

November 2012

Dear Friends of Kenya Help,

As I sit down to write our annual newsletter, I can't help but feel awe at all that has happened since I first returned from Kenya in September 2005. With the support of our wonderful and generous donors, we have built beautiful St Francis Xavier Secondary School for Girls (SFG), sent 11 students to university, of which 2 have now successfully completed the 4 years (the rest are in process). Two classes have now graduated, all member of which passed the national exam, and our third class (below) is presently sitting for its exam.



More than 100 high school students have scholarships, including those from the *Mji Wa Neema* children's home. KH has refurbished the home and contributes to its daily functioning. We have supported the social work of Jecinta Gakahu-getting poor children into elementary school (buying uniforms, paying fees etc), helping hungry families eat, relocating some destitute grandmothers to plots of land so they can feed their grandchildren. We have accepted donations to Life Bloom to help that organization provide support for women who have resorted to the extreme of sex work to feed their children. With the generous help of St. Denis Catholic Church in Menlo Park we have helped with the refurbishment of Archbishop Ndingi Boys High School, an ambitious, long-term project. Not bad for 8 years!



2012 saw some big changes, beginning with the arrival of **new principal, Mrs. Ruth Kahiga**, who teaches English. I had the privilege of working with her this past summer and am delighted with the way she is directing the school, interacting with the staff and inspiring the students. She is truly a mother to them all. This is particularly important in this school where more than half our students are orphans or have single-parents.

In June of 2012, the district (like a state) held its annual prize-giving day honoring excellent schools. St Francis received a number of

academic awards, but the most coveted trophy earned was **The Most Child-Friendly School**. In the picture, Principal Kahiga is shown presenting trophies to SFG Board (left-most in picture is Child-Friendly cup).

Our beloved Fr. Kiriti has been transferred to a very remote, rural area in northern Kenya. This has been a major loss, because he was at the school virtually every day during those building years, directing, inspecting and “cracking the whip”.

Fortunately we have not lost his valuable input completely. He is the new chairman of the SFG Board of Governors, so we still feel this vital connection to his energy and wisdom. He is also a member of the board of Empower the World (ETW), a Kenyan non-profit, which receives KH wire transfers. We requested establishment of ETW to safeguard our donated funds. This had not been a problem, but with Fr. Kiriti’s move, we foresaw possibilities and moved to ensure that our donations are allocated as requested.

Although the building program is almost complete, we did add some nice touches. SFG now bakes all its own bread, plus all the bread for Archbishop Ndingi and is getting inquiries from other schools, because the bread is so delicious and so nutritious. KH hopes to buy a flour grinder for SFG so that the process begins with grinding fresh flour for each baking, thus maximizing the nutritional value and minimizing the cost.



SFG continues to become more green. You may recall that it is off the power grid, with solar and wind installations. I had thought I would be asking for help to drill a bore hole (well) so it would also be water independent, but just a few weeks ago, an angel appeared, offering to fund it. The miracles continue! When the water system is completed, irrigation of the pasture will eliminate the need to purchase silage for the 3 cows during the dry season. Newly planted fruit trees will also appreciate regular watering.

(Left: Esther, our matron is adding more water to the dough-mixing machine, purchased by Kenya Help.)

Another possible project is a fishpond so the girls can enjoy the wonderful talapia found in Kenyan lakes and is easy to grow. If another plot of land becomes available, the pond can be built and chickens raised. The girls actively participate in the food production, from cleaning out the barn to milking the cows, watering the fruit trees, helping to bake the bread and maintain the grounds. All this and they excel in their studies too!

We are delighted to welcome a new member of the SFG community, a son born in October to deputy principal Peter Murigi and his wife, Peris. I was fortunate enough to attend their wedding several summers ago (a real treat) and to stay in their home several nights so I could spend evenings helping the Form 4’s math preparation for the KCSE.

We are sad that Fr. Kiriti is unable to visit us this year, but he promises to come in 2013. I will be speaking Sunday, December 16, at Our Lady of the Rosary Hall about Fr Kiriti’s work in his new parish of Kosetei, as well as showing pictures. Please see insert for details, as well as a list of opportunities to see and donate for items I have brought back from Kenya.

And (fanfare!) we are pleased to announce the launching of our new website at the end of November.

We thank you for your continued support and hope you will continue to help with our many projects, and in particular, to send more and more needy students to high school and to university.

With gratitude,

Margo McAuliffe and the Kenya Help Board members
Craig Noke (KH Board President), Kay Williams, Judy Murphy, Debbie Shaver, Betsy Rosenthal, Deepa Shiva