



SUITCASES for AFRICA

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Fall 2025 Newsletter

Jambo! Hello Everybody! It's been quite a while since we've written. "Where does the time go?" seems to be a common refrain from everyone these days.

Well, let us fill you in on what the team from Suitcases for Africa has been up to this past year.

Wendy and Michele departed for their annual visit to Kenya to see our students and visit some of our projects in April of 2025. While the trip was shorter than some in the past, they managed to get in a lot of quality time with the students. They couldn't believe how these "kids" had grown into confident young adults!



One of the trip highlights was meeting on an individual basis with the first student recipients of the Michael Seaman Scholarship Program. We can't even begin to tell you how wonderful and heartwarming these meetings were! The scholarship students, who are now in college, university or apprenticeship programs, amazed Wendy & Michele with their ability to speak freely as they shared their success stories. The students felt free to share some of the challenges they have faced along the way as well. Mostly what came through was how grateful they all are for the extra support these scholarship funds have been for them.

One young man brought tears to their eyes as he told stories of struggling to make ends meet during his first year at university prior to the scholarship funds. While his school fees were being covered through SFA for the past decade, he was barely able to scrape together enough money for food and shelter. This meant that he

was going to university after not having a proper night's sleep and with a grumbling tummy. Not very conducive to higher learning! Nonetheless he persevered and is now so grateful for the extra support the scholarship has brought to him. He feels secure in his lodging and even has a little stock of food staples in his room. He feels confident that he is now learning at the level he should and will be graduating soon. He hopes to find employment as a science teacher specializing in chemistry and physics! On the side he is also a drummer and plays in a Christian band. What an incredibly amazing young man! We will continue to follow him and we wish him much success!

What these in depth student interviews have shown to our team, is that SFA is absolutely on the right track with this education program. Most of these students have been in our program for 10 years or more. It is incredible to think that SFA's original mandate was only to help them through primary school. Their hard work and tenacity through many difficult situations that occur in everyday life in rural Kenya, has shown that it is possible to lift a child and propel them towards success. They've all put in the hard work and it's now starting to bear fruit. We have students who want to pursue teaching, hotel & hospitality, IT, engineering and automotive engineering to name but a few. Imagine what each of these students can bring to their families and the community around them? Such success stories! We could not be prouder of them all!



Many thanks go out to Mama Susan Nangala and her assistant Sister Esther. Without them, SFA could not do what we do. Asante Sana - we thank them very much for all their hard work with these students. Susan and Esther are there to guide and advise each student in any way possible and they've played a huge role in these success stories. Many of our loyal SFA Education Sponsorship Program participants have been part of this program for many years and their individual students appreciate their long term commitment. We thank each and every family who share in "their" students' success stories!

Michele & Wendy took some time after that first day of interviews to treat our hardworking students to a delicious lunch of chicken & chips with a soda. These were provided by a local hotel restaurant where our trusted driver John's oldest daughter, Mercy, works. It was delicious and they all enjoyed it very much.



While waiting for lunch to arrive, Wendy & Michele taught the kids to play a bit of Scrabble, which they had never seen and they were very intrigued!



They finished the meal off with a true Canadian dessert of S'mores, made on the rental house kitchen's gas stove! They loved it and so did Michele & Wendy! Sharing little moments like this with these students is always special. For the kids it's a fun experience of learning something new and having a well-deserved treat.

A nice way to end our day.



Earlier that day Wendy & Michele met with Mama Susan and Esther before the students arrived. They were able to share with them and John, the viewing of Pope Francis' funeral on television, live from the Vatican.

They were very appreciative to be able to share that experience together.



The next day, meetings with our students continued. This is an annual tradition of having a get together at our dear supporter Elizabeth's home. They pitch a giant tent, the students entertain the SFA visitors with stories and song and then everyone shares a delicious meal cooked by the ladies of that community.

There too Wendy & Michele took the time to sit privately with each student in the program, to hear of their progress and any challenges they may be facing. Along with Mama Susan & Esther they listened until they were sure that all of their concerns had been heard. When possible, the team tries their best to remedy any little problems that they can. Sometimes it's a matter of an exam fee or textbooks that are missing. When possible SFA approves the funds immediately to help the students get over these little hurdles.



The SFA team was happy as always to interact with the kids and hear what they've been up to. In this group they were told of dreams of opening their own businesses, becoming a chef, teaching, engineering and one boy dreams of becoming a priest. With continued support from their sponsors, as well as mentoring from Mama Susan we hope that they can achieve some of these dreams. Congratulations to them for all the hard work and commitment so far.



The caregivers shared in the celebration lunch as always. We thank them for working together as a community to ensure the students have the support they need to thrive. This is an annual tradition that our SFA members look forward to every year probably as much as the students do!

The following day our team headed out to see the last group of students. For the first time they were hosted at the home of one of the sponsored students. She was so very proud to be hosting the Canadian visitors in her

home, as were her parents. It was lovely for the SFA team to get together with these students in their own community.



While some students in this group struggled with issues that made their school performance difficult, overall there was progress and the SFA team was encouraged by what they saw.



Again after spending individual time with all the students, discussing any challenges and then hearing poems and songs specially prepared for the day, the team was treated to a beautiful meal sponsored by SFA. Just before the food was to be served, the skies opened up and torrential rain poured down! The lunch was rapidly moved inside and everyone enjoyed the time to chat some more. The family was very pleased that the team decided to meet at their home and sent them off with a gift of sugarcane as a special thank you.

The next day the team had their wrap up meeting at Mama Susan's home. Esther was called away to a family funeral so they didn't get to see her but it was a productive meeting and they treated Susan and John to a well-deserved meal in a local restaurant as a special thank you.



The best things in life are:

“THE PEOPLE WE LOVE,

THE PLACES WE HAVE BEEN

AND THE MEMORIES WE’VE MEADE ALONG THE WAY”

SFA's Upcoming fundraising events:

Hope to see you at:

Beau Holiday Market – Nov. 22, 2025



CORE Women - Annual craft fair Nov. 29, 2025



AND

THE JOSHUA WELL PROJECT

Present

Annual Craft Fair

NOVEMBER 29, 2025 9:30 am - 4 pm

At Beaconsfield
United Church
202 Woodside
For information call:
514-781-0319



HOME MADE SOUP

BAKED GOODS

WINE RAFFLE

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HEALTH AND CLEAN WATER PROJECTS

WITH

SUITCASES FOR AFRICA

WANT TO RENT A
TABLE? CALL US
NOW!



Corpus Christie parish Bake sale & African market Dec 6-7



Corpus Christi Parish
Christmas Bake Sale & African Market
to benefit:

SUITCASES FOR AFRICA

Sat. Dec. 6th. 5:30pm

Sun. Dec. 7th. 11:00am

Shopping for a cause: items have been brought directly from Kenya to help make your gift shopping a fun & unique one stop shopping event.

Baking: amazing goodies have been lovingly prepared by Corpus Christi parishioners and Suitcases for Africa members.

Frozen Soup: just in time to stock up on delicious frozen soups for the cold winter nights ahead.

Gift Cards: the ideal gift for those who have everything they need and want to support orphans & vulnerable children in Kenya.

Corpus Christi Parish Hall
16 Pacific Ave., Senneville

For information:
Darlene 514 457-3786 or Wendy 514 992-5500



Wendy is with Babu – a trusted and valued friend for many many years!

Lots of wonderful new Kenyan handicrafts were brought back to restock our African Market, just in time for your holiday shopping! Come out to the upcoming fundraisers to have a look.

We'd love your feedback!

SFA is actively recruiting new members to help with our fundraising events. If you or somebody you know would like to join us or has some new fundraising ideas we'd love to hear from you. What sort of fundraising events would you like to attend? Music concerts? Trivia Nights? 50/50 raffles?

Please send us your ideas. We'd love to hear them!

The more money we raise the more vulnerable children in Kenya we can help. If you'd be able to help with some baking or soup making for our upcoming fundraisers please reach out.

Thank you for following SFA - we really appreciate it!