



Project Education, Inc.

Supporting The Clay International Secondary School in Kenya



Late Fall 2013 Newsletter

New from Clay International Secondary School

- Daryl Campbell, Board of Directors

Clay International Secondary School is in the business of changing lives. But it is not only our students' lives that are impacted. Anyone who sets foot on the deep red soil in Ngomano, who beholds the school's grounds and facilities that have been created by the Clay parents and people of the village, feels something special, something powerful. This past October,



Director of the Clay School, Benson Mutua, Chairman of the Board - Bob Wax and I spent a week together on the Clay campus. As usual, upon arrival we were met with smiles, laughter, singing and dancing. This is a scene that when I encountered it for the first time some six years ago, it melted my heart and changed my life forever. It felt good to be home.



The campus looks absolutely stunning. Completed only a few weeks after we broke ground this past July, a new solar-powered dining hall has been finished which is immediately visible upon entering the campus. Director Benson has overseen several new plantings by the parents, adding to the already beautiful, picturesque landscape.

And our students now enjoy a newly blacktopped basketball court – with two challenging “3-point lines” – proudly adorned with “Clay Warriors” along the edges. Thanks go out to Benson, all the donors and parent volunteers who helped make the new sports facility a reality.



Over the course of my 5 days on campus, I had the opportunity to speak in the classrooms with all 130 students in Forms 1 through 4. My message was simple – education is the gateway to realizing dreams. I talked about being a college President, (I am currently Interim President of Shoreline Community College, near Seattle) and the kids were curious about my life in that role, asking very engaging questions like. “What are your biggest challenges?” “Getting enough money to pay for everything that my college’s students need,” I told them was one challenge. The Clay kids certainly understood that.

Bob spent quality time with students as well. At the direction of Bonnie [a.k.a. “Mama Wax”], Bob assembled student members of Clay School Art Club, discussed progress made since the Waxes’ last visit, handed out new supplies, and worked with them to plan future projects.

True to his business roots, Bob also followed up with the Form 4 students, whom he had challenged last year to earn a targeted amount of money (they agreed upon 8,000 KSH – Kenyan shillings) while on their break, and then report back as to how they had done. Spending their holiday vacation working for neighbors or in their villages, or starting their own chicken business from hatching eggs, they earned over their 8,000 KSH target. The students were then encouraged by Bob and Barassa, their Business teacher to think of “giving back” as all Clay students are recipients of full scholarships themselves. They decided to give 20% of their profits back to the school as seed funding for next year’s Form 3’s for when it’s their turn as Form 4’s to create an enterprise project. The remaining funds will stay in a school fund and handed back to them during their graduation ceremony in March, 2014.

During the week Bob, Benson and I met with local government officials in the Makueni District, talked with them about our needs and challenges, including one of our most pressing ones - bringing electricity to the village - and in general nurtured the relationships that are so critical to our future progress. In such a short time our school has gained tremendous notoriety - for our students’ excellent performance, commitment and perseverance, and for the educational values we espouse. Clay International Secondary School is unlike any other of its type in all of Kenya, and our aim is that students and graduates are living examples of how education could transform this country. But we cannot afford to rest. Kenya is developing at a rapid pace.

In its vision for the future, dubbed “Vision 2030,” Kenya recognizes that education is crucial to its economic and societal development. And yet, its educational infrastructure currently fails to address this piece of economic development – professional technical skills – which will ultimately be central to its growth. Bob, Benson and I continued the ongoing discussion that PEI has had about a comprehensive education, suited to individuals’ skills and with practical outcomes.



Finally, our week in Kenya was capped off by an extraordinary visit with 9 Clay graduates from 2009 and 2010, who came together to join us for lunch in Nairobi. Our graduates told gut-wrenching stories of their struggles to survive in the challenging environment of the city and of a developing nation – stories of fear and anxiety, loss and sadness, and ultimately of hope and achievement. We left feeling blessed to know these incredible young men

and women, whose grit and perseverance we saw at Clay has served them well in overcoming more hardships in a few short years than most of us will experience in a lifetime. Their ultimate success is a testament to their individual and respective characters, shaped in large part by their years at Clay. We are very proud.

The answers to the questions – “What can I do?” and “How can I make an impact?” – became crystal clear to me during this amazing week in Ngomano. It’s as simple– continue to support our kids, create solutions, and use all of our individual and collective skills and abilities to make a difference by making a donation, which is easy and simple by follow this link:

<https://npo.justgive.org/nonprofits/donate.jsp?ein=61-1476686>

Finally if you have never visited the school, please make plans to do so. I promise you that you will be forever changed by the experience. I was, and I continue to be.

Amani na elimu kwa wote (Peace and education for all).

If you have any questions or comments on anything about CLAY you can always contact Bob or Bonnie: Bob.Wax@projecteducationkenya.org or Bonnie.wax@projecteducationkenya.org.

Please do visit our www.projecteducationkenya.org, to keep up with CLAY throughout the year.