A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The excitement of beginning 2020 has been dampened by the worldwide Coronavirus. Kenyan students, like those in the USA, have been impacted despite their readiness with new uniforms and supplies. In the USA, a 10-day “Immersion” trip to Kenya in March/April has been postponed. CSA board members Dolores Battle, Mary Klaus and I were going to Kenya with others from Friends of Kakamega to meet with Kakamega Care Center staff, visit students’ homes, and see our emerging programs first hand. We look forward to being able to reschedule as soon as travel is deemed safe. The new Strong Young People agricultural training program is described in this newsletter, following Sharon’s story as an example of a new Form 1 student under the Family Care approach. Disappointingly, CSA’s annual Kentucky Derby Party for May 2 has been canceled. See below. Thank you for your caring and support this year and in the past! Together we will weather the storms and press on with our goal of assisting disadvantaged students in pursuing education.

- Alison Hyde

MEET OUR NEWEST BOARD MEMBER

Dolores Battle is Professor Emeritus of Speech Language Pathology at SUNY Buffalo State. She is the former president of both the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA), and the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics (IALP). She has received numerous awards for her work in multicultural and global issues in the profession including Honors of ASHA, Honored member of the IALP, and The Diversity Incentive Award from the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Science and Disorders. She is widely published in communication disorders in culturally and linguistically diverse populations and global issues. Dr. Battle has traveled professionally to 40 countries on five continents including much of Europe, Australia, South Africa, Brazil, Peru, and Kenya. We are so pleased to have Dolores join us, bringing her vast experience and knowledge to the board.

Dear Friends of CSA,

It is with great sadness that we must cancel our 6th Annual Kentucky Derby Run for the Roses event on May 2, 2020. We wish everyone well in our global community and encourage all to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In previous years we have counted on the Kentucky Derby event to raise more than $25,000 toward our annual budget. While we are disappointed to be canceling the event, we hope you will consider a donation so that we are able to continue our programs supporting those that are most vulnerable. We recognize that we will not be providing you with the festivities of fancy hats and mint juleps, but we hope that you will understand the impact this funding has on our students, and recognize how important your donations are to their education and well-being.

With gratitude,
Alison Hyde, President and the CSA Board

Donations can be made online at www.crossroadsspringsafrica.org or by mail to PO Box 242, East Aurora, NY 14052
MEET A STUDENT AND FAMILY FROM OUR NEW FORM ONE CLASS

Fourteen year-old Sharon impressed everyone with an excellent score on the Kenyan national exam that all 8th graders take, placing #1 in her class of 34 students. Seeing the incredible need back at home, we know this academic performance was only achieved through sheer determination and hard work on Sharon's part. Sharon says she wants to be a doctor and that her favorite hobbies are drama and singing, talents that she will now be able to develop in the Drama and Singing Club at her new high school. Without our assistance Sharon's family could not afford to send her to high school, in fact none of her older siblings had the chance to proceed in school after 8th grade.

Sharon lost her father when she was still a baby. Her mother, Nafreda, worked hard to support her children on her own, selling bananas from a basket to earn income and walking over 15 miles each day in search of customers. Nafreda can no longer carry the heavy loads of bananas that she once could. She wishes instead to start raising chickens as a way of earning income, and with CSA's pivot toward a Family Care approach, we will assist her in doing this.

As we adapt our programs so they will help whole families rise above poverty, we are excited to explore ways to assist Sharon's family as well as other students and their families who face similarly daunting challenges.

SPONSOR A STUDENT

Please consider a sponsorship for $800 per year that can be paid yearly, quarterly or monthly. We have individuals, family groups, book clubs and grandparents, on behalf of their grandchildren, sponsor a student! If a sponsorship is not something you can do then please consider a donation to support one of our programs. Our Polly Fund supports university students and our pilot project, Strong Young People, will help create opportunities for recent high school graduates. To sponsor a student or make a donation please visit our website: crossroadsspringsafrica.org.

CSA is now supporting 112 high school students. Several high school students still would love to have a sponsor. Seven from the 2019 graduating class received Direct Entry into University or College for continued study. CSA has 25 post secondary (University) students. Our first University student graduated this year.

STRONG YOUNG PEOPLE: AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS TRAINING

This new program benefits our high school graduates who have not qualified for colleges and universities. We believe that all young people deserve a chance to make the most of their talents and motivations, and we are continuously working to develop, run, and improve training programs that help post-high-school youth start businesses as they build independent adult lives.

The program was officially launched on January 20th, assisting 19 young people to find meaningful incomes from their most valuable physical asset in common: farmland. Because most agriculture in western Kenya is subsistence-based, and few villagers have ever seen higher-earning agricultural activities, the program will start by providing inspiration and exposure to new ideas and activities through field trips and guest speakers. They will see mushroom farms, fruit orchards, fish ponds, and successful horticulture and poultry ventures. The youth will then take part in business-plan training, compare and select an agribusiness activity, and break into smaller groups for production-training specific to their chosen endeavors. Following this, each participant will receive a “micro-grant” of start-up capital to launch their new farm business, followed by continued mentorship, on-farm visits from our agricultural field officers, and workshops that will link them to microfinance banks so they can grow and expand their businesses in the future.