

# RDL Building Hope Society

January 2017



*“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 2017 is beginning, it is time to take a look back to 2016 and update you on what has been happening with the RDL Building Hope Society (BHS). As always, I continue to be amazed at all that the Building Hope Society has been able to accomplish since the beginning of this project in 2010.

When the Building Hope Project began in 2010, the mission was simple: Through the building of classrooms in Africa, to inspire Canadian children to understand 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.

Our mission continues to be fulfilled as we grow and continue to under-

stand the needs of our partners on the ground in Kenya, in this project.

If you have followed our journey from the start, you will know that our original intention was to add two classrooms to an existing, run down school in Ewaso Ngiro, Kenya. Seven years later, we not only did that, we opened a brand new facility, Building Hope Academy, that currently has 6 classrooms, a teachers quarters, bathrooms, and an eating area for the children. On top of that, our organization, through generous donations, sponsors 35 students to attend high school. This year, the first two students ever sponsored by our organization, have completed high school with excellent

results and have begun the next phase of their education at university. We could never have imagined this seven years ago. We never imagined how our lives would become connected to this small community in western Kenya. We never could have imagined that truly, ‘a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens’ could change the world of at least a few very special people. Once again, thank you. Thank you for continuing to support our project with your funding, for your trust in us, and for continuing to make this world a better place. Asante Sana! Thank you!



Elizabeth Critchley  
President  
RDL Building Hope Society



## An Incredible Milestone

In December 2011, the grade eight students at Enkare Ngiro School, sat in their brand new classrooms, built through funds of the Building Hope Society. These students were there to write their final exams. The exams are government prepared and count as 100% of the grade of these students. High School acceptance is based on these results and there is huge pressure on the students. The truth for most of these students is that even if they had good results, their parents would not have the means or desire to send them to high school. In Kenya, all high schools are boarding schools, and tuition is expensive. In addition, the boys in this community are needed to work with the herds of animals, and the girls are of an age to be sold for marriage.

The students at Red Deer Lake School in Calgary, AB, where the Building Hope Project began, decided that they would raise money to send the top boy and top girl from Enkare Ngiro School, in Ewaso Ngiro, to high school. To do this they needed to raise \$1000 US for each student. Their plan was to sell lollipops to the students at Red Deer Lake School and to use the proceeds to sponsor the top two students based on the results of the final exams. When the exam results were in, the top students were revealed to be Daniel Njapit and Naomi Otuni.



Daniel and Naomi were each accepted to a well reputed high school and each of them began their four year program in January 2012. The students of Red Deer Lake School continued to sell lollipops and continued to sponsor them for their full high school career. In addition:

1. The Red Deer Lake School students continued selling lollipops and added two sponsored students each year (top boy and top girl), for a total of eight students (meaning \$8000/year) in all.
2. Naomi and Daniel were each accepted to a University this past year and have begun their studies. Naomi is studying to become a teacher and Daniel is studying biotechnology. Both wish to return to their little community to work when they have completed their studies.

Red Deer Lake School is no longer sponsoring Daniel and Naomi. However, a family from the Red Deer Lake School community has chosen to sponsor Naomi. Daniel's family is working hard to support him.

This alone would be a perfect ending to a great tale, but the story gets better and better. This past summer, two former students from Red Deer Lake School who are now part of the Building Hope Society Alumni, Carmen and Chloe, travelled to Kenya, with their mother Barb, to volunteer at Building Hope Academy and at Enkare Ngiro School. They met and became good friends with Naomi and Daniel. Together they offered Leadership Camps for the other sponsored students and for the students at Enkare Ngiro School. The following pages are filled with stories from that trip.

## Carmen, Chloe & Barb's Amazing Kenyan Adventure!



We started our trip off with getting to run a leadership camp for the form 8 Enkare Nigro students as well as the Form (grade) 8 West Ways students. During the camp we split the students into teams and ran an amazing race competition where they had to go out of their comfort zone to try new activities such as a three legged race and wheel barrow races. We also challenged the students to think about ways that they could help their community and to write these ideas down. After the amazing race we were able to share with the students strategies to help them be more successful in school. The most surprising strategy that they had never been encouraged to do was to ask questions in class when they didn't understand a concept. We were also able to teach the students how to make SMART goals to help them achieve their dreams for the future. Finally we were able to do an activity called "pat on the back" where the students tape a piece of paper on their back and then they all write kind and meaningful messages to one another on the paper. The students all had so much fun and didn't want to go home after the day was over.

After our time with the Form 8 students we were able to spend time at Building Hope Academy. Here we were able to do activities with each of the classes. In baby class we taught them a new song called If You Chance to Meet a Frown. We also taught them what the word upside-down meant so when they sang it in the song they understood the meaning of the song. The children were all so enthusiastic and we loved getting to spend time with them. In middle and top class we taught them the same song but we also drew happy faces, talked about what made the students happy, and then posted their pictures on the wall. In class 1 and 2 instead of teaching them the song we read them a book about called "It's Okay To Be Different." After we read them the book, we had the children write sentences about differences that it is okay to have, and then draw a picture of what they wrote about. The students did a great job writing their sentences but found it challenging to draw a picture that represented what they wrote about.



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## Carmen, Chloe & Barb's Amazing Kenyan Adventure! (con't)

During the evenings, after school we were able to travel to teacher James' home and meet his family. It was about a forty-minute walk one way, which is relatively short considering that some of the children walk for two hours to get to school. We had the opportunity to visit Brian's home and celebrate his graduation from university.

One of our favourite parts of our trip was having the opportunity to meet all of the sponsored high school students. They were all so kind and grateful for their opportunity to go to high school. We were able to spend lots of time with Daniel and Naomi and we became very close with them. Daniel expressed thanks to everyone in Canada for the role that they have had in shaping his life and helping him achieve his goals. Naomi shared that her opportunity to go to high school and now university has increased her self-esteem and sense of self worth. She was so grateful to have the opportunity to further her education instead of having to get married as soon as she finished the eighth grade.



On our last day in Kenya we were able to meet the parents of all the children during the end of term celebration. It was a great way to end our time in the community. It was hard to say goodbye to all of our friends but we continue to keep in touch. Our time in Kenya was life changing. We will never forget the incredible experiences and people that we were fortunate enough to meet.



# Building Hope Academy

One of the biggest challenges in working with a public school, such as Enkare Ngiro School, is that because it is a public school, run by the government, we have little say over how the school operates. For that reason, we continue to support Enkare Ngiro School to the best of our ability. We choose to put our money into things that directly impact the students, like exam packs for all grade 8 students, supplies and books, food for students as they are studying, and sponsorship to high school. We continue to consider ways that we can raise money for, and be a good support to this severely underfunded school.

At the same time, we continue to be in partnership with Building Hope Academy. This school is a community school, and as such, is under control of the local community. It would be an understatement to say that the members of this community are proud of this school.

Building Hope Academy continues to grow and thrive thanks to donations to Building Hope Society. To date, 8 classrooms have been built, funding is close to being secured for a kitchen/dining room structure, a teachers quarters is operating and children have access to healthy meals and excellent instruction.

This school is known for its success for hundreds of miles around. It now hosts 145 students and has programming in place from preschool (baby class) to form 3 (grade 3). Students receive an excellent education in this facility, parents are engaged, teachers are motivated and results are high.





## Next Steps



### Where will your donation dollars go this year?

The BHS has set a goal to fund the following programs in 2017:

- Build the Kitchen /Dining room structure at BHA
- Build a library.
- Stock the library at BHA with books.
- Continue to sponsor the top two grade 8 students to go to high school.
- Continue to sponsor the previous top students from Enkare Ngiro School who are currently in high school.
- Sponsor students at both Enkare Ngiro School (for high school) and at BHA, as sponsors come forward.
- Continue to support the work of teachers at both schools.
- Continue to write letters to the sponsored students.
- Provide exam packages for students at Enkare Ngiro School.
- Purchase a structured reading program for the students at BHA.



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