



SUITCASES for AFRICA

News Letter

Winter/Spring 2023



LOVE IN ACTION



The New Year 2023 started with hope as everyone continued to recover from the challenges that came about by the Covid 19 Pandemic.

The pandemic caused world- wide chaos, grief, stress and permanent changes for many. Our students went through the same upheaval and with fewer resources.

We are rejoicing with the community that most of our students are back in school.

SFA is continuing to focus largely on assisting our sponsored students by guiding them through the storm with the excellent work of our team on the ground.

In this edition we share Susan's update on Walter, one of our much -loved students.

It is a story of determination, triumph and also the sorrow of sudden and profound loss.

We invite you to read this latest update about what is happening on the ground in Kenya and to see how your assistance is helping to overcome difficult challenges faced by these children.

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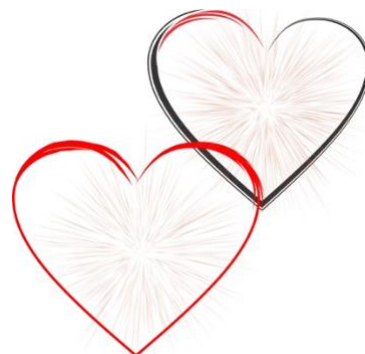
Love in Action

This edition of the SFA Newsletter is dedicated to all the supporters and members of our small grassroots charity. As one person we can spread love and compassion through our actions. As many we can multiply that love to reach across the miles to children and families who are struggling to overcome high hurdles.

Love has the power to change the trajectory of their lives. We have seen what changes that can bring to a whole community. Thank you to all of you for being a part of that change. We share Walter's Story in this edition and some of the ways love is in action in our community.

Thank you from the SFA team

*"Love is a fruit in season at all times,
And within reach of every hand"*
Mother Teresa



Walter's Story

Profile prepared by:

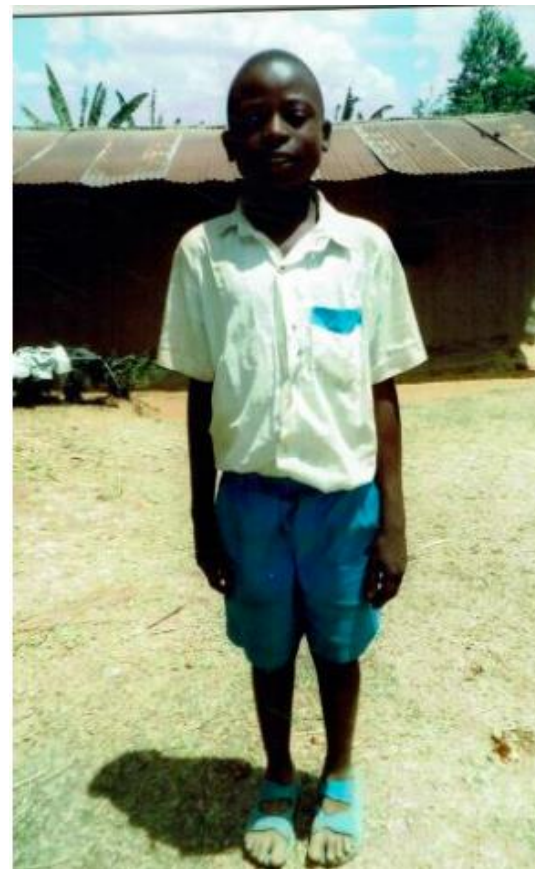
Susan Nanjala

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR:

Walter's life has been transformed by his sponsor through the Educational Sponsorship Program from day 1 when he was enrolled.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Walter was born 15th October 1999. He was 12 years old and in class 5 in 2011 when we enrolled him. He was identified as a needy bright child by his school class teacher. Walter is the 3rd born in a family of 6 children. He has 3 brothers and 2 sisters. He is a quiet boy but bright and focused. His parents are very poor and depend on local gold mining for a livelihood. The entire family is involved in the activity and they earn 2 dollars a day. At the time of his enrollment Walter also worked with them in the mine. Walter is now in the university but during holidays, he still does the same activity so as to raise money for college needs. He works very hard and does not care whether what he does is a dirty job and risky to his life. Since Walter was registered in our program, we have not experienced any disciplinary challenges with him.



WALTER'S EDUCATION JOURNEY:

In primary school, Walter used to be between class position 1 or 2 despite challenges faced at home and his parent's inability to fully pay school levies. The pillar of the family was his mother and she is still the pillar to date. His worries about school payments, uniform, lunch program and school books ended after we enrolled him in the SFA program.

Walter did not repeat any classes and when he sat for class 8 National Examination, he passed so well that he was called in to join a very good high school. Because SFA support could not afford full high scholarship at that school he joined a local day secondary school. In a day school, SFA support was able to fully pay his fees and cater for 85% of other levies, one meal a day, provide his uniform and stationary. In high school, he continued performing well and he retained the same class position.

As shared earlier, his mother has been his pillar of strength. His mother is very hard working. Though totally illiterate, she does some casual work activities but these activities are not available on daily basis. When she gets one, she is paid 200 shillings. (\$1.9 CAD). She also approaches politicians and Well Wishers for bursaries and assistance. While she does this, the entire family is still involved in mining activities. Through thick and thin, this family has been able to educate their eldest son who is now a primary school teacher and the rest of the siblings go to school.

COURSE STUDY:

Walter is now studying education in Kenyatta University. He began his 3rd year in September this year. A degree course in Kenya takes 4 years. If all goes on well, he will graduate in 2024 December. He is still as disciplined as ever and always appreciates the support given to him by his sponsor through SFA. He is among our best- behaved students, focused and organized.

WALTER'S STRENGTHS:

1. His mom who works tirelessly to solicit for funds to help him.
2. The entire family for working as a team despite the prevailing poverty they faced.
3. SFA for having stood with him since 2011. SFA has actually held his hand and walked with him through this noble journey by availing continual financial support.
4. His own willingness to acquire an education
5. The family's ability to fight the stigma associated with poverty.
6. His Self -discipline
7. Being bright.
8. Being a Good communicator.
9. Being Self driven

THE CHALLENGES FACED:

1.The social stigma due to the family's poverty and the gold mining activity undertaken. Those who do that job are classified as poor.

2.Having been stamped as a poor family, the society did not expect such a family to educate their children. Now as earlier shared, Walter's mother is key in the family affairs. Because of her hard work, Walter's eldest brother had joined Teachers' Training College. At the time we enrolled Walter with the SFA program and he sat for his grade 8 National examination, he passed well and joined high school

3.A terrible event happened. Sometimes, there are those who do not want to see you rise up and a gang organized itself and one night, the family was attacked. The gang wanted to know where they were getting money to educate the children and demanded for money from the poor couple. In the process the father was hit with a blunt object on the jaw and chest and immediately he collapsed. The mother's hands were hit. The gang only found Kenya shillings one hundred (95 cents !) When neighbors heard the screams, they came to their rescue. This was a complete set back for the family.

4.When we heard of what had happened, we visited the family and found them at home not able to go to hospital because they had no money. They had no food and we realized they also had no beddings to sleep. I took the initiative to communicate to SFA. SFA members were so touched that they looked for an emergency fund.

The SFA Board approved and wired it to us. With this money, we commenced the family on monthly food rations for 6 months since they were not able to do any manual work because of their injuries.

We took Walter's father to hospital and he was treated and we bought them beddings too. I was so astonished that it is joy for other people to help when they see you struggling to make ends meet for your family The good thing is that the family is still working hard and the other younger siblings go to school as the family pays fees little by little. Walter has continued to push himself and if God willing, he will be a graduate teacher.



Along the journey

Left, Walter is pictured enjoying his visit with Wendy & Michele at a sponsored student group meeting.

He is also enjoying his gifts of sunglasses and new shirt from Canada!

Right, Walter at University working on a group project!



Congratulations Walter!



We are so proud of your continued hard work and determination. This is a photo of Walter doing his student teaching stage at Mukumu School for Girls.

On behalf of Walter and his family, I want to thank God for how far he has brought us. I thank SFA and his sponsor for ensuring that every year funds are available for Walter. I thank Walter too for being good student. He has never given us problems “

Susan Nanjala

Project Administrator



A Few Words from Walter's Canadian Sponsorship Family

Walter has been part of our family for many years. His photos on our fridge, the letters we have exchanged, the updates from Suitcases for Africa – they have all been part of our lives since the children were young and in preschool, more than a decade. Walter has been a source of inspiration, courage, and love for all of us, and we are so grateful for the opportunity to have him in our lives. We recognize the challenges and obstacles he has had in his life and he has taught us about resiliency and perseverance. Although we have never met, Walter is and always will be part of our family.



A Tragic Update on Walter's Family

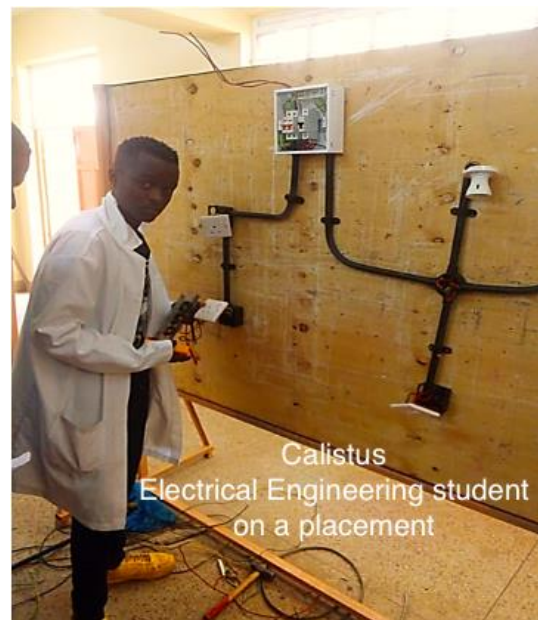
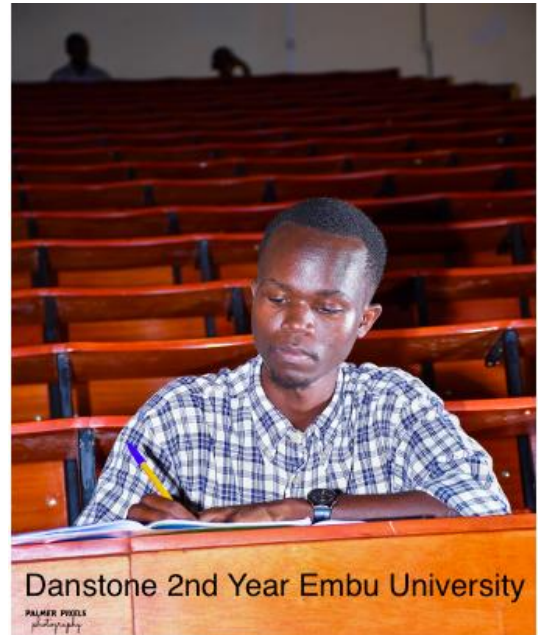
Sadly, as we were preparing this newsletter and celebrating the success of this hardworking family, we received information from Susan which broke our hearts. One day while Walter's father was working in the goldmine there was a terrible accident. There was a wall cave -in and Walter's father was killed before he could be rescued. Sometimes it feels to us like heartbreak stalks the poor and vulnerable and despite all their efforts. Time and again they face hardship and setbacks that are hard to bear. We share in their sorrow and we will find a way to continue to assist this family with emergency funding as they find their way forward. This is the reason we started our emergency fund (where most needed) a few years ago. Susan advised us that Walter has had to put his education on hold to support his family by going back into the goldmine. We are working for a way forward to assist Walter to continue his teaching classes as he is so close to achieving this goal and will be better placed to care for his mother and siblings with a teaching job upon graduation. Further updates will come. Please keep this family in your thoughts and prayers in the difficult months ahead.



Our Sponsorship Program is Celebrating 12 Years!

We are so proud of all of the projects that we have managed over the years with orphans and vulnerable children in Kenya. The project we are particularly fond of is our Educational Support Program. We have partnered with dozens of Canadian sponsors and numerous deserving students. When we first envisioned this program, we set ourselves what we thought was an ambitious goal of having students attain a grade eight education. Fast forward to 2023 and we have ten students from the 2022 graduates with the potential to go on to University, Technical College or Vocational Training Programs. We had nine students already attending post-secondary education making a total of 19 students pursuing higher education. Next year will bring even more students reaching higher for their goals.

Congratulations to all our students, at whatever their level, for their perseverance & dedication to achieving their goals of attaining a life changing education. Mama Susan & Esther have been the main driving force for all of our students over the years. We are grateful for their guidance and expertise with this project. We thought you might enjoy seeing a few more of those hard at work.



We are so proud of you all!

Letters from Kenya to Canadian Families Speak Volumes

015/2023

Dear David,


Hello! How are you? Receive my humble greetings from here in Kenya. I hope you are fine, alive and kicking. As for me, all is good and fine. It is a long time since we talked to each other. Here in Kenya we are fine may be there where you are.

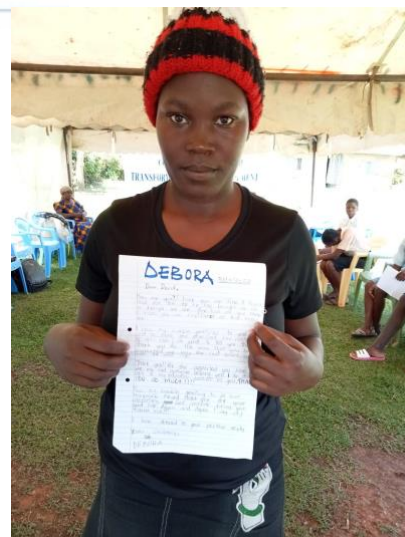
I wrote this letter to Thank you. THANK YOU SO MUCH!!! for the support you give me. Am in college studying DIPLOMA IN AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEERING and am really enjoying it.

Again, I say thank you so much because am continuing with my education. I would like to design new engines that uses less energy. I hope one day we will meet. May God Bless you very much.

For the Suitcases of Africa Organization, let them receive my humble greetings. Greet everyone who know me and tell them thank you and God Bless You.

I look forward to your positive reply.

Yours sincerely,

DEBORA.



6/5/023

Dear : RICHARD AND SHARON

I hope you are fine. Am writting this letter for you to thank you for far you have taken me. I also thank you for effort you have to me because your strongness made me to have also be strong in my studies. You have assisted me as from grade four undil know I have finished up my secondary studies. I have learn something from you that (don't give up) am thanking you for patient you have to me undil know. I strongly pray for you and God help you through your life.

My dear Richard and Sharon am promising you that one day I will help someone the way you have helped me. I wish one day we will meet. But when I finished up my secondary studies I wish to continue for searching for more knowledge. I wanted to join for manure Mechanical engineering because it is included by driving at the sometime. But also I wish the day people will be Recruiting I wanted to go and try if God wishes. Thank you very much and May God continue protecting.

CHRISPINUS

Chrispinus



Thank you SOKO, in Pte. Claire Village

Thank you Michele for dedicating prime space for our Kenyan merchandise to be on display at SOKO in Pointe Claire Village. It was a great opportunity for your many loyal customers to learn about Suitcases for Africa and see the wonderful treasures that we bring back each time we visit our friends & colleagues in Kenya.



Many thanks to Tara for supporting Suitcases for Africa
With with donations from her events, and Craft Markets.

Corpus Christi Parish Annual Christmas Bake Sale & African Market

We would like to thank the parishioners for helping this event to be a great success this year. Thank you to the bakers and the soup makers and the house plant nurturers for all their efforts. We appreciate all who came to partake of the coffee and goodies and to shop with us. Thank you also to the wardens for their donation. Thanks to all of you it was one of our most successful years for this event



The home -made soup salesmen!





Kerry-Anne Kutz Benefit Concert

**“Singing in the Afternoon”
Celebrating Valentine’s Day Songs**



On February 12th. this year we were once again honoured to be entertained by the voice students of Kerry Anne Kutz. What a special evening of song presented by not only the very young but also the young at heart. We appreciate the ongoing support of the congregation of the Lakeshore Unitarian Church who enthusiastically host this evening of entertainment.



Love is the Greatest Part

Michael Woytiuk, the Music Director at Merging Waters United Church, is an accomplished keyboardist and teacher of music. He is much in demand as an accompanist and performer giving many concerts each year in music festivals, schools and senior's residences. Michael teaches a large class of piano students giving him the opportunity to share his knowledge and love of music. Michael was a friend of Ebi Kiminani and her family and is happy to share his composition entitled Love is the Greatest Part.



Love is the Greatest Part

There is wisdom and courage and all kinds of art,
stories of sacrifice that tear at your heart,
A mother's tired smile when her baby arrives, the touch of a
healer saving lives.

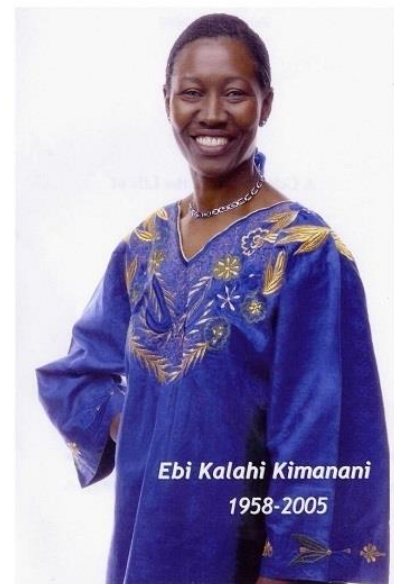
Love is the greatest part of it, shown in acts of care.
Love is the greatest part of it, love in kindness shared!
Love moves everywhere.

There are gard'ners and teachers with patience to spare,
ecologists inventing schemes to clean up the air,
and volunteers always doing more than their share,
food banks and shelters for those in despair.

Love is the greatest part of it, shown in acts of care.
Love is the greatest part of it, love in kindness shared!
Love moves everywhere.

There's the Red Cross and Crescent for disaster relief
Doctors without borders all over seas
And Suitcases for Africa we know so well,
the dedicated people who have won a Nobel!

Love is the greatest part of it shown in acts of care.
Love is the greatest part of it, love in kindness shared!
Love moves everywhere.
Love in acts of love, in acts of love, love, love.



Faith First Program at Corpus Christi



Many thanks to the level 5 class of the Faith First Program at Corpus Christi Parish in Senneville for sending their love to students in the SFA Educational Sponsorship Program.

Every year, for many years now, their teacher Evelyn has invited SFA to visit with the group and share videos, photos and stories of what life is like for their counterparts in Kenya. The children learn

about the similarities they share and the unfamiliar challenges the children in Kenya face. What it is like to go to school on foot for long distances, sometimes before the sun is up. It is common for the children to haul river water to the school for classmates to share if there is no well. It is also common to eat only one meal a day when they return after another long walk home on an empty stomach. To learn in large groups with few to no pencils, supplies or books. We share questions and answers about all things Kenyan.



This time of sharing is then followed by our Canadian children doing a craft or project to send to the Kenyan students. This year they made friendship hearts with kind and supportive messages. We know and have seen how highly appreciative the Kenyan children feel to receive such a personal gift made with love.

SFA Annual Spring Plant Sale, Bake Table & Market

May 20, 2023 dawned as a dreary iffy day that threatened rain showers but we were very thankful that even if the sun did not come out fully it did not rain on our plant sale!

We extend a sincere thank you to Johanne Babb & Libby Monaco who volunteered for the whole day with the plants and the bake table. Special thanks also to super gardener Tanya Vanhartesveldt who has faithfully supplied us with hundreds of beautiful plants every year for over a decade. We have always maintained that we have the greatest volunteer base - we could not carry on our activities without them. The bakers and gardeners really came through again this year. Thank you also goes to Edwina & Joe for the use of their great driveway!





On behalf of all our members we would like to thank you and also to wish you a very happy, relaxing and safe summer.



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).

Thank you for helping Suitcases for Africa throughout this difficult time. During this Pandemic of covid19 you have helped to us maintain our presence in Kenya. It was crucial in the maintenance of our Educational Sponsorship Program supporting orphans and vulnerable children. If you wish to make a donation

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