

Nourishing Minds

A Quarterly Newsletter published by The Jifunze Project

158 Packard Road
Stow, MA 01775
U.S.A.
Tel: 1.978.897.8767

Box 67
Kibaya – Kiteto – Manyara
Tanzania
Tel: 255.27.255.5318/9

Website: www.jifunze.org Email: jifunze@jifunze.org

©2003 The Jifunze Project
January 2003

Volume 1 Issue 1



Our Mission:

The Jifunze Project works alongside individuals living in under-served parts of rural Tanzania to help them create innovative, empowering and sustainable educational opportunities that will expand their possibilities for livelihood and enrich their lives.

Construction Completed!

We have now, *officially*, completed construction of the first phase of our education centre! Last week we put our last panes of glass in the windows and just yesterday we screwed on the last door. Our local electrician has spent the past few months wiring the entire facility and it looks great! This news would not have been so exciting if we had simply hired an external contractor and s/he had completed the building and then handed us a set of keys. However, we were determined to utilize local constructors, carpenters, welders, glass cutters, and electricians. We slowly put the building together as a team, piece by piece. The entire community has been building with us, and it is an exciting time for all in Kiteto who have witnessed just how far we have come in such a relatively short period of time. It was just two years ago that Carrie returned to Kiteto and began talking with different community members about this dream. We now have a beautiful building which will house and nurture our developing dreams for many years to come. ☺

Maktaba Schmaktaba Library Schlibrary



Over the past few months we have made an effort to consolidate various unofficial titles for our project. When we initiated the education resource centre last year, we translated it into Swahili with the word "maktaba" (library), in order to help people in town relate it to something they may have encountered in their lives and give them a bit of an idea of what we

were embarking on. Then, out of habit, we began translating the Swahili back into English, calling the centre a library. However, "library" does not accurately reflect the breadth and scope of what we are undertaking and therefore we have returned to calling our project the Kiteto District Community Education Resource Centre (CERC), or "Kituo cha Elimu," in Swahili. Now that people have started to understand what it is that the centre will be doing, it is easier to give it an unfamiliar title...because we are doing things they have only ever dreamed of.

Budding Garden

As the snows turn to rain here in Massachusetts, the rains are also falling in Kiteto, feeding our ever-developing educational garden. We proudly brought in the earliest harvest of tomatoes ever known in Kiteto District last year as a result of our ability to water the garden through the dry season. We sell our produce to local women in the community at bulk prices, and then they are able to re-sell them at the market and make a profit. We are thrilled with this arrangement as it allows us each to gather profit, while continuing to educate the community about the diversity of crops that can thrive in our area.

Grand Opening!

The teachers are now on break (as they have not had vacation since we began construction last June), but when they return next week we will enter into full-time preparation to open the centre. ☺ We are planning to have our official opening in May of 2003 and would be thrilled and delighted if you wanted to join! We plan to spend the first half of next year organizing the books (stamping them, initiating a computer based inventory, putting them on the shelves, etc), distributing membership cards, educating children on how to use the centre, completing procurement of furnishings, planning educational seminars and programs, and piloting small study halls so that kids can begin utilizing our resources. During this time the teachers will also undergo a more thorough computer training course, as well as a course in library management. The Management Team will use this time to complete our Memorandum of Understanding which details the partnership between the Jifunze Project, the Kiteto District Council, and the local Steering Committee regarding their running of the centre. This document will outline the current partnership, as well as our goals for the partnership in the future. We aim to phase out the Jifunze Project over the next ten years as we build the capacity of Elimu ni Ufunguo (Education is the Key), a local NGO which we helped to initiate in order to sustain the CERC in the future.

CERC Team

As we complete construction of Phase One and prepare for centre operation, our staff is growing in order to provide the services we want at the CERC! All of our Tanzanian staff continues to have their salaries paid by the local Kiteto District Council or the Ministry of Education; it is a huge display of local and national government support that they are now covering salaries for twelve individuals who are working solely on the CERC project! This past December the District Commissioner and our Member of Parliament came to the site for a visit. The teachers toured them around, explaining their plans for each of their individual rooms within the centre and the visitors were extremely impressed!

Over the past month we have welcomed seven new members to our team: Ahmed Athmani and Mohamed Kimosa (Guards), Asha Ibrahim (Administrative Assistant) and Fatuma Kamota (Caretaker) have expanded our support staff, while we have welcomed two new primary school teachers to our implementation staff: Mr. Masumbuko (Adult Education Program Coordinator), and Mr. Mgonza (Computer and Multi-Media Resources Coordinator). Lastly, Mr. Mwemezi, a secondary school teacher, has been transferred to the centre as a result of a local arrangement between the CERC and Kiteto Secondary School. We have already been impressed with the wealth of new knowledge and experiences these individuals have brought to our work!

Finances and Development

While things have been developing wonderfully in Kiteo over the past few months under the guidance of our Jifunze and CERC staff, we have also been blessed with the generosity of many individuals and foundations from outside of our small district! This fall we received a \$5,000 renewal grant from The Lifebridge Foundation, and this past December we received a \$7,035 grant from The Fieldstone Foundation, a \$7,000 grant from the UN's 1% for Development Fund, a \$6,000 grant from the Global Fund for Children, and renewal support of \$5,000 from Paul Newman and the Newman's Own Foundation. We would like to extend our gratitude to these extremely generous individuals and foundations. Some of this new funding will be used to support general program costs (while we aim to keep them extremely low, they do exist), while others will be used to develop our Early Childhood Education Centre. The ECEC will be a state of the art learning facility for pre-school age children and will be designed by Ms. Christina Gabriel, CERC co-founder and current staff member, using a combination of Montessori and indigenous teaching philosophies. The ECEC will include an indoor classroom with interactive learning materials as well as an outdoor play ground. We will keep you updated on our progress!

Volunteer and Internship Program

Our work is financially supported by a wide range of individuals: from children at the local elementary school to fascinating foundations, from governmental development agencies to extremely generous individuals abroad. In addition, we are blessed with, and have long relied upon, the support and hard work of numerous volunteers. Both Carrie Oelberger, our Director, and Hana Brown, our Assistant Director, have been working with only living stipends since the beginning of their involvement with the project. However, there are many other individuals who come to work with us for a limited amount of time to offer their experience and expertise to our project.

We hosted our first intern, Ms. Gwenn Rosenberg from Haverford College, in the summer of 2001. Tiaré Cross came to Tanzania to help us from February through July 2002, teaching basic computer classes to CERC staff and offering general assistance with program administration. We are now pleased to be hosting two new volunteers, both of whom have committed to staying with us for a full year. Greg Callahan, a graduate of the University of Michigan ('02), serves as our resident experiential educator, working with secondary school students and taking them on field trips to surrounding areas, immersing them in the world of Biology which initially drew him to spend 6 months in Tanzania studying spiders in 2001. Paulo Ferreira also joined us this October as our first volunteer from outside of the United States, hailing from the warm coast of Portugal. Mr. Ferreira has been working in computer programming for over 15 years and is assisting us with the maintenance of our computer resources, as well as offering continued computer training for the CERC teachers. Both of our current volunteers, in addition to their plethora of other skills, are extremely talented artists. Greg and Paulo have teamed up to design and paint the inside and outside walls of the CERC, exciting students with ten foot high plant cells, a detailed computer motherboard, various animal skeletons, a ten by thirty foot map of the world, and many other delights! Once they finish up with the drawings we will certainly send you all pictures!

The Ever Developing Development Organization: Jifunze

As our project and dreams continue to grow, so do the number of folks we need to help us nurture them! Carrie Oelberger, our founder, slowly divides up her job, bit by bit, and hands parts of it away to individuals who are extremely qualified to take them. ☺ Last year Carrie was working as Director with Hana Brown as her Assistant Director. When Ms. Brown transitioned back to the United States this September, we realized the need to re-evaluate our staffing needs. Although we have

done an incredible job with full-time volunteers for the past few years, it has become nearly impossible to find qualified, self-funded individuals who can commit to a minimum two year contract, something we are finding increasingly necessary for the continuity of work with our stakeholders within Tanzania. Our current plan is to employ three full time Jifunze staff members: an internationally based Executive Director, a Tanzania based Country Director and a Tanzania based Programs Coordinator. We are currently seeking funding for living stipends and benefits for these positions for the upcoming year.

Executive Director & Country Director: The work that Carrie and Hana shared last year has been divided in a more practical manner between an internationally based Executive Director and a Tanzania based Country Director. As the Jifunze Project is involved in the management of the CERC, we find it extremely important that we have staff members living and working within the community on a full-time basis. It has also become apparent that continuing to network and do fundraising from within a small town in Tanzania without internet access is extremely challenging. Therefore, we have concentrated the duties of the Country Director to focusing on local capacity building, local networking, fundraising within Tanzania and government relations. The Executive Director will be in charge of international fundraising, report writing, documentation, and overall administration of the project.

Programs Coordinator: As we now move into CERC operation, we recognize the importance of having a Jifunze staff member who will support, guide, train, and work with our CERC staff so that the programs remains consistent with our mission and goals and the staff have the skills they need as they transition from classroom teaching to running the CERC. To reach this end we have established the position of a Programs Coordinator, who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation and running of our CERC project, specifically designing and implementing programs which increase the capacity of the CERC staff and partners to run an innovative rural community education centre.

As you may know Tiaré Cross, our resident Hawaiian, returned from her 6 month volunteer contract with Jifunze and accepted a one year contract as Programs Coordinator starting this past September. Carrie has now moved into the position of Executive Director, and we are currently in the middle of a search for the position of Country Director (with Tiaré holding down both positions until it is filled!). Hana is continuing to volunteer from the States and assist us as we search for, screen, and select qualified individuals for this position. Carrie plans to spend a good deal of time in 2003 performing her duties as Executive Director, as well as working with the new Country Director. In addition, Carrie is looking forward to doing some writing about the project over the course of next year in order to document the unique process through which we have gone about development, and the extremely successful results! We grow and adapt in order to respond to the project's needs and thank you for your support as we continue to develop! ☺

Note from the Executive Director:

We at Jifunze would like to thank you very much for your continued interest and support of our work. Please continue to stay updated by checking out our website: www.jifunze.org. We would like to wish all of you a healthy, joyful, and peace-filled New Year.

Warmly,

J. Carrie Oelberger