



Project Education, Inc.

Supporting The Clay International Secondary School in Kenya



September Newsletter

What's new at Clay International Secondary School

By Bob, Chairman of the Board, and Bonnie Wax, PEI Board member.

Winter season arrived near the equator in Ngomano Kenya during our visit in July. The nights were cool and the days were just right. It had been dry, but the bougainvillea was in bloom on campus and the students harvested and ate their own crop of sorghum. Tomatoes and cabbage were growing surprisingly well in the gardens.



Early July saw a 3 day visit by PEI Board members, Jim Clay – founder of the school, and some of his family members: son Bryan, daughter in law and newly elected board member Jill, and grandson Ryan. Don Mergans a perennial visitor and Clay family friend came, and all joined us during the week we spent on campus.

During this visit we laid cornerstones for the new dining hall being built with funding



help from Sarah Lee and her husband David Stanke and also from Jim Hudak and his employer, CIT. The graduates of Clay reached in their small pockets and donated what they could for the dining hall, happily starting a precedent of alumni giving, proof that one of Clay's lessons, "to give back", has been successful. In a surprise development, the school's Parents Committee presented a donation on behalf of current parents, another sign that the school is deep in the hearts of all our stakeholders.

Jim and Ryan Clay laying a cornerstone on new dining hall



The festivities continued in the Sembuleni building, or assembly hall, where each class (there are four, one for each year of secondary school) sang and danced to their native Kamba songs, parents exuberant in their dance finale. Next came a speech contest where 8 students, semi-finalists chosen by their peers, each presented a short speech on leadership to the community, board and judging panel. Two winners were awarded top prize (see Jill Clay congratulating winners in photo at left) and then came student presentations in academic subjects. All agreed the day was a

success and might become an annual event. During the rest of our time there, we shared our days with the students in the classrooms, on the playing fields, having fun outside, playing games, singing songs, and getting to know one another better.



The students look healthy, they are engaged, they work hard in and out of class, they do chores, ask us probing questions, tell us about their aspirations, and they aren't afraid to state their opinions. The campus athletes spent a day at a regional meet during our visit and the boys' volleyball team made it to the finals - and won! The girls' team came in second in their league.

Bob, Bonnie, and Benson Mutua our invaluable Director of Clay School had a workshop with the teachers to create a future vision of the school and engage in long range planning. Thanks to Wells Fargo Bank we were able to deliver backpacks to all 127 students. And we are expecting shipment any day of dozens of pairs of soccer/football cleats, from a shoe-drive by a thoughtful Tracy Foote, all of which will be shipped gratis through the efforts of her husband Paul by his generous employer, UPS.



Transporting bricks to dining hall site



We were sad to say goodbye but had meetings and other school business to attend to in Nairobi. One notable event there was a gathering of former Clay grads who are studying in university or college. Some even traveled 4 or 5 hours to get there. All enjoyed a leisurely lunch at the Stanley Hotel roof deck and we caught up on everyone's progress. Alex Kimilu, class of '10, has taken on the coordination of this Alum effort and much credit goes to him for impressing upon his peers the

importance of staying in touch. The Clay School will be measured by the success of its graduates, and it will be through the Alumni Association that we can track their successes. Alex can be reached at kimilualex@yahoo.com. If you are interested in alum news, take a peek at their Facebook page which they have constructed, Clay International Alumnae at www.facebook.com/groups/311255588980919/

Some of you have asked what you can do to help. We have an immediate need for basic sneakers/trainers for the kids, for art materials: drawing and watercolor supplies, magazines, or lightweight books about art for the newly established "Art Club" on campus, and the classrooms need whiteboards for better visibility during class. Magazine subscriptions are always welcome, but must be in-country. Contact us for a list of ideas.

Lastly, we have a NEW WEBSITE that is still a work in progress, but it gives you a more in-depth picture of the Clay School story. Please see it at the new url: www.projecteducationkenya.org, and send us feedback as we continue to edit the site. Also you can follow us on Twitter: @PEIkenyaCISS

Thanks, and if you have any questions or comments on anything, or would like to make a donation, please contact Bob or Bonnie Wax at: Bob.Wax@projecteducationkenya.org or Bonnie.wax@projecteducationkenya.org.