

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.

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Creating Books From Oral Stories

The students at the CERC Primary Room recently finished an exciting project – turning traditional oral stories into books. Julie Rener, a Jifunze volunteer from Belgium, visited the CERC in July to teach bookmaking to the teachers and students. She demonstrated how to use simple, readily available materials to create the books.



Julie Rener and CERC Primary Room students show off their books

Led by teacher Joyce Nnko, the students' first book was based on the Maasai story, "Sungura na Simba" (The Rabbit and the Lion), which the students brought to the CERC from their elders. The second story, "Uchoyo ni Hasara" (Nastiness Results In A Loss), was completed in September. The children were pleased to have the opportunity to both narrate and draw pictures for the books. It was especially exciting for them to use various pictures and colors to help transform their words into a full-fledged novel.

Community Education Through Theater

The CERC is pleased to announce its new Drama Club! There are currently ten enthusiastic secondary students involved in the club. Their goal is to increase community use of the CERC by educating the wider Kibaya community about its resources. The plays provide an entertaining way for the community to learn about the Early Learning Center (ELC), the Primary Room, the Secondary Room, the Adult Room, the literacy program, and computer training.



Members of the CERC Drama Club pose for a photo

Founded with the help of CERC Assistant Director and Jifunze Co-Founder Christina Gabriel, and Jifunze Volunteer, Cynthia De Beer, the Drama Club hopes to also provide an additional source of income for the CERC. The Drama Club also hopes to eventually give performances about important issues such as AIDS awareness, nutrition for young children and gender issues. We are all excited to mobilize the Kibaya community using the newly created Drama Club!

Karibuni Tujifunze: The CERC's New Newsletter

The CERC recently created a new monthly newsletter that publicizes programs and special happenings at the Centre, all in the local language of Swahili. It also serves as a venue for local voices and creativity. The newsletter is created by an editorial committee consisting of the CERC Director, Administrative Assistant, Literacy Teacher, Program Development Advisor, and a visiting volunteer. After only three issues, the paper has received substantial positive feedback from the community. They are receiving diverse submissions from people of all ages, and look forward to producing next month's newsletter. Congratulations to everyone involved in the project -- your wonderful ideas have come to life!

Management Capacity Building

Jifunze Project Management Advisor, Mary Malekela, and CERC Director, Yahaya Ndee, recently attended a one week management course at the MS-Training Centre for Development Co-operation in Arusha. The course covered various aspects of resource center administration, such as technical, information, and database management and marketing. Ms. Malekela and Mr. Ndee found the program very valuable and are eager to apply their new knowledge and skills to the CERC.



*Jifunze Project donors,
Nancy and Buster Alvord*

Donor Spotlight Nancy and Ellsworth "Buster" Alvord

This month we would like to take the opportunity to highlight the enormous contributions that one family has made to the Jifunze

Project and to the development of the CERC. Both alumni from Haverford College, "Buster" learned of Carrie's work with the Jifunze Project in a Haverford College publication. Dr. Ellsworth Alvord is a Professor Emeritus of Pathology in the Division of Neuropathology at the University of Washington, as well as a Research Affiliate for the Center on Human Development and Disability. He and his wife Nancy volunteer for a wide range of human service, educational, philanthropic and arts organizations. The Alvords were honored as Outstanding Philanthropic Family of 1995 by the Washington State Chapter of the National Society of Fund Raising Executives. We have been lucky to have a family as thoughtful and as generous as the Alvords in our midst since our project's early beginnings. We are also fortunate that they have passed on their family values: Buster and Nancy's children follow their parents' wonderful example of engaged concern for the world outside of their immediate home.

Natural Medicines Seminars



Members of the Garden Club learning together

The CERC Garden Club began on the 14th of February 2004 and currently meets each Saturday morning. The

members of the garden club, most of whom are primary school students, care for a small plot within the larger CERC garden. On this little plot the members perform all the activities necessary for proper garden maintenance while also exploring different farming methods and techniques.

Recently, a local Maasai farmer was invited to teach the children about traditional herbal medicines. His lesson taught the children to identify and harvest the plants, as well as the proper preparation techniques for medicinal use. He also taught which medicines are best suited to common ailments. This was the first of a series of three Saturday seminars which the Garden Coordinators, Cynthia DeBeer and Christina Gabriel, have arranged on the topic of traditional medicine.

Cynthia DeBeer has been volunteering with the Jifunze project since January of 2004. She is a native of the Netherlands with a degree in Tropical Agriculture. Cynthia has been an immense help to the Educational Garden. In addition to garden tasks Cynthia is also working hard with the CERC computer program, offering both teaching and technical support. She also has been integral in the initiation of the CERC's local newsletter, 'Karibuni Tujifunze'.

Volunteer Spotlight

We continue to benefit from the wealth of resources our volunteers add to our work at Jifunze and the CERC. Thomas Robson joined us in Kiteto in July 2003 and gave eight months of selfless service through March of this year. Thomas studied Industrial Design as an undergraduate and combined his strong skills with incredible resourcefulness as he designed and oversaw construction of many new resources for the CERC including a playground, innovative hanging bookshelves, and a novel map display system. In addition, Thomas set up our computer centre, served as IT support, designed and implemented a new financial accounting system, and is currently in the process of editing a video documentary about the project from footage he shot while in Kibaya. Although Thomas is missed in Kiteto at the CERC, he continues to volunteer with Jifunze to help us run our US operations, acting both as the Treasurer of Jifunze and our Volunteer Coordinator.



*Thomas Robson at
Farewell Party
in Kibaya,
March 2004*

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