

Nourishing Minds

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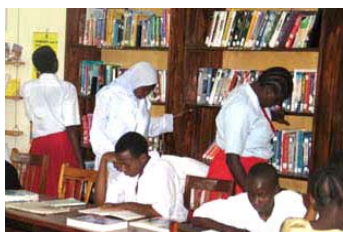


The Jifunze Project works alongside individuals living in under-served parts of rural Tanzania to help them create innovative, empowering and sustainable educational opportunities that will expand their possibilities for livelihood and enrich their lives.

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New Dormitory Opens Doors for Female Students



Female dormitory residents make their CERC Debut

Beginning in February 2006, the residents of Kiteto Secondary School's recently opened female dormitory began visiting the CERC once a week for a special study period. Every Thursday at 4:00pm,

accompanied by one of their teachers, the girls arrive at the center, where they study independently or in groups for two hours before returning to school. All dormitory residents are welcome on Thursdays, regardless of their CERC membership status. Jifunze and the CERC are offering this special opportunity to dormitory residents in order to help these girls meet the extraordinary educational challenges they face, as well as to encourage all secondary students to make use of the CERC's resources.

Girls and women in Tanzania have yet to gain equal access to educational opportunities. Particularly in rural areas, such as Kibaya, girls seeking education face a number of difficulties. If a young woman is able to gain a coveted space in a secondary school, she and her family must gather sufficient funds to pay for school fees, uniforms, and unless the school is within walking distance, money for food and housing. In addition to these obstacles, girls must often deal with a lack of support for female education in their homes and communities.

The girls' dormitory at Kiteto Secondary, completed in late 2005, is designed to assist female students in overcoming these obstacles. The Headmaster of Kiteto Secondary explained that the dormitory was built to help female students, particularly those who come from outlying areas, succeed in their studies. Struggling to meet expenses and far from parental or school supervision, the girls were vulnerable to a variety of negative influences, endangering both their health and their academic success. For its fifty residents, the new dormitory represents an opportunity to study free from social and financial stress.

Beading Group Makes CERC Their Home

In early 2006, CERC welcomed a small beadcraft group to the center. The group aims to improve their skills in beadcraft through the making and selling of decorative jewelry, clothing and other items. They also hope to pass on their skills to others, welcoming them to learn beading, or become full members of the group. The group, which currently has four members, meets at the center most evenings. In addition to improving their art, group members are developing entrepreneurial skills that will assist them throughout their lives. Each member contributes a small amount to the cooperative, which is used to buy beads, thread and other necessary materials. As members sell their work, the money is recycled into the cooperative purse and the profits are divided among group members.



Beading group members proudly display their work

The group's founder, Sara Sailapu, a member of the CERC's basic literacy program, demonstrates education's transformative power. When she first came to the center, Sara did not know how to read or write. As a Maasai

woman she was not encouraged by her community to seek education. However, when she heard of the center's literacy program, she was determined to use this opportunity to gain the literacy skills so many others already possessed. Over the past year, Sara has studied almost every day. She can now read and write Kiswahili and has learned basic math skills. With knowledge came newfound confidence, and the idea to found a beading group. Helped by CERC Assistant Director, Christina Gabriel, Sara turned this idea into a reality.

Jifunze is delighted to be able to support individuals like Sara in gaining the skills that make their dreams come true. We look forward to working with the new group as they continue to grow, helping them to share their knowledge so that others can follow in their footsteps.

Early Learning Center Featured in *Exchange Magazine*

Jifunze was delighted to be featured in the November/December 2005 Issue of *Exchange*. *Exchange*, a renowned publication dealing with early childhood development and education, highlighted the center's Early Learning Center in its article "Reaching the Most Vulnerable Children," by Elizabeth Ruethling. In her article Elizabeth praised the center, calling it "not only a local kindergarten, but also a nationally recognized model for ECCD (Early Childhood Care & Development)." The article can be accessed on Jifunze's website at: www.jifunze.org/about/press.htm

New Opportunities for IT Learning

After a pause in which to improve the program's sustainability and build capacity with CERC staff, the CERC's computer program is back and better than ever! In response to overwhelming demand from community members over the past few months, in March 2006, Jifunze and the CERC began offering a variety of new IT learning opportunities for CERC members.



Students practice as Patricia explains a new program feature

Currently the CERC is offering two computer courses to members: Introduction to Computers, and – for the first time! – Microsoft Excel. The courses, held on weekday evenings, are taught by volunteer computer experts David

Cruickshank and Patricia Gathua. While the Excel course is being taught solely by Patricia, the introduction course is being co-taught by David and CERC teacher, Rajabu Massoud. In response to student feedback from previous computer courses, course hours have been extended and extra practice hours added to the class schedule. Fourteen students, nine women and five men, are currently participating in the courses, with more joining every day.

In addition to the courses, the CERC is also offering new "Computer Drop-In Hours" in the mornings and evenings. During these hours, CERC members who are not participating in computer courses are welcome to use the CERC's computer lab to practice their computing skills and ask questions of David and Patricia. Course participants are also welcome to use this time to practice skills learned in class and prepare for exams. The drop-in hours came in response to numerous requests by members who have some computer training and wish to further develop their skills but are currently unable to participate in courses. We are excited to be able to provide this much-needed service to the Kibaya community and look forward to further improving the program in the coming months.

Volunteer Spotlight: Karibu CJ!

Jifunze warmly welcomes our newest Intern, Christine Jillian Fravil, (CJ). CJ will spend the next eighteen months collaborating with Jifunze and CERC staff to further develop the center's English as a Second Language (ESL) program. She looks forward to helping CERC members of all ages and abilities improve their English language skills.



New Jifunze intern, CJ Fravil

CJ, who began her professional career in the fundraising department of Save the Children U.S., has spent the last 16 years working as a crisis counselor for children and has experience in non-traditional teaching. In 2004, she spent 5 weeks in the Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana, where she counseled and taught English as a volunteer with Children Better Way, a local NGO. Her experience in Ghana inspired CJ to join Jifunze, and she hopes to continue in international development after completing her internship. We are delighted to have CJ with us and we look forward to seeing the ESL Program blossom under her guidance.

Donor Spotlight: Katharyn A. Gerlich

This quarter we would like to highlight the generous contributions of Katharyn A. Gerlich. Over the past 4 years Kathy has made a strong commitment to our organization, providing us with funding to support a diverse range of operational costs. Through her donations, we have been able to support international travel costs associated with travel to Tanzania, provide supplies and equipment for both the Tanzanian and U.S. offices, and also cover unexpected costs which arise in order to run our organization.

In addition to Jifunze, Kathy generously supports numerous other charities. She became aware of our organization through her parents, Nancy & Ellsworth Alvord (spotlighted in NM 10/04), who instilled in all of their children the importance of philanthropic giving. We are deeply grateful for Kathy's support and very much appreciate the ongoing interest she shows for our work.

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