

R.R.SMITH *news*

- NEWSLETTER -

2021



AN EDUCATIONAL LEGACY

604.871.2260

Toll Free: 1.877.683.2243

www.rrsmith.ca

The R.R. Smith Board of Directors met in early October to elect an executive for 2020-2021. The outcome is as follows:

President - Barb Mikulec

Vice-President - Gail Chaddock-Costello

Secretary - Helene McGall

Treasurer - Dave Carter

Members at Large - Steve Bailey, Andy Hattrick, Sarah Joyce, Karen Kilbride, Sheila Pither

BCRTA representatives: Caroline Malm, Helene McGall

Member donations are being encouraged.



On-line <https://vancitycommunityfoundation.ca/donate/other-ways-to-give> and specify R R Smith Foundation

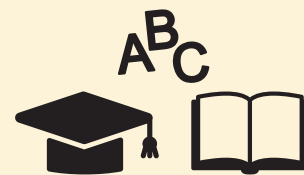
Or mail cheque to: R.R. Smith, #100-500 W. 6th Ave. Vancouver, BC, V5Z 4P2

Charitable number: 861602126BC0001

Grant applications for 2021 funding are being received at the office until March 1, 2021. Registered educational charities in B.C. are encouraged to apply.

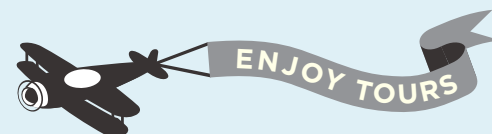
Application forms and fund criteria are available on the website.

www.r.r.smith.ca



R.R. Smith celebrates 20 years of service this year.

R.R. Smith has an affinity plan with Enjoy Tours. Once it is safe to plan a trip, you might consider this company. When BCRTA/RR Smith members and companions book a tour with Enjoy Tours, the company sends a small donation to R.R. Smith but only if you register as a BCRTA/RR Smith member. The catalogue is available www.enjoytourandtravel.com/tourcatalog/



R.R.SMITH *news*

- NEWSLETTER -

2021



AN EDUCATIONAL LEGACY

604.871.2260

Toll Free: 1.877.683.2243

www.rrsmith.ca

R.R. Smith

MEMORIAL FUND FOUNDATION

Fill in this form so we have the information we need to provide you with a tax receipt.

Name

Street Address

City

Province

Postal Code

Amount of Donation

To Endowment

To Grants

Mail the completed form and your cheque to:

R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation

100 - 550 W. 6th Avenue,
Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2

For donations made by way of bequests, life insurance, real estate or In Memoriam, please contact the President, R.R. Smith Memorial Foundation by mail at the above address or by phone at:

604.871.2260 or toll free 1.877.683.2243

The R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation is:

- A Registered Charity under the Canadian Income Tax Act #86160 2126 RR0001
- Incorporated under the BC Society Act

The purposes of the society are to advance public education in British Columbia and overseas

If you believe that Education can make a difference, please support the work of the R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation by making:

- A regular donation which will be used in the year that it is given to support the grants the Foundation makes that year
- A donation to the Foundation's Endowment Fund so the interest earned can be used for future grants
- An "In Memoriam" donation for a family member or friend
- The R.R. Smith Memorial Fund Foundation your Life Insurance beneficiary thereby making your premiums tax deductible
- A real estate donation

WHAT WE DO

- A** Providing scholarships and bursaries to
 - Doctoral students in any area which advances public education, and
 - Deserving students, to enable them to attend post-secondary educational institutions,
- B** Making and administering grants to Canadian registered charitable organizations, the purposes of which are similar to those of the society,
- C** Acquiring school materials, books, equipment, and supplies of all kinds, and donating them to schools,
- D** Providing funding to support innovative projects which advance public education,
- E** Working cooperatively with governments in Canada and other countries, and other charitable organizations.

The Foundation makes grants to projects that meet these criteria and are registered Canadian charities. Application forms are available at www.rrsmith.ca

SAVINGS START AT HOME



BCRTA members get preferred rates and exclusive offers on home insurance through Johnson.

Click here or call for your quote.

Group ID
Code: **BC**

1.877.742.7490

JOHNSON 

Thank you letter from CHES

Canadian Harambee Education Society

We can't do everything . . . but we can do something



CHES Activities in Africa During the Pandemic

CHES is so very fortunate to have outstanding people working for us in both Kenya and Tanzania, whether they are paid employees or volunteers. They truly care about all the girls and their welfare. CHES could definitely not operate as we do without these wonderful individuals.

During the past months, we looked after our girls even when schools were closed. The CHES board of trustees in both countries have been proactive in ensuring that CHES operations continued and that they were in contact with families throughout the closures.

In August as heavy rains interfered with the availability of power, cellular, internet and transport.

A sincere thank you goes to all those involved. We know that the girls and their families are most appreciative of both the past and ongoing efforts. Here in Canada, we are grateful as well as our Kenyan and Tanzanian staff and volunteers certainly went above their regular duties for CHES.

CHES Office: #102B - 9030 King George Blvd.,
Surrey, BC V3V 7Y3
Phone: (778) 565-5261

CHES@canadianharambee.ca
www.canadianharambee.ca
BN 13148 8017 RR0001

COVID Times for Tanzanian CHES Students

On March 17, 2020, Chris and I, at the request of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, were beating a hasty retreat to Canada after spending two and a half weeks engaged in CHES work in Katesh. We were also preparing for a Canadian Grade 12 Global Perspectives' class visit to help build a library in a local secondary school. The school visit had been cancelled the day the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic. On our drive to Kilimanjaro airport that day, the first COVID case in Tanzania was identified, and although no official lockdown has ever been mandated, all schools were instantly closed. We were on the last flight out of Tanzania and on the last KLM flight from Amsterdam to Vancouver.

Our Tanzanian Form 6 students, due to graduate at the end of June, were recalled on June 1



and sat their final exams on June 29. The successful grads are now preparing for college or university in September or looking for work to support their families.

Forms 1 – 5 students were recalled July 1. All our Form 5 students returned to school and will start Form 6 in September.

Our 260 Form 1-4 students, whose school year is January to December, did not fare so well. Twenty-six did not return to school. Some are pregnant, others were married off, and others have been kept home. As described in the July issue of the Economist magazine, this picture is typical of what is happening in Third World countries as a result of the pandemic. Teenage girls have been the group most vulnerable and most affected by not being at school. Our girls in Tanzania all come from families in the Hanang District, which has one small town and a huge area of subsistence and pastoral people living in extended family compounds. In times of trouble, the girls are desperately needed to help support and even ensure the survival of their families. Julia and Joy have been working hard in the CHES Office in Surrey to inform sponsors if their girl has not returned to school. In Tanzania, Naomi (our CHES treasurer there) and other Tanzanian board members are finding replacement girls for those we lost.

The girls who returned to school are now working extremely hard to complete their year. The July holidays and therefore our academic tutorials were cancelled and the school day has been extended by two hours. Many schools are holding classes on Saturday and even Sunday so that the students will catch up. Our girls are finding this very demanding.



Although the Hanang District has not been badly affected by COVID and no personal cases have been reported in our CHES community, girls who returned to the Sara Williams hostel in Katesh are practicing safe distancing, wearing masks and washing



their hands frequently. As Naomi writes from Tanzania: “Everyone says it is so strange and not usual not to shake hands with people when you greet them. Even when you go somewhere like a market, people are afraid even to be close to each other. Life is not normal.”



CHES has been able to purchase masks, hand sanitation stations and supplies, and extra tables to double our number of tables (so that eating and doing homework is at a safe distance) thanks to the special fundraising of Sara Williams and Willie Alexson with his annual April tomato plant sales in Saskatoon!

The knowledge that 26 of our girls have lost their chance to complete their secondary education is very hard for us to take. However, being aware that this group of teenage girls is multiplied by many girls worldwide and that this group is taking

the brunt of the effects of the pandemic in Third World countries, reinforces our commitment to continue supporting girls’ secondary education. From the bottom of our hearts at CHES we thank you, all our sponsors and supporters, so very, very much for all your caring, commitment and continued support.

by Catriona Harker

COVID and CHES Girls in Kenya

In mid-March schools closed in Kenya and all students were sent home with instructions on what and how they should study. However, the reality was that our girls had no access to the materials and certainly not to the online learning via TV, radio, computer or mobile phone. The Kenyan CHES board arranged for some materials to be printed off and given to our CHES girls so they would have something to study from.

In June, the Kenyan government reported that there were over 6,700 pregnancies in the Kakamega area alone among school-aged girls. The Canadian board was most concerned and wanted to ensure that none of the CHES girls was such a casualty due to the pandemic. The Kenyan board was asked for their suggestions as to what could be done for our girls.

Our Kenyan office manager, Rebecca, and the Kenyan board decided to run a series of workshops that the girls would be safe if they attended (small group, sanitizer and masks). The girls were put into groups of 15 and invited to the office; groups came on different days during the month of July. The sessions dealt with a variety of topics, including self-awareness, assertiveness, stress, COVID and avoiding pregnancy, as well as giving students support for their academics. A special session was held for our deaf students also. As students sat in the Louise Paulsen Memorial Shelter





they were very happy and attentive; they took notes and felt connected to CHES. All but 28 of the girls attended over the course of the month. CHEBAK members (CHES alumni) made in-person visits to the homes of the girls who missed the sessions. These 28 girls have since visited the office in Kakamega and picked up materials to use for their studies while at home.

At the end of June, the Kenyan government announced that schools would re-open on September 1. However, at the end of July that changed and the government decided to cancel the remainder of the school year and all students would repeat their school year starting in January 2021 – basically losing a full year. Fast-forward to September 21, when the government instead announced that teachers were to report back to their schools. Schools would reopen on October 19, and classes would continue until April for the current school year. For the 2021 school calendar, learning will begin in May or June.

by Joy Ruffeski



Tomatoes for Tanzania, 2020

Amid the dangers and restrictions of COVID-19, our 5th annual Tomatoes for Tanzania sale on May 15 was an outstanding success, but a very different occasion from the sometimes boisterous social affairs of previous sales. A host of volunteers (including Willie’s grandchildren) set up tables along the driveway the evening before. Because of a frost warning, the plants themselves (many going on two feet high and with flower buds) only got as far as the garage and were placed on the tables the morning of the sale.



Over 80 tomato lovers were slotted into pre-determined 15-minute slots, only four folks at a time. Our “charming but steely-eyed” gatekeeper, David Miller, did an amazing job of keeping people on time, socially distanced and happy. Robert Clipperton, David Meyer, and Bernadette Vangool kept the tomatoes coming from the greenhouse to restock the empty spaces, and Dorothy Bird was the keeper of the coin (a coffee can delightfully repurposed for the occasion).

Our largely unsung hero was Willie Alexson, who managed to grow over 1,000 plants of 30 varieties. Two weeks after the main event, sales continued, and we were able to mail a cheque to CHES for \$4,479.40.



Stocking Up

In addition to purchasing personal supplies (including soap, sanitizer and masks) for CHES students during the pandemic and for their return to school, Rebecca has been busy updating educational materials that the Kenyan students use. Revision books covering the whole syllabus from Forms 1 to 4 were obtained for math, physics, chemistry and biology along with set books for English. These books were recommended by the teachers and can be used for several years, thus cutting down on the expensive photocopying previously done so the girls had such materials.

Calculators, originally purchased in 2006 and used yearly since, were also replaced. This undoubtedly will make the students very happy, as many of the calculators were not functioning properly! Perhaps their math and science marks will improve as a result of these timely purchases.

by Joy Ruffeski



Progress at Dumbeta

Our spring newsletter showed pictures of the land on the grounds of Dumbeta Secondary School being cleared for the foundation of their library. Funds for this structure were donated by the students, staff, parents, and friends of Stelly's Secondary School in Central Saanich near Victoria.

The picture on the following pages shows that a lot of progress has been made, though the building remains far from complete.

After the Tanzanian students were sent home in March, construction proceeded but after several weeks it was deemed important to cease non-vital projects of this nature as the close working conditions of the labour force might have been too tempting to the COVID-19 virus. In addition, April to June is the period of the year when nearly everyone has to focus on their shambas (farm plots) in order to ensure a harvest that is bountiful enough to see each family through the year.





Students are now back in school and the threat of COVID, at least around Katesh, is seemingly non-existent. Funds remain in the bank that will permit construction to continue, but, to date, the contractor has his tradesmen working elsewhere. We hope very much that we will be able to provide a photo of the finished library in our next newsletter.

by Chris Harker

Grads in Kenya Give Back

The Kenyan office considers all former CHES graduates to be members of CHEBAK (CHES Beneficiaries Alumni Kenya) whether or not they have signed up as CHEBAK members. For many years alumni have played a crucial role in our operations in Kenya. During student selection they are involved with document and information verification and mark checking. They make all the verification visits to ensure that the selected students are as needy as they indicate.

CHEBAK members also help with advising current students with respect to study skills. They may also assist in the office as needed, distribute books and other supplies, or help with the orientation of agents. During workshops all the assistant facilitators are grads, as are most of the facilitators. There are many such willing individuals who readily share their work-related skills. These include Eunice Mukolwe (Assertiveness), Elizabeth Akwabi (Health Habits & Hygiene), Cynthia Shivachi (Reproductive Health), Vantor Mwelema (Self Awareness), Ruth Aleyo (Study Skills), and Edith Olwande and Rael Mulili (Youth & Technology). Even some men who were CHES beneficiaries before only girls were selected assist: Charles Munyendo (Math), Anthony Napali (Course Choices), and Bonface Mango (Career Options). Of assistance also are former and current patrons and board members who are exemplarily good to CHES and are willing to do anything to help CHES girls succeed. Rebecca reports, “We have more than enough human resources than even we need.”

The grads who assist are carefully chosen to ensure they have high moral values and show good leadership skills of being able to serve others. Patrons in the schools assist by recommending suitable trustworthy candidates. They are given training in the office, and older grads help train the new ones.

Within the community, many CHEBAK members are also helping others during the pandemic. Edith Olwande (featured in one of our former CHES newsletters) has even gone the extra mile to reaches the homes of families in her district.



We can't do everything . . . but we can do something!

Families for Children • Familles pour Enfants



111 Roseheath Ave, Toronto ON M4C3P6
10 Bowling Green, Pointe Claire QC H9S 4W1

sandraffc2@gmail.com www.familiesforchildren.ca

Families for Children (FFC) is a not-for-profit, non-sectarian organization that exists to fulfill the needs of children and young adults with physical and/or cognitive disabilities.

By providing housing, education, specialized medical care and vocational training, FFC helps these individuals to reach their full potential, and live with dignity in a loving environment

**To donate in Canada or the US visit our webpage at
<http://www.familiesforchildren.ca>
or click on one of the following links:**



We accept E-transfers now and have designated the email address of FFCdonation@gmail.com exclusively for this use.

Greetings from all of us here at Families for Children. Its been a challenging time for everyone involved, including volunteers, staff and the children. Schools are still closed and all the kids who are able have been learning via various online platforms. We have been chronically short staffed grasping for activities and themes to entertain all the kids. Like the rest of the world, we are hoping to see an end in sight, but worry about how we will cope.

We are always grateful for your support and the need is great at this time. Please consider us in your year end charity giving

Dhaka

The kids and staff in Dhaka have been busy. They've been on the rooftop gardening, in the library and computer room, playing indoor organized games and received a donation from a movie star. We had a visit from one of our older girls who now works with the Bangladesh army and she arranged a lovely lunch for the children.



With all the children usually in outside schools, the kids have been great support to one another. Below are photos of the children enjoying their meal.

A training session for 25 of our girls was arranged which included a day of sewing and painting on material, beading for jewelry and the center that provided the training also provided an array of treats like oranges, chips, cookies and apples.



On a happier note, Shanto is a special needs boys who has been with us for 2 years. His mother and uncle showed up with definitive proof that he is her son. She said he and his younger bother had left their home and

the younger brother was only 4 and unable to find their way home. The boys were reported missing by their family and the younger boy was located and returned home. Shanto was found in our district which is a different district from the one the family lived in. She was directed to the police station to submit her proof and get legal permission to take him home. The transfer was done with the police and he was delighted to see her and she was delighted to be reunited with her son.



India



India is still on lockdown and schools continue to remain closed. The children are using mobile phones and laptops to attend their online classes. Our older boys have been excellent with tutoring the younger boys and helping with assignments. Three of our high school aged children had to attend outside exams and went into quarantine after they were done.



Our staff have been excellent with finding activities and occasions to structure activities for the children. It gives them an opportunity to draw pictures and celebrate with meals as in the top photo for Thanksgiving and the bottom right celebrating grandparents. Even just relaxing in the sun as the bottom left photo shows with our blind children.

The two photos to the left are a couple of our girls working hard at online classes. The photo on the top left is Varsha working hard on her ninth standard curriculum work on a phone. All our children have been coping and all the mobile devices we have available for study use.



The photo to the far left wearing red is Lavanya studying her second year Engineering. She's an excellent student and has always impressed us with her ability to stay focused

One day at a time is our mantra at the moment. We are all in this together and keeping everyone safe is our top priority now.



Click on the Instagram and facebook links to follow us
**For everyday updates of photos and fun video
follow us on Facebook and Instagram**

