

RDL Building Hope Society

January 2015



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has”

Margaret Mead



Four New Building Hope Academy Classrooms—pg 3



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Message from the President

As we begin 2015, I would personally like to take the time to thank you for being a part of the Building Hope Project. Little did we know, in 2010, that the little seed that was planted would grow into such an inspirational story, uniting two communities. It could not have happened without your generous support.

In this edition of our newsletter please read the incredibly exciting updates about the work that has been accomplished by The Building Hope Society this past year.

My personal favourite story of this year is the following. Merry and David, our partners in Kenya, organized a Leadership Camp for all of the stu-

dents who have been sponsored to go to high school.

This was an overnight experience; a first for most of these students.

At the camp the students were able to share their school and life experiences and to dream about the future. Together, without prodding, this group decided that because they have been able to experience the gift of education, they would like to figure out a way to raise money to sponsor one young child from their community to attend the Building Hope Academy. Amazing.

True selfless giving from children who have very little in terms of material things but who seem to understand

generosity in its purest form.

This is the best example of what The Building Hope Society is about. It is about teaching Canadian students that they have the power to change the world. It is about Kenyan children realizing that they too have equal power, now that they have been given a chance themselves.

Thank you for your part in this wonderful project. May 2015 continue to amaze us all .

Ashe Oling

Elizabeth Critchley
President

RDL Building Hope Society

The Building Hope Academy Background

Often in rural Kenya, students are required to walk very long distances, sometimes through dangerous elephant territory. After conducting a survey that revealed that close to 100 young students (aged 5-8) were not attending school due to the long distances required to walk (often 2h each way), it was determined that a new school was needed to meet the needs of these students.

15 acres of land was donated by the family of our partner, Kamishina (David) Ole Nkuito to be used as the site

of the new school. Understanding that land is a precious resource in rural Kenya, this donation speaks to the commitment of our partners in this project.

Building Hope Academy would start as a primary school for the youngest

students and would then grow, classroom by classroom as the children became older. The women from the community cleared the land by hand, and the men erected a fence. In 2013, the doors to the first two classrooms were opened and classes started.



Before



After

The Concept for the Building Hope Academy

The Building Hope Academy is a community school. This is different from Enkare Ngiro School which is a government school. A community school receives no funding from the government of Kenya, however, it has the advantage of controlling its resources, supplies and buildings. In a community school, the community served by the school becomes part of the planning process. This fit well with the RDL Building Hope Society's philosophy of including the community in our decisions regarding projects. In addition, by creating a community school

and by including the community in organizational meetings, there was an opportunity to educate the parents about the value they could add to their children's education, simply by adopting a few practices. These practices included walking their children to and from school, attending meetings at the school and

attending concerts put on by the students. These seemingly small acts were foreign to this demographic at first. However, they willingly adopted them and the parents are now increasingly involved at the school. It would be safe to say that these parents are now the most proud supporters of the school.



Parents gather at BHA on Christmas Day

New Building Hope Academy Classrooms

The first classroom at the Building Hope Academy was opened in May 2013. The second classroom was opened in 2014. Both were immediately filled and the learning of the students was unprecedented. One look inside these classrooms provides a glimpse into the standard that has been set at BHA. Children speak English, sit at tables, learn both by rote and experiential teaching methods, receive nutritious meals, receive health care, have clean drinking water, participate in physical activity, and have the luxury of parental involvement.

During 2014, it was clear that two classrooms would not be enough. Once again, through the generosity of donors, money was given to the Building Hope Society to build two more classrooms! Classrooms #3 and #4. Incredible!

In addition, a teacher's quarters that can house up to six teachers has been completed. This ensures some continuity regarding the teachers who work at BHA. If a teacher has a child, the child is allowed to live with them in the teachers' quarters and attend the school. And thanks to a generous donation the most wonderful treat of all for the teachers has been the recent instalment of a shower with both hot and cold water!

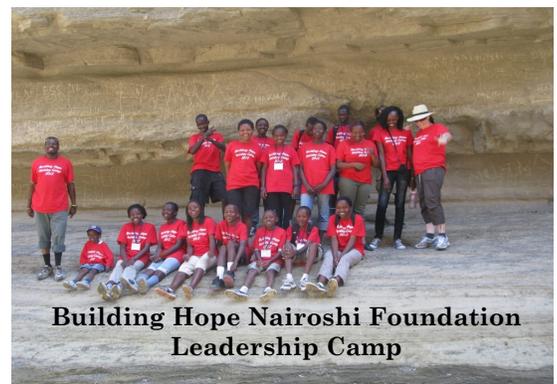


Sponsorship Update

Many of you who had sponsored children, both high school (\$1000 per year) and at BHA (\$400 per year), have continued with your generosity. The worry of money is all too real for these children and they know that without your support, their dream of education will end.

Currently there are more than 50 students receiving sponsorship including 33 high school students.

Thank you for your generous support.



Continued Involvement With Enkare Ngiro School

Enkare Ngiro School was the original school of contact for the Building Hope Society. In 2011 we opened two new classrooms at this school; one for grade 7 and one for grade 8. In addition, the students of Red Deer Lake School raised money to sponsor the top two academic students (one boy and one girl) to go to high school. In rural Kenya very few students get this opportunity. Most families could never afford to send a child to high school. Girls are often married young for a dowry and boys tend to leave school to tend livestock. This small act of generosity, of sponsoring two children, Daniel and Naomi, along with the building of the classrooms, infused a spark of hope in these students that fueled change in Enkare Ngiro School. Building Hope Society has donated supplies for all of the grade 8 students in this school to use as they prepare for their strenuous end of year exams. The results have been staggering. The average grade of the students has moved from slightly under 250 out of 500 to well over 300 out of 500. This highlighted for our organization the powerful ripple effect of small acts of generosity.



Next Steps



The BHS has received donations that will be used toward the following:

- Two more classrooms
- Additional Teachers' quarters
- Additional student washrooms
- A reverse osmosis system for the water well to remove harsh minerals in the water
- Teachers salaries for the 2015 year

In addition to these projects the Building Hope Society is fundraising for:

- A minivan to be used to transport students for whom the distance is still prohibitive
- Supplies to enhance and support Enkare Ngiro School in all classrooms
- Funding to help create professional development opportunities for the teachers
- Funding to publish a childrens book written by the Alumni group that will be used in our schools in both Kenya and Canada

We are well aware that a simple thank you is not enough to recognize the chance you have provided to expand this project and these children's lives. Please know that this thank you comes with heartfelt humility, with incredible joy, with life changing prospects and with endless possibilities. By starting this project we thought that we were teaching others to dream in ways they had never allowed themselves. We too are learning the same lessons. And so, thanks to you we dream on.

Please note that volunteers are needed and are welcome at Building Hope Academy in Kenya.

Please visit our new website for more information.

www.buildinghopesociety.com