

Greetings from RCPUSA!

It's that time again! Time to fill you in on all the progress that Rabondo Community Project (RCPUSA) has made thanks to the generosity of supporters like you!

Our First Exchange Student!

This is an exciting year for RCPUSA as we have been able to secure education and lodging in the Twin Cities for one of our at-risk youth. Sheillah, a brave 10 year-old, was selected because of her discipline and dedication to her education.

Many years ago, Sheillah's family was shattered by her father's death, leaving her and her siblings in desperate poverty. She had to leave her insecure home and has been in the care of RCPUSA for many years. RCPUSA has supplied boarding school fees, school supplies, medical and dental care costs, safe housing during school holidays and transportation to and from boarding school.

The impact of Sheillah's education will not only change her future, it will have ripple effects throughout the village. When word spread that Sheillah was rewarded for her dedication and hard work with the opportunity to study in the US, her peers became motivated. They saw that they too could aim high. Also, when Sheillah returns to Kenya, she will have a different perspective. She will see all that is possible and bring back that sense of what can be achieved. Of course we cannot emphasize enough the benefit that this opportunity brings to a young girl. Traditionally in many parts of Kenya, educating boys has been valued more than the education of girls which has resulted in limiting these girls' opportunities. RCPUSA has been trying to reverse that gap and

sees the education of girls as equally important.

We are grateful for the generosity of St. Therese, who has donated two years of tuition-free education and school supplies. We are also grateful the family that has volunteered to host Sheillah for the next two years, having taken her in as one of their own. While her tuition and board have been covered, and the host family has been given warm winter clothes by generous neighbors, RCPUSA is still needing funds to help cover various costs of her time in the United States. RCPUSA has been diligent that she receives proper medical and dental care and, of course, we need to feed this growing girl who has a particular fondness for our Honeycrisp apples! Monetary donations for this hardworking girl would be greatly appreciated.



Sheillah's First Day of School in the United States

We are hopeful that this is just the first student that can pursue an American education and an understanding of the world outside of Kenya. Thank you to our supporters who's donations have helped build a bridge between Kenya and Minnesota.

continued on page 2



Frank Babka (left) and Timon Bondo

of our board meetings (as seen in picture to above)!

Timon Bondo (our founder) and Mr. Babka met many years ago at a "Books for Africa" event, another one of Mr. Babka's philanthropic interests (among many, including rotary club). Mr. Babka showed interest in RCPUSA's belief that self-sufficiency and the chance to rise up from poverty could be achieved through education and proper health care. Since then, he has remained a generous and consistent donor to RCPUSA, increasing the

Donor Spotlight: Frank Babka

One Man's Dedication to Change The World and How We See It

This year, we'd like to celebrate one of our longest-standing donors, Mr. Frank Babka. Mr. Babka has been a key supporter for RCPUSA for nearly a decade and has even attended some

size of his gift every year. This has helped sustain our projects considering this recent difficult economic downturn.

Mr. Babka is the only child of immigrant parents who worked hard to create a new life here in the United States. They made sure that their son was educated and prepared for his future... and prepared he was! He studied hard, then worked hard, and became successful, but his life was not yet complete. You see, one downfall to a good education and a drive for understanding the world we live in is discovering just how much some people, most people, don't have. He couldn't stay in his office chair any longer. He had found success and wanted to help create opportunities for others, so he has dedicated his life to helping those who aren't able to help themselves and to educated those of us who can.

Mr. Babka now spends his days supporting organizations who share his vision, including RCPUSA. His concerns also include the

continued on page 3

Focusing On Our Core Belief... Education

This year has proven to be a difficult year in raising funds for our capital projects, so RCPUSA is focusing our energies and funds on continuing to create a solid future for our most needy. RCPUSA continues to care for 36 children, ages 3-18, that come from severely disadvantaged homes (Sheillah, mentioned earlier, is one of these). These children are simply not in a position to stay with their families and attend the day-school built by RCPUSA. Instead, RCPUSA has found a boarding school for these children and covers their school fees, school supplies, incidentals, medical and dental care, transportation to and from school during the school holidays and transitional housing for the children to stay in while they are on school holiday. It takes less than \$800 per year per child to provide a good education, health care, and a safe place to spend



The current tin kitchen (left) and our future kitchen with dining hall in progress (middle and right) where the students can eat sheltered from the weather.

school holidays. Please consider a donation for our strongest priority, the education of these children. Can you include as your wish list, sponsoring one of these children at \$15, \$25 or more per month? Education is so important for their future.

High Marks for Rabondo Students

When RCPUSA began its work in Kenya, there was no school. Only dedicated students that used rocks for desks, dragging them under the shade of sparse trees and scratched their letters and numbers into the hard dirt. Over ten years later and with the help of so many generous donors, RCPUSA has built a primary school and secondary school that has educated hundreds of students. This year, 452 students will have graduated from the secondary school and 30 have post-secondary degrees, including areas of study such as engineering, teaching, and information technology.

Safe Water – Key to a Healthy Life

While education is part of our mission at RCPUSA, so is access to safe water is incredibly important to good health. Many diseases, such as cholera and typhoid, still flourish in locations where standing water sources are shared. Our Safe Water Project, has made great strides in the recent past – the drilling of a bore hole, testing of water, and installation of a temporary pump and small tank. Sadly, as funds grow tighter the second part of our project has remained unfinished. This year we have only been able to make repairs when needed to the small, temporary tank and platform near the well pump. We have also purchased bricks to build the kiosk to protect the well head, pump, and electric meter.

DONATE? VOLUNTEER?

To volunteer, contact us at:

763-545-2828 or info@rcpusa.org

To give a monetary donation, please submit checks to:

Rabondo Community Project, USA
PO Box 27954
Minneapolis, MN 55427

PayPal is available:

www.rcpusa.org
Click 'Donate - Volunteer' tab
towards the top of the page.

Short on cash and time?

If tougher times have you left you short on cash and not travelling these days, consider donating your unused frequent flyer miles. It takes 85,000 miles for Timon to visit Rabondo every year to view the progress of our projects.

The Rabondo Community Project USA is a 501(c) (3) organization and gifts are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Our Safe Water Project, Phase II, includes several smaller portions. The first portion is the building of a tower with large tanks to store water and provide water pressure. The second portion includes running piping from the pump to the tower and from the tower to several points of distribution including the primary and secondary schools, medical clinic, new kitchen and a kiosk for local residents to access the water. The last two portions include building a structure to protect the well pump and meter, and to purchase a permanent electric meter. If you or your organization are interested in providing safe, accessible water, please contact us. Any contribution would be greatly appreciated.

Father Forliti's Kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of the home and so it is the heart of Father Forliti. Last year we featured Father Forliti and his dedication to the construction of a kitchen and dining hall for the students of RCPUSA's secondary school. Previously, the students were forced to eat outside in the dusty wind or rain, as were the women cooking over wood fires. Storage of dry goods is also difficult in these conditions.

Work is in progress on the new kitchen, but more needs to be done. We are still in need of funds for the finishing work. We are also in need of some funds for the furnishings, like tables and chairs and storage for dry goods and cooking supplies.

Luna Pads

For many years now, RCPUSA has had a wonderful relationship with LunaPads helping us keep our girls in the classroom. To

purchase pads to donate to RCPUSA, see LunaPads' Pads4Girls program at: <http://lunapads.com/about-us/donate-pads>.

Alternatively, we are considering putting together sewing patterns and creating our own kits similar to those created by LunaPads. If you or a group that you know are the crafty type, please contact Molly at mrolfsmeier@gmail.com so that we can discuss how you or your group could help.

Current Gifts

Every year, it is a hard decision to make to send out our newsletter. While we want to keep everyone informed of the progress we make every year, the cost for producing this piece is considerable. With this in mind, RCPUSA hopes that we can count on you and your financial support.

It is only with the dedication of our supporters that we can continue to better the lives of the people of Rabondo. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this another successful year. We appreciate your support which is helping to give hope and dignity to the village of Rabondo. To find out how you can volunteer or contribute, please contact us at www.rcpusa.org (or via other contact info listed to the right). **Any amount of contribution will be greatly, greatly appreciated!**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

Exciting news: Celebrating 10 Years of Support!

Long time supporter, Concierge Services Program of Fanshawe College, Ontario, Canada, is celebrating 10 years of support with a special opportunity! The college is inviting one student from Rabondo for an education tour in Ontario this spring. This student will attend classes and field trips. Over the past decade, students at Fanshawe College have raised funds to help build classrooms and provided supplies and uniforms for the students of Rabondo village.

Frank Babka, continued from page 1

rebuilding of Haiti after the 2010 earthquake and he has recently travelled to Africa.

He also donates his time to speak to groups, including many students, about the impact of global population (or overpopulation) on poverty, hunger, and the environment. You can read more about this activity at www.worldpopulationbalance.org/presentations_babka.

While Mr. Babka has been a generous supporter of RCPUSA for many years, he wanted to make sure that deserving students got support they needed. For example, one such student, Stephen, has graduated with a degree in Information Technology this summer from the University of Nairobi. This has not only empowered this individual, but has also positively impacted the village of Rabondo, as he is the first in the community to receive such a degree. (You can read a letter from Stephen on page 4.)

Mr. Babka's commitment to RCPUSA is profoundly changing the future for the children of Rabondo. For his generosity, we are so grateful. We wish there were more Frank Babka's to help make such a difference needed in the world today!

Testimonial: Denish Budi, Chairman of the PTA and Rabondo Resident

This project began over 10 years founded by Mzee Timon Bondo, the patron of the project. This project was founded to deal majorly with education, health, clean and safe water, electricity and environment.

What was supposed to be a primary school for the community had been closed by the government due to lack of required facilities and teaching staff. RCPUSA rescued the situation and provided the required facilities. It was built to reduce illiteracy level in the community. Today the school has good classrooms which are conducive for learning. RCPUSA also made effort to employ teachers to help reduce understaffing because the government has not been able to employ enough teachers.

The project also provided learning materials and supplies such as desks, pens and pencils, books, uniforms, and even water tanks for catching rain water. Today, the playing objects like slides and swings are standing in the school compound helping the young kids to play during their free time.

As a result of this improvement, in 2011 a girl from our primary school scored the highest score on a nationalized test in the district as a whole. She was then sponsored by Equity Bank to continue her education in the top girls' secondary school in the country, all expenses paid.

In addition to primary school, the RCPUSA built the secondary school without the hand of the government. Today, over four hundred students have graduated from the school and a number of them have completed their college education.

The school has created an impact to the community since ¾ of the families from within and around Rabondo have at least one secondary school graduate in their homes today. Families that could not afford expensive boarding school fees elsewhere, are today beneficiaries as St Timon's Secondary School is a day school where parents can afford the small fee that is required.

Illiteracy level has gone down in the community as most of the youths can now speak English and have improved their thinking capacity. Some of the youths are in college and will become professionals after graduating. This will help improve their living standard.

Recently, RCPUSA drilled a permanent bore hole to provide safe and clean. This will help prevent water borne diseases. Electricity has also been supplied to the school and the clinic from RCPUSA.

RCPUSA has also put up a health clinic that will help to attend to the patients from the community without travelling for long distance in search of medical care. The project has generally changed the community in different ways and we continuously appreciate the efforts of Mzee Timon Bondo. Thanks to the supporters of RCPUSA.

*Yours Faithfully,
Denish Budi
Community Member and PTA Chairman,
St. Timon's Rabondo Secondary School*



Rabondo Community Project, USA

PO Box 27954,

Minneapolis, MN 55427

www.rcpusa.org

Letter From One of Our Recent University Graduates!



Stephen in his cap and gown

I am Stephen Ooko, a graduate from the University of Nairobi living in Rabondo village. I attended school at St Timon's Rabondo Secondary School before my invitation to join the University. I am very grateful to RCPUSA for the support they have given me to reach this level. About 10 years ago, my father died as a result of being overrun by a bus while standing on the roadside. At the time of his death, we were

living in a rental house. After that, we were forced to move out because we had no money to pay the rent. My other siblings and I moved in to settle in a small crowded hut with my grandma in Rabondo village. This is where I settled and had the opportunity to continue my education in a secondary school with the support of RCPUSA. Four years later, I succeeded in passing my exams and joined the University of Nairobi, majoring in Information Technology, and graduated in August. I am not the only one who received support from RCPUSA. We are many and now that a number of us have graduated, we would like to give back. We have formed an alumni association of St Timon's Rabondo Secondary School to collaborate and find ways to give back more through education – which we believe our future depends on.

Through RCPUSA, the community has generally changed. The secondary school is doing well. By the end of this school year, it will have a total of 452 students who will have completed their secondary school since it began in 2003. Within the same time period, more than 30 students are today graduates from different Universities and colleges. This is amazing in a community where there was none before that. In fact some of the students have gotten jobs and are now able to support their families. We appreciate the vision RCPUSA has for this village and we hope their effort will continue.

*Indeed the community, especially the students, were excited to receive Dr. Lewis Kamiri, board member of RCPUSA, during his recent visit to Rabondo from the United States to see firsthand the progress that had been made. He appreciated what he saw although a lot more needs to be done. His visit inspired the community and the students at both the primary and secondary schools. Such visits help sustain hope. In just under two weeks before Dr. Kamiri arrived, a representative from the district education office also shared with students, parents, teachers, and members of the community on the importance of education. He acknowledged and appreciated the contribution that RCPUSA had made in accomplishing what the government was unable to deliver in providing opportunity for education. I would only encourage those supporting the effort of RCPUSA to continue doing so to make a difference in this community. **Thank you!***