic celebration it is every year. The students are all thriving and working hard to achieve their goals. This year in particular the students seemed extra happy to receive their letters from their sponsors. They took great care and attention in writing their letters back. The Malava students are, for the most part, attending the same school and were given permission to take time off from their class work to meet with our team. The Khayega group of students came from all over the county to see us. Unfortunately many of the Khayega students were expected to be in school on the Sunday of the gathering and were only permitted to come once they had completed their exam. Many students could not come from so far away at that time of the day.





Another exception that brought about great joy this year was the return of five of our alumni. They made a great effort to come back and join us. They were all thrilled to see each other and we enjoyed watching their reunion. Henrietta came all the way from Kisumu. It was her one day off from her catering courses. She is currently doing a stage at a hotel. The older students counseled the younger ones to work hard so that they could reap the benefits of their hard work and thereby get into a technical training course, college or university just as they had done.

They advised some of our senior students on the options they may have depending on the efforts that they make in this their final year.

It was truly uplifting to see these young people who have been through our program and how they are paying it forward. They are so grownup! Susan and Esther continually counsel students as needed. They strive to assist the students to find the way and the will to stay in school despite the many challenges and demands on their time.



The students are pictured here in their new shirts donated by West Island Soccer School.... WISS.

Chevoso Community Group Update

The team had the opportunity to once again visit with this wonderful community group while in Kenya. It is always uplifting to encounter people who are so happy despite the many obstacles that they encounter every day. Everything is going well for the group as they continue to support each other in whatever challenges appear. The Posho Mill is functioning well and Rachel has become very efficient at repairs when they are needed. There is still a very small shop on the premises which stocks some basic items for the locals to purchase.

It was great to see everyone looking so well! They really have become like a family to us all.



The Khayega Sewing Group Update

As many of you may remember, back in 2009 SFA started a training program to support a group of women who found themselves with many neighbourhood orphans in need of assistance. We trained girls and women in sewing techniques and then purchased sewing machines for the graduates.



This was the beginning of our Khayega Sewing Group.

They now continue to make so many wonderful items for us to sell here in Canada. The proceeds we collect from these sales avail funds for the women to assist as many children as they can. Once again this year Elizabeth, Julia and their team have prepared many colourful items such as shopping bags, quilts, pot holders, aprons and placemats etc.



Hopefully we will be able to gather again soon to give you the opportunity to see and purchase these very unique articles.

Our Driver John – The Kenyan Pied Piper



John is our trusted driver and dear friend. Every time we are in a meeting or busy with details we are sure to find John somewhere sitting with a group of children or walking and talking quietly with a youngster in distress. It never fails. John has six children and one can tell that he really has a passion for young people.



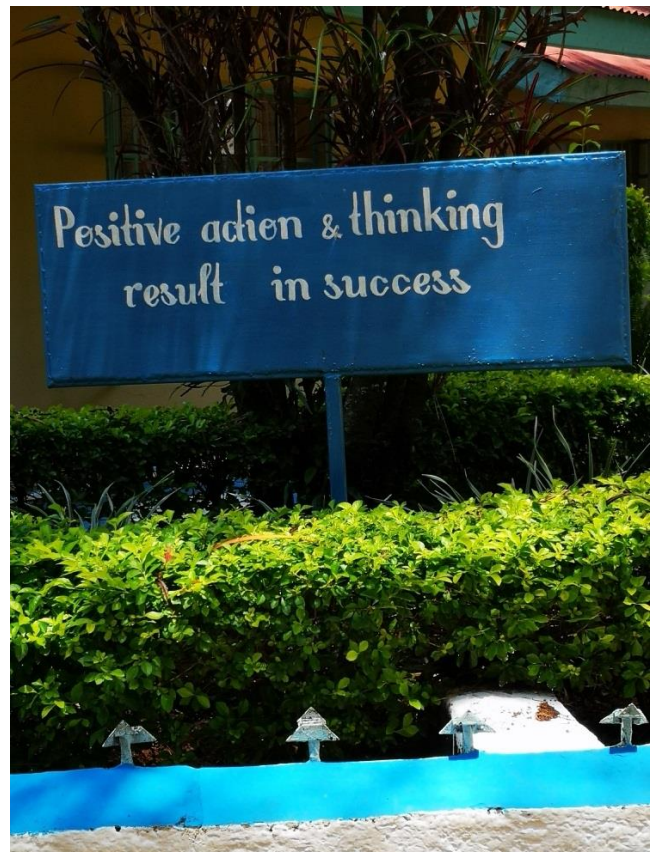
We are so fortunate to have John with us each and every day that we travel around visiting our projects. **Asante John.**



Photos from 2020 Visit



Motivational Signs..... Popular in Kenyan Schools and Communities, here are a few of them for your enjoyment and inspiration.







How Canadians are Helping in their own Way



Letter of Appreciation to Gerry & Lenore and Friends

March 3, 2020

Shamoni Water Project

Our Visitors Suitcases for Africa – SFA – Wendy & Michele, CCTD Director Susan & Esther, officials, area administrators and Shamoni fraternity - Good Afternoon.

I would like to thank you to this special occasion, our guests Suitcases for Africa. I do like to express my sincere appreciation for your concern about the welfare of the Shamoni people.

They say water is essential for our survival, it enhances our wellbeing and apart from drinking, it is key for our cleanliness.

It is indeed touching to see that our visitors are touched about the wellbeing of our society. I can't just find special words to thank you. May God bless you. Our people from Shamoni thank you for your co-operation towards this project.

As Shamoni people we have accepted to take good care of the project.

My special thanks goes to GERRY & LENORE and everyone else who ensured that the project succeeds. Our facilitators – CCTD – receive our heartfelt thanks because we could not have had this project without you.

Finally to our visitors may the almighty God shower you with blessings and we wish that some other projects come. Thank you for being a blessing to us at Shamoni. We are indeed humbled. Welcome again to Kenya, Welcome to Shamoni.

Karibu Sana, Thank you. God Bless You.

The Shamoni Community Group Chairperson



SFA would like to thank all those who hosted, volunteered their time or donated to the following events:

- Kerry Anne Kutz Concert**
- Corpus Christi Market Sale**
- Core Women Fitness Craft Sale**



Tara Lee Gooding
Events, Crafts, Markets

Soko Shopping Night
Michele & Gordon

Corpus Christi Parish African
Market & Bake Sale



HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Join us in raising funds and awareness with your own ideas or events.
- Make a donation to support our projects.
- A tax receipt will be issued for all donations of \$25.00 or more.
- Purchase our donation cards (see samples on our website).

During the Covid 19 pandemic SFA has had to cancel all of our planned events for fundraising in the coming months however the great needs of these struggling communities continue. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic coupled with a huge plague of locust eating most of the harvest for the region we foresee a profound period of food insecurity in the months ahead. The **World Health Organization** predicts serious famine in east Africa.



Great Canadian GIVING CHALLENGE

We would like to announce that June is the beginning of the Great Canadian Giving Challenge. For every dollar that is donated through Canada Helps.....

Suitcases for Africa will have a chance to win \$20,000.

During this difficult time this is a wonderful and easy way to help us maintain our presence in Kenya. It will help us to provide emergency food for those in most need. We also hope to continue with our usual projects supporting orphans and vulnerable children.

Just click on the “Donate Now” button on our website at www.suitcasesforafrica.com

We hope to share some good news as the challenge draws to a close!

Thank you – Asante Sana

