

Nourishing Minds

A Quarterly Newsletter published by The Jifunze Project

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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.

HERI YA MWAKA MPYA HAPPY NEW YEAR

At Jifunze we are ringing in 2004 by listening to the voices of the youth we serve, reflecting on our first half of a year of operation at the CERC and envisioning creative ways to generate enthusiasm among community members about educating themselves. From the Jifunze staff, board, volunteers and the Kiteto Community Education Resource Centre (CERC) staff and partners in Tanzania and the U.S., we wish you all the joy and peace of the New Year!

What better away to kick off the New Year than to hear what the youth of Kibaya have to say about the CERC. The fantastic staff and volunteers of the CERC and the Jifunze Project have been working hard in the past six months to serve an average of 1500 students a month. These talented and dedicated individuals are preparing for a new and diverse group of patrons as the Adult Education Program prepares to open its doors in 2004.

Jump Starting Learning at the Primary School Level

The CERC's Primary and Secondary Rooms saw an increase in activity over the recent school break. The break is a vacation for students, but also marks the end of a school year. Students gathered in the Centre to review the basics and get a head start on the curriculum they will encounter in the next grade level. The Primary School Room serves children between the ages of 7 and 14, catering to the needs of those currently in school as well as those disadvantaged children whose circumstances have prevented them from enrolling in the local school system.

Fatuma Musa
11 yrs old

Fatuma dreams of becoming a doctor.



She studies at the CERC in the hopes of one day stopping adults and children in her town from dying at a young age.

Fatuma Musa who is preparing to enter Standard 5 in a Kibaya primary school enjoys coming to the CERC, "because there are lots of books, especially English ones." Along with her two siblings who also visit the CERC, Fatuma reads the words in the English books and when she returns home her mother translates them for her. Fatuma can choose from over three hundred children's books in English to help her cement the basics of English and improve her vocabulary. One of Kiteto's constant educational challenges has been to cultivate strong English skills in its students. Fatuma's excitement about learning and the resources at the CERC are certainly giving her a jump start on English.

Study Hard, Play Hard

Gabrieli Gasper, age 10



Gabrieli's favorite part of the CERC is enjoying a little time on the playground after a hard afternoon of studying inside.

Gabrieli likes to hit the science books in the Primary room after school and loves the colorful pictures of animals, the Earth and bugs. After a few jokes Gabrieli shyly admits that his favorite subject is science. He, too, wants to be a doctor "so that I can treat my parents when they become sick". When he tires of studying he takes a turn on the swing-set or lets off steam on the slide. At the CERC, we don't believe in all work and no play!

Serious Studying in the Secondary Room

Next door to the Primary Room is the Secondary Room which exudes a much more serious air as students aged from fifteen to their mid-twenties come to study Calculus, Biology, English, and Geography. Many of the students that have come over school break are from Kibaya originally but study in larger cities such as Arusha, Moshi or Dar es Salaam where education centers like the CERC are few and far between. The CERC recently had to expand its hours for the break due to requests by Secondary students who wanted to use the space and resources both in the mornings and afternoons.



Emanuel Lebahati studies in one of the secluded Secondary discussion rooms

Future Teachers Nurtured at the CERC



Christina Unambwe Mbise, Age 23

“I feel I have the wito [calling] to be a teacher.”

Christina Unambwe Mbise is a secondary school student at the Ngarenanyulai Secondary School in Arusha and is home in Kibaya only for the holidays, but she isn't relaxing too much. She continues to study even during vacation. Christina hopes to become a Primary School Teacher after finishing college. Traditionally, most teachers in Tanzania are male, but Christina believes that she is meant to be a teacher and is working hard towards her goal. She says, “I come to the CERC to improve myself so that I can go to college. I am reading various books here, such as Biology, English, History and Geography. The CERC is a very good place. You can study in peace, we get a friendly reception by the staff, and we can get the different books we need.”

Global Fund for Children Visits Kibaya

On January 12th, Steve Ginther, Program Officer for the Global Fund for Children arrived in Kibaya after a dusty and hot trip over the dirt roads that connect Kiteto District to the paved main roads. Steve got to tour the CERC, meet the partners and staff of the Centre. Global Fund for Children helped to fund the Early Learning Centre, including the playground, which will be a resource centre for Kiteto's smallest students – the Kindergartners. The playground is now open at the CERC and is mobilizing students to come to the Centre to study and to have a little fun. The CERC staff and partners enjoyed the chance to meet one of the CERC's American donors in person and show him the work they are doing in Kiteto.



Steve Ginther stands in front of CERC with staff

Joan Balances Family and Work in Rural Tanzania

Hujambo? I arrived in Tanzania in late-October, and I am pleased to introduce myself as the new Program Director. Joining the Jifunze Project's work is a natural transition for me as I have had great experiences working on various education initiatives in countries such as Angola, Colombia and the United States.



Joan Wells
New Jifunze Program Director

My husband and 15 month-old son, who have accompanied me to Kibaya, have also been integrating themselves into the community. We have been pleasantly overwhelmed by how much Tanzanians enjoy babies. My son has befriended the Masaai population in particular, receiving daily invitations to join them in their homes and to take an occasional ride on one of their goats. The three of us are looking forward to the next year and a half in Kibaya and being a part of Jifunze's work as the CERC comes into full bloom!

My arrival to the organization coincides with the wrapping up of an intense transition from a focus on capacity building and grant implementation to program development. My position promises to be loads of fun (although certainly not without its frustrations and challenges!) and has the potential to help foster some amazing programming here at the CERC. Working closely with the Tanzanian teachers to enhance and create innovative programming is certainly a highlight of the job and a wonderful opportunity to learn a great deal about both Tanzanian and American attributes and tendencies

The Jifunze Project and CERC are certainly lucky to have such a dedicated, bright new team member in Kibaya with the additional bonus of Toby (husband) and Oliver (son) to add to the Kibaya community. Good Luck Joan!

Donor Spotlight

The Fieldstone Foundation

The Jifunze Project and CERC have appreciated the partnership with The Fieldstone Foundation which is a small foundation based out of Stow, Massachusetts. The mission of the Fieldstone Foundation is to provide support to those who are working to realize a vision for the future of the earth and its people. It is their belief that any vision for the future must balance the needs of the environment, communities, and individuals, and promote the evolution of a more peaceful and just world.

The Fieldstone Foundation has supported the development of the Early Learning Centre in Kiteto and the Adult Education Centre. Their funds have been used to broaden the spectrum of community members that the CERC is able to provide unique educational opportunities for. Additionally, the Fieldstone Foundation has renewed support to help Jifunze and the CERC realize our vision of capacity building among local staff and partners so that the CERC will be self-sufficient in the near future. We extend our deep gratitude to the Fieldstone Foundation for sharing and supporting Jifunze's commitment to creating sustainable, community rooted projects that will inspire this generation and the next generations of Kiteto citizens to deepen their education.