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NEF 2017 MID-YEAR NEWSLETTER

Happy 5th Year Anniversary NEF!

Following the 2016 End-of Year Newsletter, NEF generated a lot of excitement with two new volunteers and quite a list of goals we wanted to accomplish in 2017. We translated that enthusiasm into action, and we are happy to announce that by mid-year, we (including our students) have made some exciting achievements. Not only do we have a fancy, new logo, but on the 20th of May NEF turned 5! To celebrate, an intimate fundraiser dinner was hosted by Jessica and Dennis Nagtalon at their home in California. We were beyond the moon with the generosity of our guests and other donors who contributed a total of \$540. That money, along with a successful pop-up fundraiser on International Women's Day (March 8), enabled NEF to provide second semester tuition assistance for the five continuing students at Busijo Secondary School, and a \$350 scholarship for Busijo graduate, Sharon, who is studying business management and economics at Mumias branch of Maasai Mara University.

Five years ago, NEF was simply an idea to give back to a community in Kenya that had welcomed Jessica when she was a graduate student. She answered a call from the village elders to help them keep 'the girl-child in school'. From the first scholarships NEF distributed in 2012, we have supported 12 girls to achieve their high school educations, four of whom are in college or already graduated. We have sponsored three workshops at Busijo Secondary School, provided feminine hygiene kits, HIV/AIDS testing, revisions books, uniforms, shoes, solar lanterns, counseling and more. To get to this point has required hard work and determination from the NEF Team, and support, encouragement and a firm belief in our cause from our donors and partners. We are thankful for all of this; it has been a huge learning curve but also a blessing and a gift to see the young women under NEF's sponsorship blossom and achieve their dreams. We set out to improving access to education for young women and that is what we are still doing today and will continue to do for the next five years so that all girls can have the knowledge and skills to live to their fullest potential.



Introducing NEF's new logo!

At the top of this newsletter you will notice a colorful, new logo. That is a creation by graphic designer, Bianca Flores, who generously donated her time to work with NEF to develop our first ever professional logo. We started the process by administering a brief questionnaire to the girls in Kenya in order to gather their opinions about what NEF means to them, what images, colors, feelings or ideas they felt should be depicted in the logo. Bianca took this information, along with the NEF mission statement to draft some design concepts. Over the last five months, we have been going over the drafts and fine tuning them. The winning design is the one you see up above. In addition, we are using another graphic design by Bianca for an upcoming NEF T-shirt. We will keep you posted about when and where to purchase your very own NEF T-shirt! Many thanks to Bianca for all her time and creative effort! If you would like to learn more about Bianca and her portfolio, please visit her website: <https://www.bfloresdesign.com>.

Congratulations Judith, NEF's first college graduate!



From left to right: Judith's mother; Edmond, NEF's field officer; Judith and her father

On May 20, 2017, one of NEF's first beneficiaries at Busijo Secondary School, Judith, successfully graduated from Busia Teachers College with a diploma in Early Childhood Education. Currently, she is teaching at a private primary school in Kenya, as a preschool teacher. We are so proud of her! She is going to enrich the lives of so many children.

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2017 Student Health Workshop and HIV/AIDS Testing

NEF sponsored and organized, in collaboration with the School Advisory Committee, a health workshop on May 20, 2017 that was attended by 199 students out of 240 at Busijo Secondary School. The workshop was designed for both female and male students to help them acknowledge their potential as youth, and their aspirations as students. The sessions were led by local, professionally training community health workers. They imparted knowledge and tools necessary for the students to handle challenges both at a personal and family level, so they can embrace responsible practices and define their own destinies. Due to the long-standing concern with girl-child retention in the secondary school, we hope to minimize the number of cases of school drop-out due to early marriage and unplanned early pregnancies, and help them stay focused on their educations



Nurse Lilian gives a presentation to Busijo students at the health workshop.

(All photos courtesy of Mr. Ogombe Edmond, NEF's Field Officer who handles local project coordination.)

The workshop topics included:

- **Sexuality and Adolescence** - Adolescence is defined as the stage of transition in one's life between childhood and adulthood, typically 11-18 years of age. During this time, there are a lot of changes that are experienced – physically, emotionally and socially. It is also important for youth to understand the potential gravity of their actions; everything from HIV, pregnancies and poor academic results. During this part of the workshop we discussed how communicating to their parents is a vital part of their growth. By doing so, they are providing insight to their parents on what they are going through, as well as giving their parents the opportunity to understand where they're coming from as well as guidance.
- **Drug and Substance Abuse** - Drug and substance abuse is a common occurrence whether it has to do with peer pressure, economic factors or accessibility. By providing a safe environment to discuss the issue, it gives the students the opportunity to voice their concerns and in return we are able to educate and further explain the impacts that drugs can have on their success.
- **Pregnancy and Abortion** - This is by far one of the greatest concerns we face with our female students. Teen pregnancy is a multi-faceted issue that is also linked to a lack of knowledge about menstrual/women's health. During the conversation, we discussed sex and the potential outcomes of unprotected sex. The facilitators created a safe environment to touch base on the risks of teen pregnancies (poor health, suicide, unsafe abortion, etc.), how to prevent pregnancy (abstinence and the usage of condoms), and the realities of abortion (what it is and the complications that can occur).
- **HIV/AIDS** - While HIV prevalence has declined in recent years among the general population in Kenya, at least 1.5 million people in the country are living with HIV (UNAIDS Gap Report 2016). Young women are more at risk than young men because various forms of discrimination can place them in subordinate or forced relationships. According to the Kenyan AIDS Strategic Framework 2014/2015-2018/2019, as

reported by Avert.org "About 33% of girls in Kenya have been raped by the time they reach the age of 18, with 22% of girls aged 15-19 reporting their first sexual intercourse to have been forced". Kenya has placed importance on HIV/AIDS education and prevention, but the topic is still considered taboo or controversial. It is hard to control a virus that is so easily transmitted through unprotected sex when youth lack awareness and services. Busijo Secondary School has no regular funding for health education and the students have limited access to the local clinics because they are often closed when they get out of school. Therefore, NEF believed it was imperative to cover HIV/AIDS during the workshop and give the students an opportunity to ask questions and get tested. We discussed what the virus is, how it spreads and how to prevent infection and further transmission.



HIV/AIDS counseling at Busijo Secondary School.

Student Evaluation of the May 2017 Health Workshop

Following the health workshop, NEF carried out an evaluation survey to help us establish the extent of its impact and areas of improvement for the unmet and future needs of the students. Approximately 112 students (53 male and 59 female) took part in the feedback evaluation. The students were required to rate the aspects of the workshop on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest, most negative score, and 5 being the highest, most positive impression of the workshop.

Overall, 82% of the respondents (92 students) thought the workshop was successful and 91% would recommend it to other people. Importantly, 100% of the student respondents thought the workshop was a good way for them to learn about the challenges they face as adolescents, and 100% feel they are able to use the information they learned at the workshop. In particular, the students hope to change their behavior by avoiding unhealthy relationships, abstaining from sex, showing respect to others and themselves, being positive role models, and staying focused on their studies.

In terms of areas of improvement, the respondents thought more time was needed for the workshop, and especially for counseling and HIV/AIDS testing. The students would like future workshops to revisit the topics of HIV/AIDS, general health and sex education, boy/girl relationships, peer pressure, and drug abuse, as well as aspects of poverty and time management to improve their study skills.

Computer Training for College Prep and Professional Development

As NEF is able to expand we are now looking to add more opportunities for our students. Because we live in such a high-tech world, and in order to prepare for college and be successful in today's age, you must possess a certain amount of technological knowledge. Many students have urged for a computer class and NEF is happy to announce that this July we were able to provide funding for all five NEF beneficiaries and one top performing, male student to receive 42 hours of computer training at a local technical college. This initial offering will be evaluated after the students complete the entire course, and if it is deemed successful NEF will include it as a regular college prep program for the NEF beneficiaries. Other Busijo students will also be encouraged to apply for the course. The current cost is \$30/student.



Current NEF Beneficiaries at Busijo Secondary School.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Since January 2017, NEF has raised \$1200. We need to raise about the same amount for the second half of the year in order to continue providing student tuition and the other valuable services described in this newsletter. NEF appreciates your continued support. Here is how you can help:

1. Make a financial contribution, either for a general or specific purpose:

- \$350 provides one semester of college tuition for Sharon who is studying at the Mumias branch of Maasai Mara University to receive a diploma in business management and economics.
- \$220 provides one semester university tuition for Velma who is completing her second year towards her Bachelor's degree in Education.
- \$200 provides one year of high school for one female student.
- \$100 one revision book set, which can be shared by multiple students
- \$60 provides one pair of shoes and a uniform set for one student so she looks presentable and feels confident in school.

- \$35 provides on solar lantern for one student so she can study at night, or one feminine hygiene kit so a girl can attend school feeling clean and protected.
- \$30 Provides a computer class for one student to help her get a head start in college.

Contributions can be made in two ways:

1. NEF's secure donation page, hosted by The Zawadisha Fund:
<https://www.classy.org/checkout/donation?eid=52123>
2. Mail a check to: The Zawadisha Fund. Please write 'NEF donation' in the memo line and mail the check to: P.O. Box 1517, Truckee, CA 96160. All donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. The tax ID number for Zawadisha, NEF's fiscal sponsor, is 46-0583426.

Zawadisha receives the money on NEF's behalf and then disperses it to NEF and provides financial reporting to the US Internal Revenue Service. In every other respect, NEF maintains independence from Zawadisha.

2. Host a dinner party or game-night with friends to benefit NEF. This works best for small groups of 6-12 people and can be as casual or formal as you wish. See photos above from a recent NEF dinner.

3. Donate sanitary napkins or reusable hygiene kits, medicine, etc. NEF can deliver these items directly to students in Kenya this year if we receive them before September 1, 2017. If you are interested in making such a donation, please contact Jessica at nasirumbi.educ.fund@gmail.com.

4. Purchase a handmade pillowcase or set. Rolling price is \$15-20 for one and all profits go to NEF. Please contact nasirumbi.educ.fund@gmail.com for more information. We will send photos of the pillowcase designs that we currently have available.

Discover more about NEF, our students and how you can donate or get involved www.nasirumbi.org!

WITH THANKS

As NEF is able to grow so are the possibilities for our recipients. We are so appreciative of all our supporters (both new and existing). We could not have achieved what we have without each and every one of your contributions. We will continue to work hard and put forth the effort for NEF and our students to continue to thrive.