



Erokamano!

Fall 2020

| Friends of KMMA-CAITHS 501c3

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Looking to a Hopeful Future

As we pause to give thanks for the grace and providence still evidenced in this most difficult of times, we peer too at the cusp of a new year and the promises of community that kindle our resolve. So it is on Erokamano, “thanks” in the Luo language, that we begin to lay a new foundation for the future of The Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy, the ecology of Rusinga Island, and the health of its people. Buttressed by the land, gifts, and hopes of our donors, we will build a new home for KMMA-CAITHS that serves as a destination for health and learning, a shelter for gathering community, and a vision for a prosperous future. As, always, we thank you for the generosity of wealth and spirit that you bestow upon our civic aspirations and eagerly share these new stories of our progress and promise. Erokamano!

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New land and a bright future for the Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy!

When its doors opened in 2016, the Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy occupied just a few rooms in two rented buildings perched alongside the main roadway on Rusinga Island. As the value and importance of this community resource grew, so too have student enrollments! Just four years later, the school now occupies every room in those buildings with an additional shade canopy used for flexible learning space. Two years ago – with an eye toward improving the learning environment and anticipating future growth – FOKC donors helped raise funds to purchase of a plot of land to permanently relocate the Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy. This is a larger space and, while centrally located for families, is safely inland from the busy thoroughfare. We are excited to report that the purchase is now finalized!

Obtaining land in rural Kenya is not simple. As the country gradually converts from oral and paper record-keeping to digital documents, sorting out details of land ownership can be a lengthy process. Property that may have belonged to a great grandparent and been informally parceled out to the descendants needs to be legally demarcated and split. In this case, the pandemic-related government shut down added further delays.



Now, the Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy has a future home: nearly an acre of land and close to the only permanent spring on the island! As CAITHS and FOKC explore possible funding sources to build new classrooms, we are moving forward planting some trees to improve the soil and provide shade for future students.



FRIENDS OF KMMA-CAITHS MISSION: working together to save lives and improve the prospects of the men, women, and children of Rusinga Island, Kenya, by supporting sustainable and safe solutions for education, health, nutrition, and sanitation through our partnership with the Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy (KMMA) and the community-based organization Centre for Advocacy and Interventions on Talent, Healthcare, and Sanitation (CAITHS).



Gearing up for school reopening

Like schools all over the world, those in Kenya were ordered closed back in March as Covid-19 began impacting the African continent. But whereas infrastructure in developed nations has enabled a wide variety of in-person and online learning to continue, Kenyan schools have remained closed since the shutdown. That is set to change in the New Year.

The Kenyan government has mandated that all schools reopen in January, and issued a list of improvements that

must be completed in each facility to promote the health and safety of students and teachers during the ongoing pandemic. These requirements include 1) on-site water supply for cleaning, 2) handwashing stations in each classroom, 3) more student bench-desks to reduce sharing, and 4) increased classroom space to facilitate distancing.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, FRIENDS OF KMMA-CAITHS has already funded the first three projects! A rain-harvesting and water storage system was installed over the summer, and local workers were employed to create handwashing stations and new desks for each class. This equipment will greatly benefit the school even after the pandemic subsides.

The greater challenge is providing additional classroom space. Already bursting at the seams, the current buildings and land rented by the Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy offer few options for expansion. Flexible learning schedules, that might obviate the needs for more classroom space, are not supported by the government.

As we explore options for increasing our learning space, from temporary construction to additional rentals, we give thanks for your continued support and welcome additional creative ideas, thoughts, prayers, and donations to help get KMMA through these challenging times.

Education and Nutrition when School is Closed

Even with schools closed, the KMMA teachers and staff are still hard at work supporting their student charges. Much of their efforts have been in designing, delivering, and collecting worksheets that students can do at home: not just busywork, but teaching and enrichment activities that will help keep student learning on track.

Recently, teachers have been able to hold small-group instruction on the KMMA school grounds. Protected from the sun by a large canvas canopy, teachers and students are able to interact in person while remaining safely distant and with open air circulation. KMMA also continues to provide school families with basic food staples to help keep students strong and healthy while regular schooling is paused.



Welcoming Alvin Makino to the Board

In the spring of 2020, the Friends of KMMA-CAITHS Executive Board named Alvin Makino to its ranks. Alvin was known to FoKC founder Kieran McNulty through a mutual acquaintance, Bill Lukens, who worked with Kieran on the Rusinga Island paleoanthropological excavations. Through this work, Bill had the opportunity to meet CAITHS founder Samwel Odhiambo and learn of his vision for that organization, as well as the Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy- to improve the health and education of the next generation of Rusinga Islanders. Bill shared these stories with his sister Kelly and her husband, Alvin Makino, who both fell in love with Sam's vision for a sustainable future. Since those initial insights, Alvin and Kelly have sought to find ways to help KMMA-CAITHS, partnering with the McNulty family. Alvin brings a wealth of expertise in financial services to the FoKC board, with over 14 years as a product manager and management consultant. Alvin will be moving from Redondo Beach, CA to Princeton, NJ at the end of the year with his wife Kelly, their children Connor and Lillienne, their dog Lando, and their cat Mochi.



“No one ever became poor by giving.”

-A generous stranger, quoting Anne Frank, when he paid the school fees for a young Samwel Odhiambo (co-founder and Director of CAITHS)

Connect and support education, health, and sustainable development on Rusinga Island, Kenya

A+

100% of your gift goes directly to Kenya to fund programming through CAITHS and KMMA!



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CAITHS (Centre for Advocacy and Interventions on Talent, Healthcare, and Sanitation) is a Kenyan grassroots organization dedicated to improving lives in impoverished and disease-ravaged communities on Rusinga Island. Started in 2013 by a handful of volunteers, CAITHS began conducting small acts of charity, educational outreach, and sanitation programs where they were most needed in their villages.

In 2016, CAITHS initiated their flagship program, the **Kathy and Mike McNulty Academy** (KMMA), to provide free education, food, and health care to the orphaned and needy children in the area. With the help of the U.S. organization **Friends of KMMA-CAITHS**, the Academy and CAITHS organization are helping to break the cycle of poverty on Rusinga Island through broad-based interventions and educational programs.

