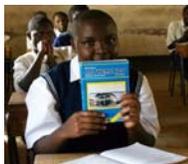


Kijana

"Youth, or Young Person"



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

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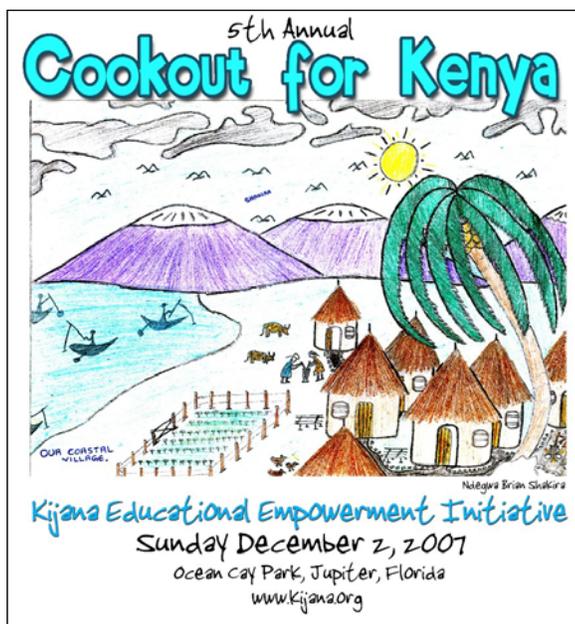
The Newsletter of Kijana Educational Empowerment Initiative

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

Fall 2007/ Issue VIII

5th Annual Cookout for Kenya to feature African dancing and Kenyan musicians

Our annual **Cookout for Kenya** will be held on Sunday December 2nd at Ocean Cay Park in Jupiter (Marcinski Rd./ US1) from 12:00 to 3:00 pm. We will have African style food along with hamburgers and hotdogs. The food will be generously prepared by many volunteers, headed by Valerie Schuster. Many pieces of Kenyan and African art, as well as other items, will be auctioned and raffled off. Additionally, Kenyan handicrafts, sandals, and jewelry will be for sale. *Delou*, a South Florida African dance company will enliven the event with a dancing performance and African drumming lesson from 1:15 to 2:00. Kenyan musicians Julius and Julia Sanna, will also perform. Help make this our best and most festive event yet. Tickets are \$15 for an individual, \$10 for a student and \$35 for a family. Tickets are available through Sheryl Kittrell at the Benjamin Upper School Office (skittrel@thebenjaminschool.org).



Our poster/t-shirt design was created by Brian Shakira, a form I student at Ebusiloli. Brian is 15 years old and currently lives with one of his brothers, Moses and his grandmother. His father died when he was 7 years old. His mother Jane pays for his education and works as a parking attendant in Nairobi. Brian is very grateful for the opportunity to showcase his talent in drawing.

We would like to thank our Cookout for Kenya sponsors for 2007: The Benjamin School, John Pew Racing, Erdenheim Farms, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Pew, The Palm Beach Post, Joseph D. Harnett, News 12 Now, WMBX, WNEW, Imperial Frame Gallery, Tubi Exhaust Systems, Elite Art of Africa, Florida Vision Institute, and Kiwanis Club of the North Palm Beaches.

Look forward to seeing you at Ocean Cay Park on December 2nd.

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.

First Female Graduate of Ebusiloli to attend University!

A few months ago, Rhinah Ondiso made Ebusiloli history as she became the first female alum from the school's 30 year history to attend university. Rhinah is now enrolled at The University of Nairobi- Kikuyu campus and will be attending for the next four years- after being awarded a scholarship by the Kenyan government to finance her education. At Ebusiloli she was one of the star pupils, ultimately serving as "head girl." Rhinah has risen from a destitute family situation to become the first female in a community to attend the university. At the completion of form four (senior year), she took the national exam and scored a B-. H/M Naman Anjichi suggested to KEEI President Jim Cummings that if she could repeat her senior year, she would likely achieve a high enough score to get a scholarship. Jim Cummings agreed to personally sponsor her and she raised her score to a B, which gained her a spot at the university.

Ebusiloli has graduated at least 820 students since its founding in 1977. Of these alums, only 5 men have attended university. The sixth, Kennedy Oywayo, will begin university early in 2008. Rhinah follows Benjamin Oluchina, another one of the few Ebusiloli alums to go to university. In 1998, Jim Cummings was told of Benjamin, a star primary student who was the top of his class but could not go onto high school due to his family suffering from extreme poverty. Jim Cummings found sponsorship for him to attend and complete high school. He ended up achieving the highest score on the National Exam (K. C. S. E.) from the school and earned a scholarship to the university. Earlier this year, after graduating, he returned to Ebusiloli to teach. Students at present are gaining knowledge and inspiration from him.

In Kenya, entrance to a Kenyan college or university is totally dependent upon performance on a single national exam—quite unlike the United States. Students must achieve a certain grade level to qualify and pay their way. A higher threshold earns them a scholarship. None of the students at Ebusiloli have the means to attend under the lower threshold in which they fund their own education. Any Ebusiloli student and virtually all rural Kenyan students must meet the higher threshold. Ironically, if the family has the means—which some Kenyan families do—a significantly lower score will gain their admission to a U.S. University. A student can achieve a C and attend university in America. Typically, they must earn a B- or above to attend university in Kenya. Ebusiloli alums are highly knowledgeable and skilled—each speaks three languages. Yet, virtually none get the opportunity to attend university.

On last year's national exam, one student (Kennedy Oywayo) qualified outright for university. Reflecting the lack of teacher resources for the community, Kennedy, a newly graduated high school student, returned to teach for the year before going to university. KEEI has financed 13 Ebusiloli students who scored near the scholarship qualifying mark to repeat their senior year. Our hope is that many will qualify (like Rhinah Ondiso) for college. We also funded the salary of an additional teacher for the school to increase the teacher/student ratio and better prepare students for the exam. If Ebusiloli can increase the number of students who go onto the university system it will benefit the community in multiple ways. The impact on the community of having several students simultaneously attending Kenyan universities will be monumental in both the short and long-term. In the short term, it will be an inspiration to younger students that they can work hard and succeed—and that opportunities for further education are possible. In the longer term, these future college graduates stand a much greater chance of achieving gainful employment—ultimately increasing their ability to help themselves, their community, and their nation. The educational capital of the community and nation will be increased. A college graduate is a huge source of pride and a powerful resource for the future economic development of a community. We anticipate that several will earn spots and that Ebusiloli will soon have a young team of alums attending Kenyan universities. (See *The Impact On My Life*, back page)



KEEI funds several advancements at Ebusiloli, Mwituha and Essaba.

During 2007, KEEI made several investments in Bunyore area secondary schools. We built the third in our series of classrooms at Mwituha secondary school, which will allow the school to bring in a new class of students in January of 2008. We are in the process of purchasing desks for the classroom so it is ready to go at the beginning of January. In January, Mwituha’s school enrollment will be around 90 to 100 students and we hope to soon embark upon the building of a science lab for the school. With the fundraising energies of Cara Scarola and Patrick Hansen, we were able to build a teacher’s house at Ebusiloli secondary school this past summer. The school had hoped for years to expand upon their 4 teachers houses. However, to do so was a daunting task. With money raised by Ms. Scarola and Mr. Hansen, we were able to build the house at a pace generally unseen in rural Kenya. The house is complete with water, and electricity. Additionally, we funded most of the cost of a new and much needed kitchen for the school. This will allow the cooks to prepare food for students’ lunch in a much more sanitary environment. It also allowed the school to destroy the old mud kitchen which had existed for years. Ebusiloli is now, according to H/M Naman Anjichi, “a modern school.” We also purchased tree seedlings for Mwituha school and recently bought textbooks for Ebusiloli primary school. Earlier in the year, we purchased over 1000 books for two secondary school libraries—Ebusiloli and Essaba. See our most recent newsletter for more details. All three schools are emerging as strong centers of learning in the region.

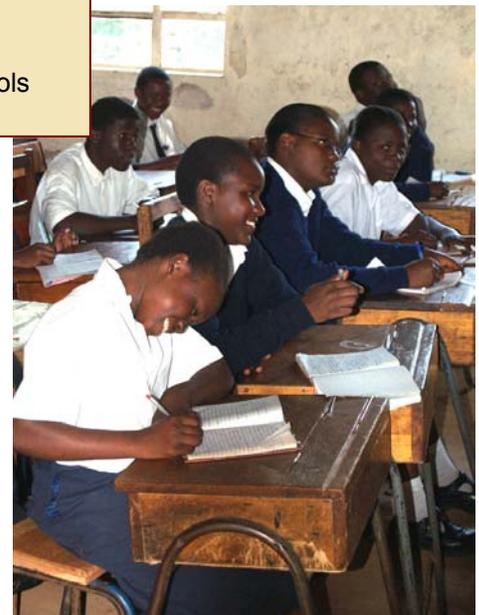


Major 2007 KEEI Funded Projects:

Ebusiloli Secondary School	Mwituha Secondary School
New teacher’s house	New classroom building
New kitchen	1200 trees planted
Field trip to Kisumu	60 student desks
School fees for 13 students	2 teacher desks
500+ library books	
New musical keyboard	

Other schools:

- 500+ library books at Essaba secondary school
- 200+ student books at Ebusiloli primary school
- Tuition fees for 13 orphaned students at various schools



The Impact On My Life by Rhinah Ondiso

"I am from Emuhaya district in Western Kenya. [I] am the 7th born in a family of nine—5 daughters and 4 sons. [I] was brought up by poor parents who were jobless. Life was not easy because even affording basic needs was a big problem. There were times we went without food not to mention the mode of dressing. We lived a life of craving, desire and thirst for the most essential needs in our lives."

"My elder siblings went through schooling through a lot of difficulties. The most serious setback was in 1996 February when I lost my father due to a sudden death. I was in class four and my elder siblings were still in school. Some finished high school, passed exams but could not join tertiary colleges due to lack of finances."

"Throughout my learning I had high ambitions and was very industrious. In the year 2000, I sat for my Kenya certificate of primary education exam (K.C.P.E.) and emerged the best in the school with high marks. It was a big achievement in a school where girls never led. I was to join one of the prestigious and highly performing schools in the district but could not because of financial inability. I was admitted at Ebusiloli Secondary School under the mercies of the principal, Mr. Naman Anjichi for having performed well. It was difficult meeting my basic needs as well as paying my fees for my mum was jobless."

"I am now a student in the famous and prestigious University of Nairobi—taking a degree course in the Bachelor of Education (of Arts)." Mr. Cummings and KEEI really worked hard to see us succeed. The conducive environment of beautiful flowerbeds, re-carpeted floors, painted walls and pavements, among others speaks of their goodness. Moreover, we were provided with academic materials (i.e. textbooks and organized academic tours.)"

"In my community, girl education has never been important. Through his help I am proud of myself, am a source of pride for my family and community at large. My impact to the society is that parents are now taking girls for high school education and girls emulate me. My desire is that one day I will help my siblings and others realize their dreams the same way I was helped. In my life I haven't seen the equivalent of my sponsor. The impact on my life will live to positively affect many and even generations to come. I know I will positively contribute to the society and worldwide. I feel good about myself and my mother is particularly proud of me because I have gained her fame."



Mwituha Secondary School, June 2007.

Ebusiloli Secondary School, June 2007



Kijana Educational Empowerment Initiative

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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.

www.kijana.org email: kijana@kijana.org