

# 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](http://www.jifunze.org) Email: [jifunze@jifunze.org](mailto:jifunze@jifunze.org)

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## 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.*

## Community Gears up for Centre Opening

The Kiteto community is anxiously, but not idly, awaiting the opening of the CERC. Led by Centre teachers and the Steering Committee, the community is busy constructing a compost bin, collecting local medicinal plants for the educational garden, and sewing covers for the cushioned reading areas. Everyone is pitching in to make the Centre ready for the public. Kaloleni and Kibaya Primary Schools have collected flowers that have been planted outside the building, and a local carpenters group has donated a suggestion box for the CERC.



"We are so thankful that the donors have helped us with construction, furniture and education resources, but it is also important that the community contributes in whatever ways it can."  
-- community volunteer

*Kibaya Primary School students mixing dirt and manure for use in planting at the Educational Garden at the CERC.*

## Books, Books, Books

At long last, the books that journeyed from the North Coast of America to the middle of Tanzania have made their way onto the shelves at the CERC. The books are currently being labeled with their Dewey Decimal numbers and will then be entered into the computer database. The teachers modified the Dewey Decimal System to make it user-friendly for the community and created a bilingual English/Swahili listing. The Children's room is being color coded by Sharifa Mjema so that the students can easily identify the categories. Tiaré Cross, Programs Coordinator, notes, "While our stock of American math and science books is ample - we are still in need of fictional literature, Primary School textbooks, African History, African Language, and, most of all, books in Swahili."



*Two Student Council volunteers from Nashoba Regional High School (Bolton, MA, USA), helping to shrink wrap boxes of books, collected across the States, and preparing them for shipment by sea to Tanzania. Carrie Oelberger is an alumnus from NRHS and was an active member of the Student Council.*  
(November 2001, Jifunze Office, Stow, MA)

## Biology Taken to New Heights

The entire Form 4 class at Kiteto Secondary School, led by Mwemezi Rashidi (CERC teacher) and Greg Callahan (JP Volunteer), climbed to the top of the highest mountain in Kiteto District on February 22<sup>nd</sup> to immerse themselves in the flora and fauna that they have been studying. These young biologists discovered that they could demonstrate their knowledge of the Scientific Method while they studied plants and habitats in their own backyard. Saturday Fieldtrips and Workshops are the first educational programs the CERC has launched in order to supplement the education students receive in Kiteto classrooms.

## Computer Training a Big Hit!

Ask any CERC staff member what time of the day they look forward to most, they'll tell you it is computer training with their teacher, Paulo Ferreria. Paulo has the teachers learning typing skills with an interesting, game-like software. Continuing to build upon the skills they learned in their first round of computer training with Tiaré Cross from March through June 2002, the teachers spend at least 6 hours each week in computer training. They have just finished a review of "Introduction to Computers," and are now beginning the month-long course, "Intermediate MS Word".



*Power in an area with sporadic and unsteady electricity requires a number of precautions to protect the computers.*

*Here Sharifa Mjema is practicing the sequence of connecting monitor cords, power cords, power strips, and power surge boxes.*  
(Photo taken: March 2002, KINNAPA training area, Kibaya, Tanzania)

## Early Childhood Education Centre's Ceiling Goes Up

The CERC's Early Childhood Education Centre has begun to look like a real classroom with the finishing of walls, roof and ceiling. We expect to be putting in windows and doors within the month. Christina, the Coordinator of the ECEC, is enjoying selecting educational resources specifically for kindergartners - the first resources of their kind that will be available in Kibaya.

### Putting together Names and Faces

During her trip back to the States, Carrie Oelberger has had the opportunity to visit with some of our supporters. She made her first trip ever out to Seattle to visit with long time donor and Haverford Alumnus, Ellsworth Alvord. While out there she was able to also spend time with his wife, Nancy, and his daughter, Kathy Gerlich, who are also supporting our work. While on the East Coast, she visited with friends from the Lifebriidge Foundation, NetAid, the UN's 1% for Development Fund, the Global Fund for Children, and John Whitehead. Everyone has been offering support, helping us to brainstorm new development ideas, and encouraging us as we continue. Tunawashukuru (We are very thankful)!

### Featured Donor: Samuel Huntington Memorial Fund

We would like to start a tradition of spotlighting a different Jifunze donor each quarter, and wanted to initiate this portion of our newsletter with Jifunze's first benefactor who gave the initial support for the development of the CERC almost four years ago. The Samuel Huntington Memorial Fund annually awards \$10,000 to a few graduating college seniors to support them in their pursuit of public service. The Fund was initiated by Jennifer Huntington, second from left, in memory of her husband who served in Nigeria for a number of years. The Fund's early belief in our project helped to propel our dreams from paper to an idea in action.

*Carrie Oelberger accepting the Samuel Huntington Public Service Award, May 1999. Carrie is second from left. The other awardees are working on: an engineering program for inner city youth in NYC and a village literacy program in Bhutan.*



### Just a Key Stroke Away

Through our partnership with NetAid, Jifunze has been introduced to the world of online volunteering! Since December, we have screened numerous applicants for assistance with the development of our website, as well as revising and re-formatting our icon. We have hired Mr. Andy Straw, who has joined us as our new webmaster, and Ms. Heather Bolesh, who is assisting us with our icon. We would like to warmly welcome these individuals to our family!

### The Toughest Job They'll Ever Love!

We are blessed with, and have long relied upon, the support and hard work of numerous volunteers who come to work with us for a limited amount of time to offer their experience and expertise to our project. We occasionally invite qualified individuals to join our team. If you know of anyone interested in working with us, please email Hana and let her know (hana@jifunze.org). We are especially in need of individuals with skills and experience workign with computers and/or in library settings.



We continue to benefit from the skills of Greg Callaham (on left), who will be sadly departing in July, and Paulo Ferreria, who will be leaving in October. We are currently working with VSO, the British equivalent of the Peace Corps, to get a full-time computer volunteer to join us after Paulo's departure.

### Upcoming Volunteers include:

- **Jenny Davis** (May 2003 – July 2003). An educational development consultant working in Malawi, Jenny will assist Sharifa Mjema with our Primary Student Education Programme.
- **Cindy Cho** (June 2003 – August 2003). A Junior at Cornell University, Cindy will be joining us through our college internship program this summer. Cindy will assist the CERC with general administration tasks, as well as intervieewing Steering Committee members for inclusion in future newsletters.
- **Thomas Robson** (June 2003 – December 2003). A graduating senior at Mass College of Art, Thomas will be joining us for a six month volunteer term to assist us with development of our Educational Garden, as well as using his art skills to put together a video documenting our project. Additionally, Thomas will lend a hand with computer training.

### Ongoing Focus on Sustainability

Since the first sketches of CERC dreams, we have always placed a strong emphasis on sustainability. We have received funding from USAID's EDDI program for the position of Programs Coordinator, which has been filled by Tiaré Cross, a former Jifunze volunteer and native Hawaiian. Tiaré started this position in September of 2002 and has been focusing on training and supporting the CERC staff as they develop educational programming for the centre. 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!), and are still seeking funding for a living stipend and benefits for this position.

### Note from the Executive Director:

Having returned to the United States late this past December, I continue to work on networking and fundraising. I am about to go into retreat for a few weeks with the hopes of getting some writing down about the project, documenting the unique process through which we have gone about development work and the extremely successful results! This extended stay in the U.S. is part of our larger plan to phase myself out of the on-the-ground work in Kibaya in order to attain a greater degree of sustainability. I would like to take this opportunity to give a big thank you to Hana Brown, our Assistant Director, who continues to volunteer from the DC area and assists us in a multiplicity of ways.

We at Jifunze would like to thank you very much for your continued interest and support of our work. Please note that we are initiating another book-by-book campaign in order to increase our collection of Swahili literature. \$30 will buy us 6 books, and \$75 will allow us to obtain a complete set of Swahili medium African History books. If you are interested in helping us to increase our library, please send any donation, payable to "The Jifunze Project," to: 158 Packard Road, Stow, MA 01775, USA. Please note that all donations are tax deductible. And please continue to stay updated on our progress by checking out our website at: [www.jifunze.org](http://www.jifunze.org). Wishing you peace in a time of uncertainty.

Warmly,

J. Carrie Oelberger, Executive Director  
e: [carrie@jifunze.org](mailto:carrie@jifunze.org)

*Carrie Oelberger, our Executive Director, shoveling The Jifunze Project vehicle out of the snow and revving it up for a few months of hard work during her time back in the United States! (January 2003, Stow, MA)*

