



## Northern Magic Fund for International Development

### **Dear Friends of Boniface, Hamisi and Northern Magic**

This is the first report I have ever written, so I would like to ask you to please bear with me. Writing had always been Diane's forte, but there is so much to tell and I will try my best to report it all to you.

Following Diane's death, I was elected to take her place as President of our recently formed Northern Magic Fund for International Development, whose mandate is to raise funds for education in Kenya. Karen Hooper and Diane King are the other members on our Board of Directors.

The Northern Magic Fund has also started to employ Andrew Thuva in Kenya on a part time basis to oversee our projects and ensure that the money we send is used for its intended purpose. We supplied Andrew with a motorcycle in order to visit the schools on a more frequent basis.

### **Our Visit to Kilifi**

Diane and I had been making plans to return to Kenya in July 2003 when she became ill. After her death, I made the decision to return alone. I was eventually joined by Karen Hooper who wanted to see first hand what the fund was doing in Kenya. One of the main reasons for going was to witness the renovations to Majaoni Primary School that Diane and I had approved last year. As the head teacher of Majaoni said, Words cannot describe it. You could see the hope in the eyes of the students, even when they had to

double up classes while the renovations were in progress. The spirit of the school was much higher than that of any of the other schools we visited. Teachers called Majaoni Primary School an example for all other schools to achieve. Students were proud that they did not have to sit in the dirt to study, that their roof did not leak, that they had desks to write on, and that their school colours were proudly displayed on the buildings.



*Workmen at Majaoni Primary School*

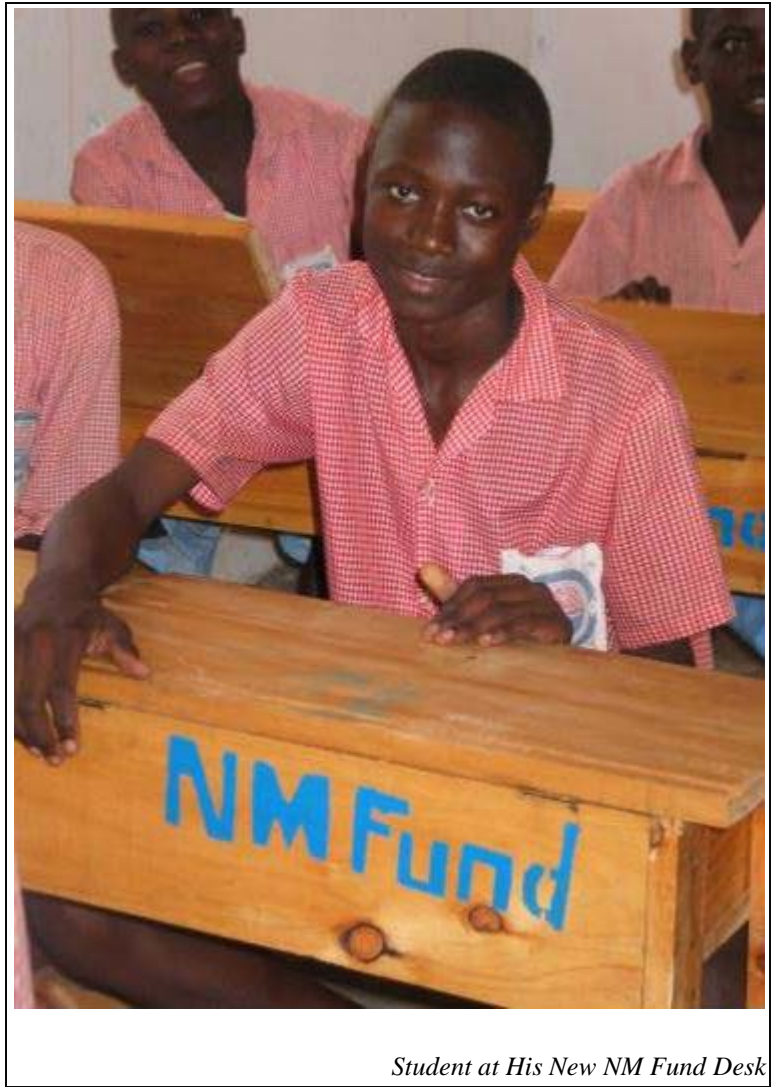
When we first arrived unannounced at Majaoni, we saw the hustle and bustle of workmen. There were masons and painters everywhere. It gave me immense pleasure to see that the donations not only helped the school but also had a ripple effect in the local economy. On a subsequent visit, on a Sunday, the workmen were still busy. I stopped to talk to one painter and said Hello, how are you? and he responded I am very happy. Why are you so happy? I asked and he answered brightly Because I am working!

During our initial visit to Majaoni Primary, we delivered over 300 Letters of Hope to the school, written by caring Canadians in response to an article in the Ottawa Citizen. After reading some of the letters, the head teacher was obviously touched. I can't tell you how much it means to them to know that someone so far away cares about them. I am pleased to say that in addition to the Letters of Hope, many donations were received. As a matter of fact, we received enough money to pay for the entire renovation project at Majaoni Primary School. Although we do not yet have the exact total of all the costs; an

estimate of \$21,000 is going to be very close to the final cost.

On the day of the inauguration of the newly renovated Majaoni Primary School, we were the guests of honor at a wonderful celebration given by the students and the community. [Click here for a short movie \(you need the newest Windows Media Player\)](#)

The desks, built at a lumber yard in Kilifi, were delivered to the school on the morning of the celebration. It was heart warming to see a teacher cheering and dancing in the school yard and the children's reaction as the truck arrived piled high with 100 new desks. The students carried the desks off the truck and into the yard where they would be used to view the day's events before finding a home in the classrooms. Before the official ceremonies began, I planted a palm tree in the school yard in memory of Diane. Children threw flower petals at us as we made our way to the head table. Many of the children were waving hand-painted Canadian flags. We were treated to a day of traditional African songs and dances, a [poem written just for the Fund](#), as well as a Taekwon-do demonstration. We graciously accepted their profuse thanks on behalf of all Canadians. There really are no words to describe that day.



*Student at His New NM Fund Desk*



*Song and Dance at Majaoni Primary*

During our stay in Kilifi, we visited many primary and secondary schools with the hope of twinning them with Canadian schools. In addition, we explained the new application process for financial assistance for secondary school students:

- 1) Students can apply for assistance only if there is no means in the family to support them to go to high school.
- 2) The students will have to be good students; academically and in spirit.
- 3) The head teacher and the teacher will have to agree and write any comments that they have about the student.
- 4) Students will be required to write a letter explaining why he or she deserves the opportunity to go to school.

We hope to be able to determine the most deserving students with this process, since the need for financial help to achieve secondary education in the Kilifi district is huge. There are 200 elementary schools in the district, yet only 30 high schools. High school tuition is not funded by the government. The government only covers the teachers' salaries. As you can see, only one out of seven students attends high school. An unskilled worker earns \$1.00 to \$1.50 per day. The average cost for high school is \$360.00 per year. A peasant farmer could never pay that.



*Studios young boy at Mtondia Primary*



*collapsed roof at Bahari Primary School*

We learned that the new government is now paying the tuition for primary education, however the maintenance of the buildings is not covered. We saw first hand the deplorable conditions of many primary schools. At Bahari Primary School, the roof on one of the buildings had collapsed during this past rainy season rendering it useless. Teachers at another school told us that today was a good day to visit their school. They said that it had rained the previous day and the children were forced to huddle in the corner of the classrooms

waiting for the rain to subside. The roof on this school was leaking badly and is basically beyond repair. Many schools we visited had roofs made from asbestos and some even used the asbestos roof for water collection. Bathroom facilities were almost non-existent. One 3' x 3' enclosure made from palm leaves, without so much as a hole, was not unusual for a school with 600+ students.

On the downside of the government's mandate to pay primary tuition, students who would have otherwise not been able to attend school are flocking to class causing unimaginable overcrowding. At Mtondia Public School, we saw 155 grade one students crammed into one five-by-eight meter classroom. Imagine? This is an image that will stay with me forever.



*155 students at Mtondia Primary School*

Malaria is another problem in Kilifi. In the short time we were in Kilifi, we found out that Andrew Thuva was just recovering from his bout of malaria when he picked us up at the airport. His wife had malaria the day we left and a foster child we visited was suffering from malaria as well. In too many cases, the people simply cannot afford the medication they need to overcome this disease.

## **George Ouma Post Secondary Project**



*George Ouma and Head Mistress Christine Kahindi at Majaoni Secondary*

We also had the pleasure to meet George Ouma. George is a very soft spoken, extremely bright, impeccably dressed young man. Truly amazing when you consider the shack without windows, water or electricity that he shares with his father who works as a security guard for \$1.00 a day. George is the very promising student that we supported last year. He has now completed high school and we are in the process of finding an affordable university program for him. He is a perfect example of how difficult it is to get an education in Kenya. When he was in grade 10, he would go to school from Monday to Friday and then work in a stone quarry for 12 hours a day

on Saturday and Sunday. He would earn \$2.00 for that work which would help to pay his school fees for the following week. I have never met anyone more dedicated than George. Although he is estimated to be in the top 250 students out of 250,000 students who wrote the national exams in Kenya, he would have no hope of attending university without the help of an organization such as ours. His passion is to become a doctor and we would love to help him accomplish his dream.

## **Boniface Educational Project**

We visited Boniface at his school. He is in a boarding school in Diani. His education is going well and he has only one more year to complete before graduating from high school.

## **Shark Tooth Jewellery Project**



*Hamisi holding necklaces*

Hamisi has married since I was last in Kilifi and is doing very well. In addition to selling jewellery to us, he is selling shark-tooth necklaces to the few tourists when there are some. Magic the cow had two calves but lost one of them. Hamisi also purchased a sewing machine for his wife with the profits of the shark tooth jewellery, which allows her to earn income making clothing for villagers. I purchased more

necklaces from Hamisi and with those profits he plans to buy two additional cows. He should have a herd of four by now.



*Hamisi's wife Maria*

## **Mark Thuva Hair Salon Project**



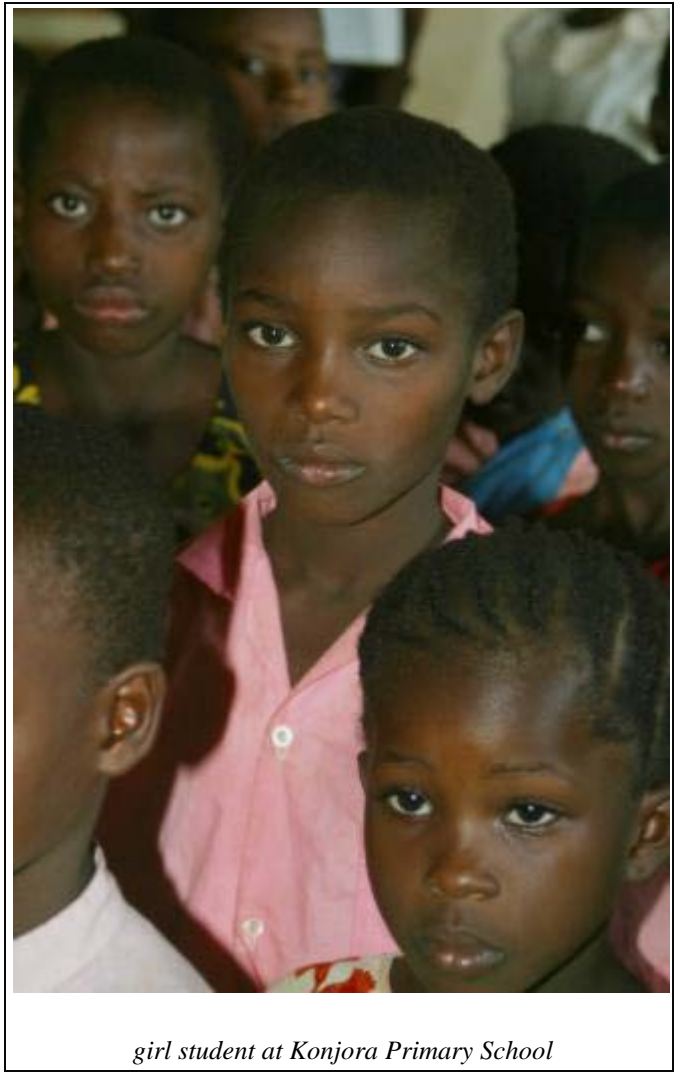
*Mark in his salon*

Mark has had a rough start with his business. He made the typical new business mistake of trying too many things at the same time. His business needed to be downsized. Even though his clientele is all local, the bombing last year in a nearby resort had a disastrous economical affect. Tourism has virtually stopped. Workers were laid off by the hundreds. The effect has been felt in the whole region. Mark has received some valuable advice from Canadian specialists and from Karen Sharp, the main supporter of Mark's hair salon. I am confident that he will be able to make his business profitable.

## Secondary School Project



Although Diane's rediagnosis with cancer early this year prevented us from being able to select students to attend high school for the 2003 school year, our Fund has made a commitment to send a minimum of 50 students to high school in the year 2004. We will be receiving application forms in November 2003, following the national exams, from all the schools we visited and will make our selection based mainly on recommendations from Andrew Thuva, who has been charged with interviewing every applicant. We hope to pair up deserving students with donors who would like to sponsor a specific student throughout their secondary education. We also plan to set up a webpage for every unsponsored child with the hope of pairing them up with donors. We believe that once someone has real contact with a student, it will be much more rewarding to see them excel. The Fund would have to pay for the students tuition in January 2004. The more people who commit to educate a student in Kenya, the more students we can send to high school.



*girl student at Konjora Primary School*

## **Charitable Status**

I am happy to say that we are now in the final stages of applying for charitable status. Pat Donahue, a chartered accountant, has kindly donated his time and expertise to help us with the accounting. We are now filing our first tax return and awaiting a letter of good standing from the tax department. Once we receive it, we will apply for the status. I am very optimistic that we can achieve that this year.



*Majaoni Primary school after renovation*

In closing, I would like to thank all of you who have so generously donated to our Fund. You are making a huge difference to the people in Kenya. I am so pleased that Diane's dream of creating an avalanche of hope and prosperity to the more unfortunate members of our world community has started to become a reality. With your help, we will continue to grow and make this world a better place. Thank you for Keeping the Magic Alive!