

# RDL Building Hope Society

January 2016



*“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



## Message from the President

As 2016 is beginning, it is time to take a look back to 2015 and update you on what has been happening with the RDL Building Hope Society (BHS). Personally, as the Building Hope Society closes out its 6th year of existence, I continue to be grateful to be part of it, inspired to contribute to its continued success and dedicated to maintain the integrity of the original intent of the project.

When the Building Hope Project began in 2010, the mission was simple: through the building of classrooms in Africa, to inspire Canadian children to see that they have the power to change the world, and through education, to inspire other less privileged children to see that they too have the power to change

the world. Using this as an important metric of our success, we are successful, more successful, in fact, than we could ever have imagined. We started out to build a classroom, thinking that if children had a place to learn and grow this would help us with our mission. With the Nairosi Foundation as our partner, here we are, eight classrooms later: two in the public Enkare Ngiro School and six in a new community school, Building Hope Academy. We now know that the bricks and mortar we purchased are not only the foundation for the beautiful buildings we helped construct; they are also the foundation for the new beliefs that children have about themselves, both in Canada and in Kenya.

Equally importantly, they are the foundation for the many relationships that have been built throughout this project. We must have chosen good products to work with; each is withstanding the test of time. In Swahili, the word for thank you is Asante. For thank you very much, it is Asante Sana. To you, for believing in our project and for supporting it with your funding, in a year when the economics in Alberta and Canada have not been easy, neither of these is enough. And so I say to you,

***Kuwashukuru sana  
sana sana sana!!***

Elizabeth Critchley  
President  
RDL Building Hope Society

## A Community Celebrates An Incredible Milestone

In November, 2015, a great celebration was held for Brian Soyiantet. All of the community came out to celebrate the achievement of Brian as he received his Bachelor's Degree! Brian is the only member of his community to have attended university. This is an incredible accomplishment! It has been made possible by the generous sponsorship of the Castiglione Family, who has provided monetary and moral support for Brian throughout his university career. It is yet another testament to what is possible when a student knows that they have someone cheering for them. Congratulations Brian, and thank you to the Castiglione family!

David, Brian and Merry



The Community Celebrates



Brian, his mother, David, Merry and Murani



## Update on Building Hope Academy (BHA)

Building Hope Academy was imagined in 2011, not long after the completion and opening of the two classroom addition to Enkare Ngiro School. Approximately 105 children were found to be not attending public school due to the long, and often dangerous distances to be travelled to get to the public school. Realizing that early education is the foundation for a strong academic student, the dream was conceived to build a school for primary aged children (4-8) that was located in a more easily accessed region. And so, as has been the case with all of the

BHS projects, once a dream is stated out loud, it seems to develop a life of its own. This is the case with BHA. At the time of writing of this newsletter, there are six completed classrooms at Building Hope Academy. The total population of the school is 145. The children are simply thriving in this incredible environment.

### BHA Graduation

In December of this year, the Kindergarten class celebrated their graduation, complete with caps and gowns. As registration for the 2016 year opened, hopeful parents brought their students from miles and miles away in hopes that they could be registered. The success of this school is becoming legendary.



# BHA - A Year in Pictures



Baby Class Graduation 2015

←

BHA—  
6 Finished Classrooms

→



A Community Celebrates a Good Year

←

Morning at BHA

→



Modern Learning

←

Modern Latrines!



When looking at these photos, it is so easy to just imagine that this is the way of life for all children in this region of Kenya. In fact, until the establishment of the BHS in 2010, it was the life of none of these children. Nor was it a life that they could even hope to have. It is only through the most generous monetary donations of our sponsors and the generous time donations of volunteers, that this story has become one of such inspiration and hope. Thank you for your part in this story.

## Red Deer Lake Students Encourage Ewaso Ngiro Students

Who would have ever believed that just a few short years after BHS was established that we would be celebrating milestones that would have been unheard of in this community only five years ago.

Part of the work that the BHS does is to provide sponsorship to students to attend high school, after they have completed their 8th grade of school.

The students of Red Deer Lake School began this effort immediately upon the completion of the two classroom addition. It came to the attention of the students at Red Deer Lake School, that for most students at Enkare Ngiro School, the completion of Grade 8 would also mark the completion of

their schooling. There is no local high school, and most families cannot afford to send their children to a 'sleep away' school. This sounded so unbelievable to Canadian students, who often take education for granted, that they decided to take matters into their own hands and raise the money to send one girl and one boy, from Ewaso Ngiro School to high school. The selection process would be simple: at the end of Form 8 (grade 8) students are required to write a government exam that counts for 100% of their mark. Students in each school are ranked based on the result of this exam. The students at Red Deer Lake School promised to send the boy

and girl who had the top marks on this exam, to high school.

Just realizing that they were being supported in their studies by other students half a world away, the students at Ewaso Ngiro, approached their end of year exams with an enthusiasm not previously seen.

Below, you will find the results of the end of year test scores for Enkare Ngiro School for the past five years. Note that 2011 was the first year that the offer was made for sponsorship for two students to go to high school starting in 2012.

### Final Exam Results

2010: 209/500

2011: 219/500

2012: 240/500

2013: 259/500

2014: 304/500

2015: 328/500

*There has been a 23.8% increase in the overall mean mark for tall students at Enkare Ngiro...*

There has been a 23.88% increase in the overall mean mark for all students at Enkare Ngiro School. This improvement is unbelievable and adds strength to our theory that the students here in Canada do have the ability to impact other students by encouragement and belief in them.



***Sponsored students using BHA as a place to study during semester break.***

## Meet some Recent Graduates!

On this page you will meet some of the sponsored students who have graduated in 2015.



Naomi Otuni



Daniel Njapit

Naomi and Daniel were the first students from Enkare Ngiro School to receive sponsorship based on their top marks. Daniel and Naomi were sponsored by RDL School. They both graduated from Secondary School in December, 2015. Naomi and Daniel are both planning to attend University in 2017. Daniel and Naomi have become trusted role models for the other sponsored students, modeling hard work and encouraging the others to do their best to make their community proud.



Mary Kilerai



Anne Wangui

Mary and Anne were fortunate enough to be sponsored by (CCASA/Danielle Aubry) for their secondary schooling. Anne is an orphan living with her aunt and her family. Secondary schooling would have been impossible for Anne due to their financial situation. Now she is looking forward to a bright future. Her dream is to pursue her love of IT at University. Mary was rescued from early marriage by The Nairoshi Foundation. Her fate was to be married off to a much older man with no hope of any further education. Mary's dream is to proceed to college and forge a career in healthcare.



Hellen and Grace Kerempe

Hellen & Grace graduated from one of the best girls schools in Kenya and are hoping to pursue further studies in Journalism and Law. They have been sponsored and supported through their 4 years of secondary school by Carol Howes, Wendy Dunne & Sheila Alan. The girls lost their mother during this time, however their father is very dedicated to both family and education and has ensured that they remain positive and focussed.

Is sponsorship working? Please enjoy this excerpt from a letter from a sponsored student named Jazzylyn written at the end of grade 8:

*I take my (school) results to my father who was so willing to take me to high school. But unfortunate, due to his financial problem, he did not make to get money for my school fees. He decided to organize for my marriage so that he will raised money from the dowry so that to pay fees for my brother who is also in high school and also for his medication.*

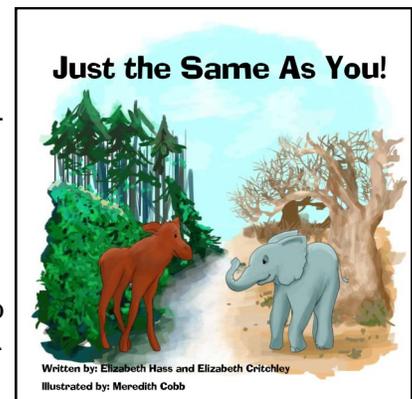
*I heard the plan from my mother and I decided to runaway from home. I went to the chiefs camp and narrate my story to him. He was sympathized to my situation and allow me to spend in his home for one week. I am so thankful for your concern. I hereby promise that I will work hard to achieve the best grade in my studies and also achieve my future career of being an accountant. Jazzylyn is currently unmarried and thriving in grade 11.*

## The Alumni Project

The Alumni group is made up of former students of RDL School, who decided that they wanted to continue to be a part of the Building Hope Project. In this past year they have met to plan how they can best contribute to the work being done by the students at Red Deer Lake School and the BHS. Over this year, they have committed to writing letters to the students from Enkare Ngiro School who have moved on to high school through the sponsorship program. Throughout this process, they are exposed to an inside look at some of the details of these students lives, and they have formed connections with these students.

In addition to letter writing, these students have created and made presentations to a variety of organizations, in the hopes of educating others on the work that is continuing to be done in the BHS.

This group also undertook the task of writing a children's book that will be used both in schools in Canada and in our schools in Kenya. The idea of the book is to find links between the communities, to use profit from the sale of the book to purchase needed supplies for the students in Kenya, and, most importantly, to donate one book to each student in both Enkare Ngiro School and in Building Hope Academy. For many students, this will be the first book they have ever owned. To purchase a book to donate to one of the schools, or to buy one for yourself, please visit the website. [www.buildinghopesociety.com](http://www.buildinghopesociety.com)



Finally, and perhaps most exciting, some members of this group are planning a trip to Kenya in the summer of 2016, led by Rick Castiglione. Paying for the trip by themselves, they will volunteer in the schools and facilitate a Leadership Camp for the high school students who are sponsored through our program.



## Next Steps



Thanks to your support, the BHS will fund the following programs this year:

- New desks for Enkare Ngiro School
- Materials for the new 2nd grade class at BHA
- Exam packages for 8th grade students at Enkare Ngiro School
- Finish the water purification system
- Complete the building of the kitchen/dining room at BHS
- Continue sponsorship of students currently attending High School.

***Thank you for your continued generous support!***

Please visit our website for more information.  
[www.buildinghopesociety.com](http://www.buildinghopesociety.com)