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Every Child Deserves An Opportunity!

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AFRICAN LEAF NEWS

Spring 2008

In June this year, two African LEAF members travelled to Nairobi on a research and fact finding mission. Because African LEAF is about to launch into the formal planning phase of our children's village project, we wanted to make sure that we get everything right.

After talking with tribal chiefs and local Kenyans in general, it became clear that, if we are to meet their needs and wants, our original concept for the children's village must change.

With the growing awareness of global warming, the Kenyans of Nairobi have expressed their desire to have, where possible, environmental solutions that will go beyond the past and their traditional village houses.

They definitely don't want a village that resembles an old style traditional village. They don't want something that could be interpreted as an "imitation". Rather they have asked for a more environmentally integrated concept.

They have identified the need to do so much more in relation to water harvesting and a greater focus on environmental housing solutions.

And so it begins ...

We've painted the vision and now in collaboration with local community members, it's time for us to start on the exciting phase of planning the dream.

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Kenyan facts

KARIBU is the Kiswahili word for "Welcome!". Throughout Kenya you will hear that word because hospitality and greetings are of vital importance to the Kenyans.

You can never spend too long on a greeting. In fact people often spend several minutes, with hands interlocked, catching up on family and any other latest news; and this is what's also expected of visitors. Rushing off to continue your busy life rather than exchanging greetings and news won't win any friends in East Africa.

The casual greetings of "hi" or "hey" with a wave just won't 'cut it'. The hand shake in Kenya means "hello, I respect you as an individual", and lack of one means, "I don't really think much of you!"

Along with the 'must do' hand-shake, there are also many gestures that accompany greetings in Kenya, depending on with whom you are speaking. There are often cool and funky handshakes, curtsies or a slight head bow when speaking to a respected elder.

If you meet someone and their hands are dirty, they will offer you their wrist or forearm to shake. The same thing follows if your hands are dirty and you meet someone; it's expected that you'll offer your wrist for them to shake.

This focus on greetings and connection can often be overlooked or seem strange for visitors to East African, however strong connections between people used to be important to all of us. It's just with our very busy lives we seem to have simply forgotten.

So try on a bit of Kenya today – take a bit of time with a greeting, make a connection and show at least one person that you respect them as an individual.

Kids 2 kids

After Easter a little bit of Africa came to visit Shearwater-The Mullumbimby Steiner School, bringing drum beats, singing, dancing and a heartfelt message.

African LEAF organised for the award winning Kenyan band Yunasi, who also played to fantastic crowds at the Blues Fest, to bring their infectious African rhythms to the main school and then, in a special impromptu outdoor performance, to the Kindy/Pre-school kids.



To continue on the path of providing a mutual learning and cultural exchange experience, African LEAF organised for Amos Mwangi, a teacher from the Steiner school in Kenya, to visit Shearwater for an exciting week. During that time he visited classes telling mesmerising stories of life in Kenya and what

its like being a Steiner teacher at the school in Nairobi. He also learnt about the innovative teaching techniques utilised at Shearwater and the amazing artistic skills displayed by the students.

Amos spent some time attempting to teach some of the students and teachers alike some basic Kiswahili. However, soccer seemed to be the common language, with Amos playing with the students of year 4 on the large oval. These same year 4 students have begun communicating with some of the African LEAF orphans via pen pal letters.

On Oct 18th Shearwater will hold its "Threads of Life" Carnival. The theme or message of the carnival, is that it takes people from all cultures to make up all the threads that weave our lives and our world today.

Come along and enjoy the fantastic entertainment, food, music and stalls. Shearwater always supports African LEAF and from the profit of this day, the school will donate 50%, so please come along, have a fantastic day with your family and help Shearwater support us.

Mbagathi Steiner School Update

This year as you all know started with news of violence in the country after the general elections. Our school opened one week later than planned as teachers and children were unable to travel from their home areas. It was tense but, despite the threat of local violence, all remained quiet until with the help of Kofi Annan - there was the break through - an agreement was signed on the 28th February. Everyone was celebrating.

Mr Shake, Judith Brown and all the staff at Mbagathi Steiner school were fabulous when LEAF members Craig and Ailsa visited the school in June. Kingsley and Zilda in the office, were very patient with their requests for assistance. Many activities were planned during their stay, including an evening Aussie BBQ with sausages and roast chicken! The children had a ball! Craig and Ailsa managed to take all the African LEAF children on a day safari into the Nairobi National Park and they also visited the local swimming complex – much fun was had by all!

The girls are enjoying their new boarding house which is full of light. A new boarding mother, Pamela Simiyu, joined the school this year

A new emphasis is now on expanding the organic garden due to the greater number of children joining the school. This ensures fresh healthy vegetable for their lunch.

All the African LEAF children and staff at the school are looking forward to October when African LEAF members Paul and Eva from Byron Bay will celebrate their wedding near the school in Nairobi.



introducing: Christine

Christine came to African LEAF when she was 4 years old. She had been living in a make-shift orphanage in Nairobi. Unfortunately it was suspected that she was suffering some abuse and neglect there. She was brought to the attention of African LEAF by a children's protection officer who removed her and placed her with us. She was thin, filthy and dressed in rags when African LEAF took over her care. Initially, she had difficulty mixing with other children.

Christine now attends Kindergarten at the Mbagathi Steiner school. She has settled in and now loves playing with the other children. She eagerly helps to fold the laundry and clothes at tidy up time. She also has great fun painting with bright colours, swinging on the play equipment and digging in the sandpit outside. Her teachers now describe her as a happy and peaceful girl. Christine loves greeting visitors to the school and happily shows them around her favourite places in the playground.



giving thanks & paying it forward



Our thanks go to Byron Hire for their generosity in helping us equip and outfit the stage and kitchen for the Yunasi concert we put on in March. It was a fantastic event with so many people dancing the night away.

This is not the first time that the owners, management and staff from Byron Hire have been so generous and helpful.

To help them help us, make sure you talk to Byron Hire next time you need to rent tools, equipment or party and catering supplies.



A huge vote of thanks also to Susanne Weiley of Cape Gallery in Byron Bay for the fabulous T-shirts that she provided to all the boarding children at the Mbagathi Steiner School.

The kids loved the pictures on the front and insisted on wearing their new T-shirts at the Aussie BBQ held at the school during Ailsa and Craig's recent visit.

Thank You
Asante Sana



learning Kiswahili lesson 2:

numbers

Kiswahili English

MOJA	ONE
MBILI	TWO
TATU	THREE
NNE	FOUR
TANO	FIVE
SITA	SIX
SABA	SEVEN
NANE	EIGHT
TISA	NINE
KUMI	TEN
MIA	HUNDRED
ELFU	THOUSAND

member profile

Craig

Australia to me is my comfort zone – I love travelling to remote, rugged, exotic places but it is always wonderful to return home

Kenya to me is the cradle of mankind

Latest good book – 'What is the What' by Dave Eggers – a novel based on the true story of one of the Sudan's Lost Boys

Favourite movie – 'Out of Africa' (can you see I'm following a theme here!) – the music alone can stir the deepest emotions. I visited the Karen Blixen Museum in Nairobi last year

Strangest meal – Ugali with coconut chicken. We helped prepare this meal with a family we visited near the Kenyan seaside town of Kilifi, a couple of hours north of Mombassa. The meal was followed by singing and dancing

Best vacation spot – Western Australia's Kimberly region – we have a small farm on the banks of the Ord River at Kununurra

Most rewarding travel experience – our 5 weeks in Kenya and Tanzania this time last year would easily rate as our family's most rewarding experience ... travel or otherwise

Good or bad at school – um – typical boy!

Favourite toy as a child – marbles

When I grew up I wanted to be – I don't know what I want to be if I grow up!

Green advice - Grow your own veggies and keep a few chooks

Most valued advice - The chooks are for the eggs ... don't eat them, silly!!!

The 3 people you would most like to invite to dinner - **Bill Clinton** - I want to know what more he would have done for Africa now that hindsight has caught up with him.

Mohammad Yunis, Nobel Peace Prize winner - he has improved the life of millions of the world's poor through microcredit schemes.

Gemma Sisia, Founder of the School of St Jude in Tanzania - an example of how one woman's vision has led to education opportunities for over 1000 of Tanzania's poorest kids - she lets nothing get in the way of achieving her goals.

I am an AFRICAN LEAF member to help a dedicated bunch of people find a home and future for some of the most delightful and gorgeous kids in the world



Your donation counts

Join the **Land4Kids** appeal & help disadvantaged children in Kenya:

\$10 will buy 1m² of land

\$20 will buy 2m² of land

\$50 will buy 5m² of land

\$25,000 will buy a 1 acre

\$200,000 will buy a an entire 8 acre plot and bore

OR

sponsor a child to give a life-long opportunity

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PO Box 1823, Byron Bay NSW 2481, Australia

admin@africanleaf.org.au

www.africanleaf.org.au