



KEEI NOTES

The Newsletter of Kijana Educational Empowerment Initiative

Empowering Kenyan and American youth through school development projects and cultural exchange.

Summer 2006 / Issue V

Kijana:

"Youth, or Young Person"
(In the Swahili language)



*A person is a person
through other persons.*
-Bantu proverb

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Ebbiba:

Community Joyful With School Improvements

At Ebbiba, community members are excited over a KEEI funded set of classrooms and water well project. The classrooms were completed in March of this year, with painting, chalkboards, ceiling boards and a 'talking wall' by Patrick and Jesse, of Kima Arts Centre. Additionally we are finalizing work on a borehole (well) for the community. The borehole was made possible by an inspirational pledge and generous donations from KEEI members. We have worked in partnership with the local community in Kenya to complete these needed projects. The new building provides a dramatically improved learning environment and also serves as a meeting place for local community leaders. Soon fresh clean water will be flowing—providing the school community with a valuable resource for improved quality of life.



Mission

Kijana Educational Empowerment Initiative, a non-profit organization, promotes and cultivates youth empowerment through educational development, cross-cultural dialogue, and sustainable and environmentally friendly economic growth, among rural Kenyan school communities and American school communities.

KEEI Begins New Program: Tuition Assistance for Bright Students In Need



Robinson, Pauline and Clement

A new initiative is emerging as a result of the Alternative Gift Market program that we began last fall. Spearheaded by Sheryl Kittrell of The Benjamin School, the Gift Market has funded school fees for several students. These students had previously all been unable to attend school due to lack of resources. At present we have paid for 9 Secondary School students to attend high school. All were staying at home, or with relatives, despite their scholarly talent. The students are attending: Mwituha Secondary School, Essaba Secondary School, Ebusakami Secondary School and Ebusiloli Secondary School. Many of them qualified to attend much more competitive schools in the country as a result of their exemplary performances on the Kenyan Certificate of Primary Education Exam. In this newsletter we profile a few of the students: Robinson Ingati, Pauline Tiema, and Clement Ebitelu of Essaba Secondary School (pictured here). Tears of joy flowed from their eyes when told they could attend school. We will continue to update you on their progress and of others in the future.

Essaba Secondary School

Essaba is a mixed secondary day school in western Kenya about 12 km from Ebusiloli. All three students are in Form I (9th grade). The school has 65 form I students. The entire class is divided into two streams (sections). KEEI has assisted the secondary and primary schools over the years providing solar power and science equipment.

Robinson Ingati

Age: 16 years old

Family: 2 sisters. 2 brothers.

Father died 5 years ago. Lives with mother.

Favorite Subjects: mathematics, business education

Difficult Subjects: geography

Favorite Sports: soccer, tennis

Ambitions: Wants to be a doctor

Pauline Tiema

Age: 15 years old

Family: 1 sister and 2 brothers. Both parents deceased. Lives with grandmother.

Favorite Subjects: chemistry, English, government.

Difficult Subjects: geography, agriculture

Favorite Sports: volleyball, netball, basketball

Ambitions: Wants to be a journalist.

Clement Ebitelu

Age: 18 years old

Family: Both parents deceased. 2 sisters (no longer living at home). Lives with 87 year old grandfather

Favorite Subjects: math and chemistry

Difficult Subjects: physics, geography

Favorite Sports: soccer, volleyball, tennis

Ambitions: Interested in aviation

Cookout For Kenya: Food & Fun(ds)!

Thank you to all who attended and assisted at our 3rd Annual Cookout at Ocean Cay Park in Jupiter. It was our most successful yet. We raised over \$10,000 providing the resources to fund our recent efforts, most notably the Mwituha restoration project. Particular appreciation goes out to the leadership of the various clubs at The Benjamin School and our sponsors: The Palm Beach Post, Nutrition S'Mart, Imperial Frame Gallery, Dr. Jack Daubert of Brint-Daubert Custom Vision and Osprey Foundation. We owe much appreciation to Valerie Schuster, Mary Ditaranto and Barbara Nicklaus for the many hours they spent preparing the food. We have scheduled our 4th annual Cookout for December 2nd again at Ocean Cay Park.



“Water Provided, Is Life Given” The Benjamin School Olympic Bracelet Project

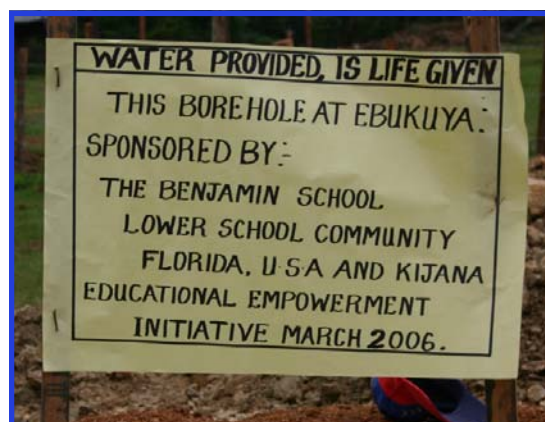
We continue to develop and inaugurate new projects through collaboration and the creative flow of past projects with our inspired partners in Florida and Kenya. At our 3rd annual Cookout we provided beaded bracelets made by Kenyan artists. Mary Ditaranto, a Benjamin teacher, and KEEI Board member suggested that we collaborate with the Benjamin lower school community and the school’s Olympic Games to get bracelets for the students using the proceeds for an initiative in Kenya. With the eagerness of Benjamin’s lower school teachers, and the strong support



of the school administration we were able to make this a reality. We had flag bracelets made for each student representing the country of each class. Families and The Benjamin School donated \$5 for each bracelet. Funds were used to drill a well for the Ebukuya Primary School community. This well will provide water for approximately 1000 students. We express our particular appreciation to the Head of The Benjamin School, Gene Gross and lower school Head, Robyn Quaid, for their enthusiastic support. Since June 26, 2006 water has been flowing. The official opening ceremony of the well will be held this July.



Well construction begins.



Building families and school communities through Educators



Family is the centerpiece of life and schools are the centerpiece of development. At KEEI we are interested in working with our local school communities and community members in sustained ways and through partnerships. We are interested in helping the whole school, the whole student and the whole teacher. One new initiative (which addresses this concept) stems from Jim Cummings’ recent trip to Kenya, where he discovered that a local trained teacher who lives and has a family within brief walking distance of Ebusiloli was teaching at a private school hours away while Ebusiloli remained desperately short of teachers. A solution was found. Since one of the most glaring needs of Ebusiloli is a shortage of teachers, we made it possible for Ebusiloli to hire Mr. Rune Naftali. Ebusiloli gains a great teacher, and Mr. Naftali gets to spend more time at home with his family.



Mwituha: A Community Ascendant

We have great educational news to share: the restoration of Mwituha Secondary School. Mwituha is a Kenyan village several kilometers from Ebusiloli - our flagship school. The community is located in a beautiful setting atop a hill, with a stunning view of Bunyore and much of western Kenya. The community supports a functioning primary school, however they had no secondary school. Community members tried to build and maintain a secondary school on several occasions but failed due to lack of resources. We learned last year that numerous Ebusiloli Secondary students were commuting daily from Mwituha. They needed to wake up around 4:00 am and walk for a few hours to reach school by 8:00 am. Walking very early in the morning was not only exhausting but dangerous. By developing Mwituha, we are providing a school closer to home for many former Ebusiloli students.

KEEI refurbished two completely dilapidated classrooms. These classrooms will provide the basic infrastructure for the new secondary school. We are intent on assisting local community members in building a sustainable school. The school will boost local pride, provide a solid educational resource and reduce overcrowding at Ebusiloli. Local leaders have recruited 40 Form I (9th grade) students creating the inaugural class of the new Mwituha. We have installed new floors, cemented walls, installed windows and doors and planted trees to provide fencing and shade. We painted the rusted roof, installed skylights, bought 40 desks and textbooks for all subjects. Additionally, we installed new toilets and hired local master artists, Patrick and Jesse, of Kima Arts Centre to paint another 'talking wall' - a physical map of Africa. Next year, we anticipate building another set of classrooms or constructing another building which will house either a science laboratory or library. According to Mr. Abel Kutai, our Senior Program Officer in Kenya, this investment is the most significant single contribution to the Bunyore region in as many as 15 years. Mwituha will now serve as a valuable local resource, allowing many more students to be educated.



Refurbishing work for new classrooms.



Photographs in this issue by Chris Oakes, Emma Young, Mary Ditaranto and Jim Cummings



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Your contribution is making a fundamental difference on two continents. Please visit our website for more information and photos of our activities.
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