



LET US CONTINUE TO SEND YOU OUR GOOD NEWS, ELECTRONICALLY!

Crossroads Springs Africa is now *Friends of Kenya Rising*. We love sharing news with you, however, this will be the last printed newsletter unless you respond in one of the following ways. In order to provide more engaging newsletters, with less environmental impact, and saving the cost equivalent to one year's support of a family, we will only be sending newsletters via email. We will no longer send printed newsletters unless you request one. If you have email, please email info@friendsofkenyarising.org and include your name in the email, OR, call or text our database administrator, John McFadden, at (518) 429-5746 with your name and email address, or specify that you want a printed version. Alternatively, fill out the enclosed postcard and send it back so we can send you e-newsletters with even more engaging photos and links to more in-depth information, or request the printed version.

JOHN CHISHOLM, FRIENDS OF KENYA RISING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



John Chisholm
Executive Director

Dear Supporters,

Now that the consolidation of *Friends of Kakamega* and *Crossroads Springs Africa* is complete and our feet are firmly planted on the ground, I write to introduce myself. I am John Chisholm, Executive Director for *Friends of Kenya Rising* (FKR). Let me share a brief version of a long journey that brought me to this point, going back now more than half of my life.

I first organized a fundraiser for our organization in 2002, and traveled to Kakamega in 2003 as a junior in high school. The calling that my mother, Sukie Rice, felt to start *Friends of Kakamega*, and that Alison Hyde felt in starting *Crossroads Springs Africa*, must have rubbed off on me. Over the next decade, through undergraduate studies at Wesleyan University and building a life in California, I kept returning to Western Kenya every year or two. With each visit my attachment to our organization grew stronger and my friendships in Kenya grew deeper.

Hoping to both build my career and find a job in Kenya where I wanted to be, in 2014 I moved to Minneapolis to join a graduate program at the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs. During that time I also joined the *Friends of Kakamega* Board of Directors and successfully applied for several grants on behalf of the organization. I graduated in 2016 with a Master of Development Practice in International Development (MDP), with Minors in Public Policy and in

Natural Resources Science and Management. In 2017 I started work as a contractor for what is now FKR, helping us go digital and planning for the future with our partners in Kenya. Today I find myself as Executive Director at the helm of a small but highly impactful organization, working hand-in-hand with the leadership in Kenya and volunteers in America as we develop what is now a rapidly-growing pair of organizations in Kenya and the US.

Much of my life is in Kenya, as are many of my closest friends and my soon-to-be-wife, Mary. There are staff members in Kakamega who I've known for more than ten years, and two dozen more who I've enjoyed getting to know more recently. I can now converse in Swahili and enjoy doing so, even though I'm far from fluent. Every day, with passion, I learn more about the country, particularly Western Kenya, and its geography, cultures, politics, and systems. Every day, with even more passion, I think about how to make our organizations stronger.

I've been with what has become FKR since the start, and I look forward to helping build an organization that has an ever-widening impact. I'm proud to be with FKR as we steer into exciting but uncharted waters. I look forward to helping guide our vision and growth as we evolve and scale our impact assisting students and families rising out of poverty.

In this newsletter I am pleased to share with you the names and faces of the FKR Board of Directors. The Board is made up of people from both *Friends of Kakamega* and *Crossroads Springs Africa*. Also in this newsletter, you can read more about the reopening of Kenyan schools, the COVID-19 situation in Kenya, and the process of how new families join our programs.

I am always here to answer your questions and share more about our progress. Feel free to reach out to me. My email address is john@friendsofkenyarising.org.

Warm regards, John Chisholm, Executive Director

KENYA COVID-19 UPDATE

The coronavirus caseload and death toll in Kenya have remained quite low compared to the US, and a second wave was quashed by February. Unfortunately, a third wave is now hitting hard and test positivity rates are suddenly back over 15 percent from just a few percent a month ago.

Kenya has a mask mandate as well as social distancing and hygiene rules. There are also restrictions on group functions and a night curfew. Late last week, due to a rising third wave, the government announced a raft of additional protection measures including an immediate ban on movement into or out of the worst-hit counties, effectively sealing off badly-hit Nairobi and its environs from the rest of the country. On April 2nd, 2021, there were 1,851 new cases detected and 19 new Covid-related deaths. Total positive cases recorded in Kenya stood at 136,893 and deaths at 2,186.



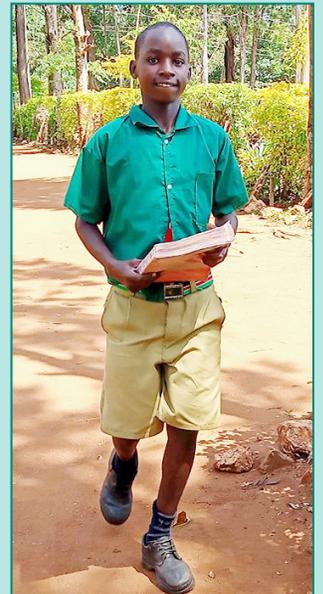
FRIENDS OF KENYA RISING BOARD OF DIRECTORS

From top left: Leah Bennett (President), Betsy Wallace (Secretary), Rachel Williamson, John McFadden (Treasurer), Alison Hyde, Mary Klaus, Linda Bennett, Mary Scalzi, Carra McFadden (Vice-President), John Chisholm (Executive Director), and Frannie Noble. If we had your email address, you could click on the pictures and read each director's bio!

ALL SCHOOLS IN KENYA HAD BEEN FULLY REOPENED

After nearly nine months away, all Kenyan students returned to classes on January 4th. Our staff in Kenya were busy handling fee structures and following up on special cases, helping ensure nearly 180 high schoolers and 50 college students were at school attending classes. 500 students were back at primary schools, assisted in part by a stipend from FKR.

On March 26th last week, to address a rising third wave of COVID-19, the Kenyan government announced new measures including restrictions on intercity travel and the temporary closure of schools affecting colleges and vocational institutions. Exam candidates finishing Class 8 and Form 4 are now sitting for their big tests, and they will be exempt from rules on travel when it's time to go home. All other students were already at home, having just started a 7-week break after finishing their first in-person term since the pandemic started. It remains unclear whether the new, 30-day emergency orders will be extended and disrupt the school calendar once again. Everyone is hoping that the new third wave of coronavirus is contained and schools will be able to re-open as planned after the scheduled term break that ends in mid-May. The delayed 2020 school year will hopefully finish as planned in early July, and, after a short break, the 2021 school year will start at the end of July.



HOW FAMILIES JOIN FAMILY CARE PROGRAM

Our process for family-intake is purely need-based, with primary considerations of need being evaluated by living conditions, barriers to accessing education, health status, agricultural production gaps, and challenges to earning income. Community leaders from the rural regions, our Regional Coordinators, nominate needy families for support, and other cases are forwarded by

school principals, village chiefs, and the like. Our social workers visit and screen those families to determine where the need is greatest, then they get together to score and compare each application to decide which families to recommend for support.

Our goal is to assist the neediest families as they rise out of poverty through programs in our five "guiding star" areas, namely education, basic needs, health, agriculture, and livelihoods.

If you are able to support a family in great need through sponsorship, please reach out to our Donor and Sponsor Coordinator, Carra McFadden, at carra@friendsofkenyarising.org.

www.friendsofkenyarising.org

- DONATE
- BECOME A SPONSOR
- GET INVOLVED

- Volunteer in the US
- Host an event
- Visit Kenya and see our impact
- Support us through CLYNK or Amazon Smile

Have you received a stimulus check and would like to make a donation? Please do! Your donation will go to our "Healthy Homes" program for much needed home renovation for families. Donate at friendsofkenyarising.org/healthy-homes-donation, or send your check to our treasurer.

Give on-line, or mail a check to
 Friends of Kenya Rising
c/o John McFadden, Treasurer
3 Echo Lane North
Sherman CT 06784
 Become a sponsor on our website
 or reach out to:
info@friendsofkenyarising.org
(802) 490-0522