

SASA

Sasa means **NOW** or **WHAT'S UP** in Kiswahili

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KISWAHILI CORNER LESSON 16

every child deserves an opportunity.

EVA & PAUL VISIT NAIROBI

Paul and Eva have once again returned from a visit to see the LEAF children in Nairobi. We delayed this Spring newsletter so that we could enjoy stories of their adventures. Over to you Eva ...!



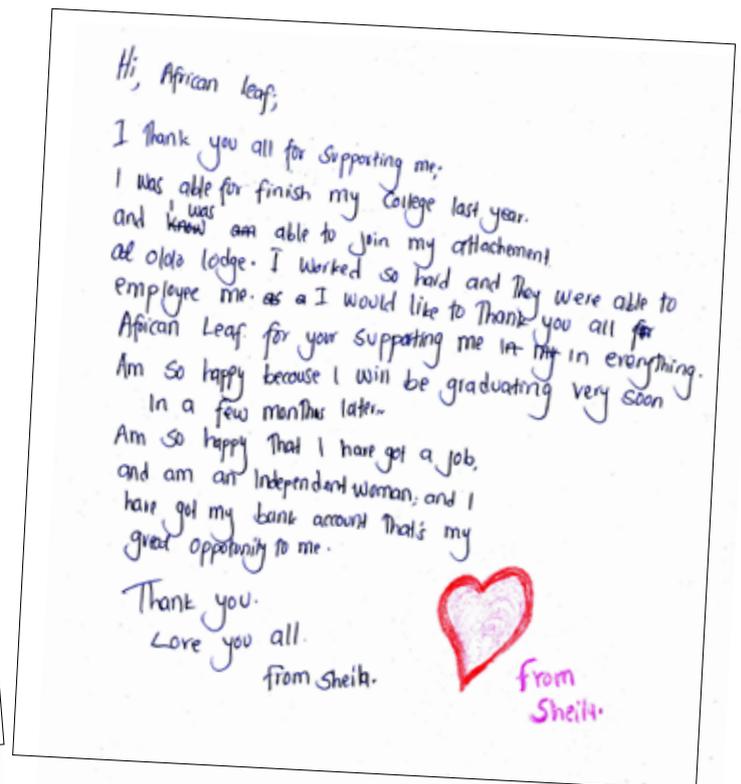
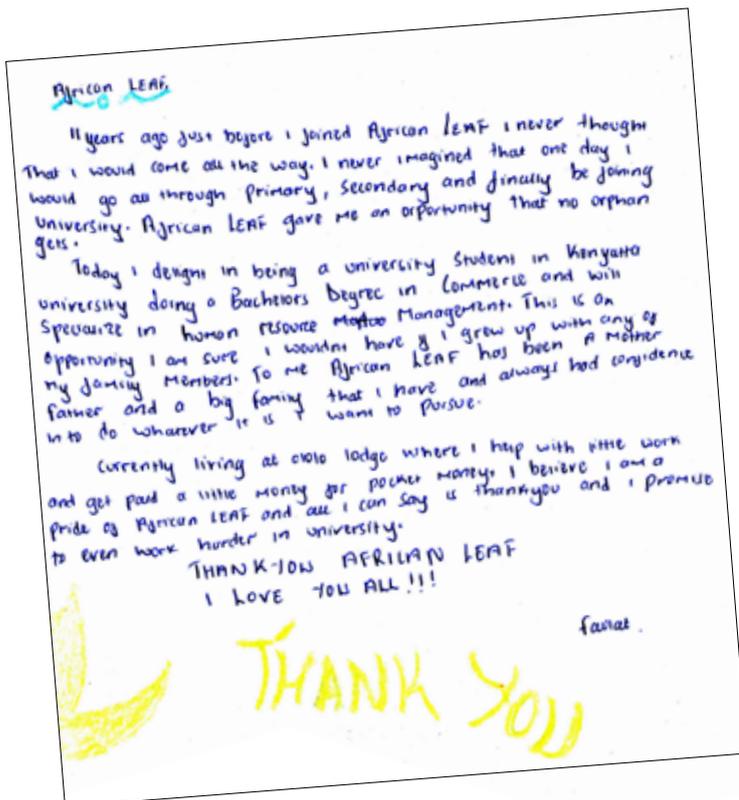
Faulat & Sheila

TWO GIRLS COMING OF AGE

On this trip to Kenya we got picked up from the air-port and went straight to Ololo, a beautiful resort at the edge of the Nairobi National Park where both Sheila and Faulat are working and living. Faulat is also doing a university degree online so that she can work and support herself at the same time. The owners of Ololo are Faulat's Australian sponsors, Joanna and Craig Chapman.

It was wonderful to be welcomed by Faulat and Sheila! Everyone who would have seen them would have been very proud! They are happy and confident, hardworking and excited about their lives and future. It is just such a delight to see how they have turned into these amazing young women! They are independent, with hopes for their future and they are also caring about others: We heard from others how they have spent part of their hard-earned wages on clothes and shoes and gifts for those who were in need amongst the other AL kids!

Paul and I stayed at Ololo for three nights which gave us an opportunity to spend some time together with Sheila and Faulat and we were really impressed with them. They were affable, outspoken and open, so beautiful! We just love them and they made us so happy!!!! They wrote letters to you, the African Leaf supporters, in which you will find out a bit more from Faulat and Sheila themselves.



THE TEENAGERS AT STEINER



Saumu



Patrick



Lincoln

Again, it was incredibly exciting to walk through the gates of the Steiner School after an 18 months absence. All of Steiner is like family to us ... so many familiar faces from the staff to the teachers and house parents, all of them greeting us so warmly and then the kids welcoming us with joy! Did I say Kids? No, they are now a lively mob of teenagers!

We currently have 10 teenagers at the Steiner School, three of them from year nine: Saumu, Patrick and Lincoln, are leaving for Secondary School after their exams this year. So on our next visit there will be just seven left at the school - four from class six: Eugene, Brightlight, Winnie and Purity and three from class seven: Christine, Junior and Diana. All of them were very lively and excited about our return and immediately began planning our time together. They called a meeting ascertaining the mutual availability in our schedules and planning it to a T: Camping on the first weekend, a picnic here, a cricket game there, shopping days for three different groups on three different days, swimming, swimming and more swimming, a movie day and the Grand Finale ... Njama choma (goat) and Kuku(chicken) with sodas and fried chips at Buffalo Den together with all the other strewn about African Leaf teenagers – "The Elders". Oh and not to be forgotten was organizing the Jumping Castle on the day out too!

THE CAMPING WEEKEND

Ok, where were we to take 10 teenagers camping? Also to our great joy, Brian would be able to join us for the weekend, so that made it 11. He is currently sitting his 21 exams till the end of November to finish his Secondary School. We asked our landlord Willie Knocker for any ideas. He said: "Why don't you bring them

here, all the wildlife and bush and beauty are right here!" It was a most kind offer which saved us the headache to hire a second vehicle for a trip somewhere else as our little cottage that we rented is only 3 kms down the road from Steiner and right at the edge of the Nairobi National Park. That means that we always see

plenty of animals around the place. Also the School had all the camping gear we needed. We brought the teenagers out for a swim at Masoi Lodge Resort and to lunch at our cottage the day before the adventure as that Friday turned out to be a pupil free day which was perfect.



Patrick; Lincoln; Eugene;



Brightlight, Christine, Purity, Diana



Brightlight & Saumu

Afterwards everyone got involved in setting up the tents, girls and boys pitching their respective tents. The girls were beautifully organized, Winnie with the know how to set up and Saumu and Purity working as a team to hammer the pegs into the rock-hard earth. Christine and Diana did likewise and Bright was jumping around, shouting at everyone like the general in command. Bright is a scream. I think the

most words I got out of her in 4 weeks were yes and no. But on the school ground and around the people she knows, she is very bossy and assertive. She is also a superb athlete and not short on any opinion that she hurls at boys and girls; in other words she can stand up for her interests! The boys proceeded in a more chaotic and relaxed way passing a bit of the time just hanging on to the poles and

doing nothing in particular. Eugene was in command as he knew the set-up of the tents. The boys' tent was saggy and floppy while the girls' tent was erected in a way that the leaders of a military campaign would have approved off. The rest of the day, after dropping the excited lot back to school, Paul and I went shopping.



Eugene & Lincoln



Purity & Saumu

THE CAMPING WEEKEND cont ...

On Saturday morning we brought the kids over. First, of course, we went swimming at Masai Lodge. That still is one of the most loved activities for all maybe with the exception of shopping! After a picnic we played cricket in the afternoon. Last

year we brought a cricket set to the school and on sport days each class gets the occasional opportunity to play. The rules have changed a bit; it is more like a cricket-baseball game as no-one runs between the wickets but in a circle around

the bulk of the fielders. The whole game is played with a high sense of competition and it is real fun to watch! Everyone had a ball and there is a lot of shrieking, laughing and shouting going on!



Brian bowling, Diana batting & Patrick wicket keeper



Bright, Saumu; Christine, Paul, Lincoln



Purity batting, Patrick wicket keeping

Later we got the BBQ going, a delicious feast of kuku, sweet corn and potatoes baked in foil in the coals of our fire. Paul and I had heard lions every night but this evening it was quiet. Maybe that was for the best as some teenagers were a bit scared to sleep in a tent with lions roaming around. We got summoned by the askari (night watchman) however, who made us tiptoe up to the boundary of the property to observe a lone buffalo. By the time we got there it was no-where to be seen...but it was funny how a lot of us were crouched down, and some were very frightened as we were approaching the spot where he had been. All Kenyans have a healthy respect for Buffalos as they can get mad and easily kill a person. Back at our fire around which we sat on chairs and mattresses the kids began to sing. They knew so many songs; many times spontaneously some of us would jump up and dance around the fire as well. Often Junior was the instigator

of a new song, cheerfully breaking out into a new tune. Junior is generally very quiet around Paul and I, but he showed no shyness around the campfire. We were also touched and moved by the courage of Christine and Diana to sing and dance for us, just the two of them and it was really beautiful. Diana especially is a born dancer, she has so much grace and joy and you can see she is totally in her element! It really was the most enjoyable night and we loved every minute of it as did these beautiful, vibrant, young people around us. As it happened it was Paul and my wedding anniversary. Exactly 8 years ago we had been married not 400 meters down the road at Masai Lodge. Most of the teenagers around the campfire had been there with us and remembered it well. It was very sweet to share the memories of that amazing wedding with them at that moment. Also it was a brilliant full moon which made it all the more special. The

old folks withdrew at some stage but from the bedroom we could hear the laughter of our happy teenagers carry out into the night...and it was the first sounds we heard next morning.

After everyone had emerged from their tents, Paul showed off his skills as a superb pancake cook, handling two frying pans and throwing pancakes about the air which always landed in the pans...the teens were amazed and delighted and loved the pancakes too! Of course, we could not miss a session at the pool around the corner afterwards. Coming back to the cottage we had brunch and tea and soda ... but we pretty much had run out of everything including water by the time lunch arrived. No-one wanted to go back to the school; everyone was adamant that they could skip lunch and stay forever!



Eugene, Junior, Purity, Bright, Christine, Winnie, Paul.



Christine & Junior

THE KENYAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

I am a Buddhist. I am supposed to be calm but my blood starts boiling when it comes to the Kenyan School system. On the bright side is the fact that most of the LEAF children are growing up at Steiner. This allows them to develop into beautiful, playful and creative young people whose severest form of punishment entails being sent to the school gardens to help grow some vegetables. But unfortunately their sense of freedom, family and enjoyment is radically stopped when the transition to the Secondary Schools at the end of year nine occurs. Then everyone has to

get used to a life of bullying, physical punishment and sleep deprivation and the new school environment for most is more akin to a juvenile detention centre!. Everyone knows this. Every person that has grown up in Kenya and gone to school and the only advice the Steiner Teachers and Parents can give our teens is to persevere and get through it. Otherwise, without a Secondary School Certificate which is obtained after four years of grinding through that system, one's job prospects are next to nil and what sort of

a life would one be experiencing forever after? That is the reality each of them has to come to terms with. Out of our eight Secondary School students, five did change their school to find a more lenient one. Mostly they were disappointed and found their new schools equally severe and archaic in their methods of punishment and forcing the students to get up as early as 4am and to finish their day of study at 10pm or even later. Absolutely unproductive and crushing!

TWO YOUNG MEN

Brian and Kevin are our first two young men who have almost finished form four and are just seeing the light at the end of the tunnel.

During our visit, Brian stayed with us twice at our cottage. He is calm and collected and counting the days to his last exam on the 28th of November. Then he is going to jump out of his skin with joy! He will have the freedom to do whatever he chooses to do. So far he has not focused on his brand new life about to emerge as he is putting all of his efforts into the exams.

Likewise Kevin is holding out to the finish. He is nineteen years old and has had a

rough road learning the hard way. He ran away from his first Secondary School twice and then gave up completely. But finding survival hard and tiresome, he contacted his sponsors and was reinstated in a Secondary School of his choice in one of the slums in Nairobi. On our last visit we could not locate him, but this time we were able to meet. We had not seen each other for 3 years and I was touched by his humility and the change he had undergone. Despite real hardship of not having regular meals and accommodation he had managed to show up at school every day, walking many miles to get there. Our visit was the

best timing for him as we could give him funds to eat, commute and sleep under a roof during his last month at school which is most demanding with all these exams to sit! He was most grateful for this. His aim is to study at a college to become a DJ as he loves music. Many clubs and bars in Nairobi use them to play music at their venues as the DJ's also supply all the electronic equipment to pump out the music. Kevin is already earning a bit of money by riding a boda-boda (motorbike), transporting people around the city. We hope we might be able to help him to buy a used motorbike next year so that he can support himself while studying.



Brian



Kevin & Eva

Our Other Secondary School Students: Faith, Kiki, Annet & Cate



Faith

The two students who left Steiner last year were Faith and Kiki. Faith is at Mwala Girls High School about 3 hours drive out of Nairobi near Machacos. She has adjusted quite well to her new school and told me she was going to use her 2 month's holidays to work at her weaker subjects. So she is ambitious to improve. She has made good friends in her new environment and she has the advantage to stay with Lali during some of the holidays and in mid-term breaks. Lali is the daughter of Rose, who is a teacher at Steiner and who has always looked after Faith and her brother Junior during the holidays. Faith's friendship with Lali

has helped her to be strong and positive. Even though Faith is a very shy person, I am sure she will find her way in life without too many complications. She is very determined and dedicated to reach the goals she sets for herself and we are very proud of her. It was a real shame that she returned very late at the closing of her school and therefore couldn't make it to our get together at Buffalo Den and she also missed out staying over with us at the cottage. Everyone asked for her and she was really missed amongst the AL teens. Luckily we were able to catch up with her on our last day in Nairobi!

Kiki on the other hand had a lot more problems in his first year. At one stage some boarders at his school, Mbagathi View academy just down the road from Steiner, stole his mattress and blanket and some clothes. Instead of going to the headmaster he asked for leave to buy soap and then just spirited home to his aunt in Karanguare slum. It was very difficult to extract him from there. AL had nominated and pays for a mentor and go-to person for Kiki named Katunge. It took her a bit of running around and talking to convince him to give it another go. Fortunately Kiki has settled in now and he even managed to improve his marks once he returned. Kiki stayed two nights with us at the cottage and we had good talks and a lovely time with him. He told us about his daily routine at school, how restricting it is but also his

determination to make it through. At the last day of school after the last exams he told us that all the 'first formers' were overjoyed to now be 'second formers' and how they all were really celebrating that fact. According to Kiki being a first former is the worst status to have and from now on things at school would be a bit easier.

I just want to share one anecdote of Kiki's that is telling of how he tried to make things a bit more bearable at school. Having some Muslim students amongst the boarders, these were given time off to visit the Mosque in town on Friday afternoons. So Kiki told the headmaster that he was a Muslim and he experienced a couple of months where he enjoyed a bit of freedom on a Friday afternoon. Paul and I had a good laugh when Kiki told us and Paul said to him that he would have done the same!



Kiki



Annet with little friend Mukami

Annet and Cate just finished form two at their respective Secondary Schools. Annet is at Baraka Royal Precious Girls High School at the outskirts of Nakuru about 4 hours from Nairobi. She is doing very well at school and talking to the headmaster there we learned that she is very popular at her school. Annet stayed with us for a couple of days. She enjoyed it a lot especially as that also gave her an opportunity to reunite and spend some

time with Kiki, Brian, Purity and Cate, all of whom she had not seen for 2 years! Annet is great; uncomplicated, open to talk, singing and dancing around the house, just really lovely company to have around. It was so special to be able to spend time with her and to see that she is a happy person!

Our Other Secondary School Students: Faith, Kiki, Annet & Cate cont ...



Cate

Cate has worked so hard at her school, Mt Carmel Convent Girls' Secondary School, and has achieved very good marks. This is the same school that Esther is attending and where she is now sitting her Final Exams until the end of November. Esther has been sponsored by our Givers of Hope to enable her to finish Secondary School which she would never have been able to do since she is an orphan. Cate's accounts of this school are very disheartening. Academically the school

has a great reputation but their education methods are very harsh. Therefore Cate is going to look for another school together with her best girlfriend during these holidays. I so much hope she will find a school to her liking. Cate is Purity's sister who is still at Steiner. She is a beautiful and strong person who is willing to work hard for her future. It was beautiful to have her with us at the cottage and to be able to spend some time together.

THE WONDERFUL **ACTIVITY** EVER

Here I quote Kiki's remarks in his thank-you letter to Paul and I: "Paul and Eva I appreciate you for all the great things you have done to me, like having two nights at your place, for the nyama choma and fun at the Buffalo Den and for giving me money to go shopping and that's the wonderful activity ever!"

Yes, all the teens are very good shoppers! Of course with Saumu, Patrick and Lincoln we did expect them to spend their money wisely as they prepare to leave for secondary schools, but the year six and seven students really surprised us. Eugene missed out on going shopping because he was invited to his friend's 13th birthday party which included a sleepover. He was

very excited about this and happy with the things we bought for him. Because of the fact that Paul and I had not flown directly to Kenya we were not able to bring a huge luggage case with presents as we did all the years before. Therefore everyone got about 35 dollars for shopping. In a modern Nairobi shopping mall that wouldn't get you very far. But at the stalls around Rongai, everyone was very good at bargaining and buying shoes, jeans, t-shirts, watches, school-bags and jumpers. We were amazed.

With the exception of the year nines who were pressed for time because of their preparation for the final exams, we took the teens to lunch before shopping. We

decided to stick with the year 6 students for a bit but they soon politely asked us to leave it to them. They were back on the dot of time we had arranged and were beaming over their successful shopping spree. Junior had managed to get a decent watch for one dollar, bargained down from 4 dollars and he was extremely proud of his bargaining skills and his watch! Winnie was very far-sighted, buying herself, other than clothes and shoes, a geometrical algebra set, a bag and a padlock to lock up her bag and precious possessions! We laughed at the padlock but thought it was smart as everything gets lost forever in Kenya!



Winnie, Paul, Eva, Purity, Bright at lunch



Winnie, Bright, Purity Shopping with Paul

When we took the year seven class a few days later, they were just as successful and happy! Diana got herself the best boots ever, they looked brand-new, made from leather with beautiful ornaments and decoration on them, made of good quality and she paid six dollars! She couldn't believe it herself. All the house parents were really proud of the teens when they

inspected the purchases and said that everyone had done really well with their money. We didn't tell anyone but Paul got Saumu, Lincoln and Patrick a brand new phone each, charged them, put contact numbers in and loaded them with credit... as a surprise gift after their exams and also so that they would be able to stay in contact with each other.



Paul, Diana, Christine, Junior at Lunch before shopping

A NEW AFRICAN LEAF FAMILY MEMBER

We are so pleased to be able to give some support to a new little person we met at Steiner this year and it's because of the generosity of our Givers of Hope that we are able to do so.

His name is Francis Olenko and he is around 5 or 6 years old ... no-one really knows. When he was around 2 years old he was found in Lunga Lunga wandering all by himself and the police took him to a government orphanage in Nairobi. A year or so after he had joined that orphanage, it closed down and he was taken in by the Steiner School a year ago. For many months he constantly cried and soiled his clothes and couldn't even speak. The Steiner school is sponsoring his school and boarding fees but in the holidays Pamela, one of the house mums, has taken it on herself to look after Francis. His speech is coming along slowly and he calls Pamela 'Mum'. He is quite cheerful now, always running around with some kind of contraption he makes up with any objects he finds. He's quite funny!

When I returned home to Australia, I wrote an email to Pamela in which I said: "We are so grateful to you that you have taken little Francis under your wings Pamela! He



Francis with Pamela

is a lovely boy, and even though I was not able to communicate with him, it was always fun when he came up to me each time I showed up. I had to laugh about all the things he makes! I am so happy to see that he is quite a happy boy now and I can't even imagine what state he was in when he first came to the school."

Pamela replied: "We are all doing great and am so excited to have heard from you. We are always happy to see you all the time you are around and Paul. You are part of our family here in the school. Am so humbled with your appreciation. Francis is a very special boy to me and my husband. I hope the next time that you

come he will be in a position to express himself in English. We are at home now but we have not yet gone up country. I do appreciate a lot for what you taken up to go a long way to assist Francis. I am so thankful. It means a lot! Lots of Love from me and Baby Francis Darling."

Francis might have had a rough start in life but he is lucky to have found a mum like Pamela. She is truly a beautiful woman with a great, big heart! All the Steiner Kids love her. She is the boarding mum for the small boys and looks after 27 of them, sleeping in the same room with the smallest ones. So Francis has her always in his sight!

KEVIN'S SISTER PURITY

Last year when we tried to visit Purity, Kevin's sister, we were not able to locate her either. Purity who is 14 years of age now, has been able to continue with her Primary School education through the help of the Givers of Hope donations. Both siblings haven't been able to stay with their mum as she has developed dementia and has moved back up country living

with relatives who are taking care of her. While Kevin has survived on his own with the occasional help from his brother, Purity moved in with her sister Sheila who is married with one young son. Having to pay for Purity's keep has put pressure on Sheila's marriage and she wants Purity to attend a boarding school next year. Jane Njogu, our social worker promised us she would get a letter from Purity and her school report to us at the end of the year. For the rest of the year African Leaf is paying Purity's living allowance and next year we will help with her further education when she moves on to Secondary School. Both sisters were very grateful for this assistance. Purity told us she loves playing football and cooking. Her favourite subjects are Kiswahili and Maths.



Purity

BUFFALO DEN



The Elders' passed on advice to Saumu, Lincoln & Patrick

This traditional outing for all of the African Leaf children is one of their favourites, not just for enjoying a rare feast but also for getting together with the teens who are spread around in different Schools and don't get to see each other very often. Saumu wrote Lynda and Christopher a thank you letter for making this special evening possible.



A FINAL WORD TO OUR DEAR AFRICAN LEAF SUPPORTERS

Our African Leaf family is growing up! Many challenges lie ahead of us, especially trying to find employment for these beautiful young people when they leave their Secondary Schools. Youth unemployment in Kenya is a big problem. But I am very optimistic. Our teens are bright, vibrant, and resilient with a great sense of joy for life. They may not have parents, or only one parent who is struggling and not able to help but they do have each other and support each other.

And then they have YOU which every one of them deeply appreciates. Now as more and more of them reach adolescence they are also very much interested in your lives! They want to know more about you, these amazing friends from Australia, who have stood by them and who are giving them a future! Maybe on our next trip we might be able to take some news back to them from you. I also wish to thank Stephen and Joanna for their generous donation they made to AL while we were in Kenya. They

have made a huge contribution to all the activities we were able to undertake with our teens during our visit.

The teens love you. They all send their love and can't wait to hear from you. I am most grateful to all of you, for being this unshakable support for our African Leaf Teens!

Thank you all from my heart.

With love,
Eva

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

A FUN NIGHT OF TRIVIA

A great night was once again had by all at Byron Bay Bowling Club on Saturday 23rd July for what is becoming our annual Trivia Night. 17 teams of 8 settled in at their tables to enjoy a fun night.

Once again MC Mick O'Regan entertained the room with his repartee and questions were compiled by Queen of Trivia Alison Mackay. Our thanks to Mick for a brilliant job done and to Alison and helpers, Gerrit, Ruth, Jana and Ken.

Team La Triviata were once again the winning team, again winning by a close call from team Free Radicals.

On the night we raised \$3,500 which we couldn't have done without the generous assistance of those businesses who donated prizes on the night: Our grateful thanks for raffle prizes to: Byron Accom for donating 2 night's accommodation at Byron Boutique Barn (1st prize); Byron Bay Writer's Festival (2nd prize); There's Always More Hair & Makeup (3rd prize) and Orient Express Restaurant (4th prize). Our grateful thanks also go to the restaurants who provided gift vouchers for the winning team: Beach Byron Cafe; Fleet Restaurant; Sabi Sushi Café; The Italian Place; and to those who supplied other prizes; Byron Bay Candle Co; Byron Bay Coffee Company; Byron Seafood Market; The Cellar Byron Bay; Linda & Christopher Dean; Pighouse Flicks; Poinciana Cafe; Red Ginger; Reflections of Byron; The Rocks at

LESSON 16 LEARNING KISWAHILI

FURNITURE & HOUSEHOLD

Meza Table
Kiti Chair
Kitanda Bed

Chumba Room
Bafu Bath(Room)
Choo Toilets

Lifti Lift (Elevator)
Hema Tent