



The Ronnie Fund

Supporting One Man's Dream for Quality Village Life in Kenya

The Ronnie Fund

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Clean Safe Water—Improved Health Thanks to Bracebridge United Church

When we are thirsty we go to the tap, turn on the water quenching our thirst with safe water. In Wongonyi villagers walk many kilometers to a rusty pipe out of which they fill a pail with water, unclean and unsafe for human consumption.

In the fall of 2007 The Ronnie Fund submitted a proposal to the Special Gifts Committee of Bracebridge United Church for our Biosand Water Filter project. Our intent was to initiate this project including purchase of a steel mold, supplies for building the filters and printing of the manual which Ronnie had already translated into Swahili.

We were blessed to receive funding of \$1,000 to allow us to get the project started. Ronnie has had the manual printed, ordered the mold and obtained supplies for the screens. Back in the village Ronnie's brothers and the youth have already constructed the screens.

The mold was ordered from

town of Eldoret which was hardest hit in recent conflicts during the elections in December. The shop making the mold was devastated by the conflicts and as a result the mold manufacture was delayed. When Ronnie went to pick up the mold he refused to accept it as it had been made with inferior materials. Ronnie returned to Nairobi where he purchased the proper steel and shipped it back to Eldoret. The mold is now ready and Ronnie will return to Eldoret, pick it up and make a test filter while he is there. The manufacturer sent us an e-mail apologizing to you, our donors, for the delay in preparing a proper mold as he was unable to get proper supplies, expressing his regrets for any inconvenience he had caused us.

We have asked Holiness Mwazi, the woman from Wongonyi village whom we sponsored for the Biosand water filter workshop last October to provide instructional workshops on

building and maintaining the filters. We look forward to seeing Biosand water filters in use in Wongonyi village this summer.

We express our heartfelt thanks to Bracebridge United Church for helping provide clean, safe drinking water for Wongonyi.

THANKS FOR IMPROVED HEALTH AND SAFETY



Ronnie and other participants sieving gravel for use in the Biosand water filters. Soon filters will be made in Wongonyi village.

CONGRATULATIONS RONNIE!! Education—Hope for the Future

We offer our heartiest congratulations to Ronnie on his recent achievements in his studies. Ronnie achieved 99% on the SkillSoft course on Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects he completed through the Inter American Development Bank. With this course Ronnie will be able to oversee the many projects we have underway in Wongonyi village as well as the

projects he directs for World Corp Kenya.

As well Ronnie completed the Trees for the Future Agroforestry Training Program. As a program leader Ronnie will be able to help initiate agroforestry projects in Wongonyi village and the surrounding districts.

GREAT JOB RONNIE!!

Ronnie continues to take every opportunity to expand his education. Ronnie says, "I have a hunger for knowledge. I can't seem to get enough, there is so much to learn and unlearn and transmit it for the betterment of all." We applaud Ronnie for his initiative and drive, knowing that all Kenya will benefit from his generous nature of sharing what he has learned with others.

Inside this issue:

New School Uniforms for a Christmas Gift 2

Our expanded website 2

Election Conflicts Disrupt Life of Kenyans 2

Ronnie's Dream—A Vision of Hope 3

Thank you! Thank you! Thanks to our Donors 3

International Scouting - Kenyan Scouts 3

The Wood Family to Visit Wongonyi 4

Special points of interest:

- Help Ronnie fulfill his dream of quality village life in Kenya
- See the difference you can make in the life of others in need
- Join the e-mail list and receive Ronnie's news.





New Uniforms—A Happy Christmas for Children The Gift of Giving Passed On

In our Christmas newsletter we told you how blessed Getrude, Ronnie's mother felt for the gifts the village had received from The Ronnie Fund. She wanted to pass on the gift by making schools uniforms for those children who didn't have them, but she lacked funds to purchase fabric.

A couple of donors read of Getrude's plight and provided funds for the purchase of fabric. Ronnie also did some fundraising in Nairobi and was able to almost match our donation, and the blue and orange fabric was purchased and taken to the Wongonyi village. Over the

Christmas holidays, Getrude and the ladies of the village were able to sew (by treadle sewing machine and by hand) 35 school uniforms.

When the uniforms were handed out, Ronnie's brother Alfred also made a gift to each child of two seedlings of grevalia trees, which the students could plant at their homes. Alfred also had the students plant a few seedlings around the village.

You can imagine our surprise and delight when Ronnie sent us an audio clip from two of the children thanking us for their new school uniforms. We also

received pictures of the ladies sewing the uniforms and the children wearing their new clothes. You can view the pictures on our website.

This is just one example of the gift of giving being passed on to others. These new uniforms will make a big difference in the lives of these children. To us school uniforms seem like a simple item but to these children it means self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

We thank our donors both here and in Nairobi for their gifts and the ladies of Wongonyi for sewing these beautiful uniforms.



Getrude and the ladies of the village cut the material for shorts for school uniforms for the village children.

Our Expanded Website Thanks to our Generous Donor's Gift

"Happiness is not so much in having as sharing. We make a living by what we get but make a life by what we give."

**Norman MacEwan
(1881-1953)**

We can only tell so much of our story in our newsletters, however a visit to our website will enlighten you on our successful programs along with our history and current needs. Recently, thanks to Steve our website was upgraded and we can now show you many more photos of your donor investments at work in Kenya.

Ronnie is constantly updating the website from Kenya adding pic-

tures of villagers from Wongonyi.

Also our friend Clyde Mobbly recently recorded a video of Peter and I and our story of how The Ronnie Fund was started, a simple jar in our cupboard in which we put our spare change to help Ronnie achieve his dream, and we are amazed at how The Ronnie Fund has grown and become known. We can't thank each and every one of you

enough for the dollars and in-kind gifts you have given to help us achieve quality village life in Kenya. The villagers of Wongonyi want you to know how much they appreciate your care and concern for them and their desire to improve their life.

To learn more about The Ronnie Fund's current activities visit www.easysite.com/theronniefund
Thanks Steve & Clyde for allowing us to share our story with all.

Country in Conflict — Political Strife Makes Life Difficult

In December Kenya held its presidential elections. The people of Kenya held great hope for new leadership and the ability to vote freely. However, the results of the voting was fraught with illegalities and President Kibaki declared himself re-elected. Rila Odinga, his opposition claimed the votes were incorrect and the resulting tribal warfare was deadly. Innocent people, especially those who are already impoverished, unfortunately

bore the brunt of the uprisings. The two large slums located in Nairobi were especially hard hit, most of the tin shacks being destroyed. Ronnie went out to help the Red Cross serve food to those without until the situation became too dangerous and emergency aid was suspended.

Kisumu and the Eldoret area were also severely damaged and many lives lost. This was of particular sadness to us as our Bracebridge friend Bill Fitch

works out of the Eldoret area.

It was also a concern to us as Kisumu is the area we have ordered our bio-sand water filter mold from, the shop now destroyed due to the unrest. A partnership between the two political candidates was arranged but even now in April, there is still conflicts occurring throughout the country. We can only continue to pray for the safety of all our friends in Nairobi and Kenya.



Children cleaning corn in Wongonyi Village. Elections conflict have resulted in escalating food costs and shortages.



Ronnie's Dream

A Vision of Hope

Ronnie is a young man with a dream—a dream of everyone experiencing a better way of life in Kenya. In grade school Ronnie was the best pupil in the school and district, a boy with so many dreams and a clear vision of what he wanted to do when he grew up. But all his dreams dissolved when his father died. Teachers said they would help him with his dream but they didn't. His mother had to sell all their livestock so Ronnie could go to high school and college.

It is because of those empty promises and his mother's sacrifice that Ronnie has a drive to help others, as he doesn't want

others to have to experience what he went through. Ronnie's dream is not to gain personal favours or special treatment but simply a passion to help his village. It was only after his father's death that he learned his father was the first person to bring the volunteer missionaries to build the current primary school in the village and that he too had dreams of lifting his peoples lives.

Ronnie says, ***"I have a burning desire to see people excel and lead happier and fruitful lives. Lack of information and resources compel me to inform my people to make the right decision with the information***

they receive." Ronnie works to empower people with both technical and information resources creating a firm base and foundation for building mutual trust.

His diligence compels us to assist him in whatever way we can so that he can realize his dream through information exchange, funding and tools, books or other means. And together we are making an impact in Wongonyi village. As Ronnie says, ***"People's lives are changing for the better. There is HOPE and above all people are beginning to believe they can make it if they seek and find knowledge."***



One of the community groups that is working together on agricultural projects. Ronnie provides information on proper farming methods.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We Appreciate your Generous Donations

When we started dropping our change in the jar in our cupboard for our friend Ronnie, we never imagined so many people would join with us in sharing the abundance we have been blessed with. We are constantly amazed when we share our story that people feel moved to help those in Kenya who are so in need of assistance.

The people of Wongonyi village also feel great amazement that

people they have never met, who live a world away care about them and want to help them improve the quality of their lives.

The residents of Wongonyi are proud people. Just like you and me, they only want the best for their families but life is not easy for them. They are challenged by a lack of resources, both financial and in terms of supplies, poor infrastructure (bad roads, no electricity, unsafe water that must be obtained from a pipe)

and all they want is a hand up the ladder of success. We want to thank each and every one of you, our donors for all the assistance you have given that allows us to provide that much needed assistance. From tools to books, from in-kind gifts to financial contributions, we can't begin to thank you enough for your caring support. With your continuing donations, we will be able to continue to make an impact in the lives children, youth and seniors in villages in Kenya.

"The purpose in life is not to be happy but to matter, to be productive, to be useful, to have it make some difference you have lived at all."

Albert Schweitzer

International Scouting Supports Kenyan Scouts

This year Peter is serving as Scouter-at-Large co-ordinating the International Scouting Program for Whispering Pines District (Muskoka and Burks Falls). This group is raising funds to support a Scout group in Kenya. As part of the bottle brigade for TerraCycle Inc., they collect 591 ml bottles and return them to TerraCycle who pays them 6¢ per bottle. TerraCycle then fills them with liquid Worm Poop

fertilizer, which is sold at garden centres. Everyone wins—Scouts win by raising money for International Scouting, the environment wins as bottles are not littering the ground and your garden benefits from eco-friendly fertilizer.

This program has partnered with Ronnie as he is working with Mr. Mwemba, Kenya District Scout Officer in selecting a local scout group that Whispering Pines will

support. Ronnie will visit the Scout troop throughout the year providing a vital link back to the Ontario group. In this manner a true twinning and partnership will be created between the Canadian and Kenyan groups.

As well TerraCycle has donated fertilizer product which Peter has been selling in Muskoka to aid this project. **THANKS BRIAN AND THE FOLKS AT TerraCycle!**



Scouter Peter receives collected bottles from Burks Falls Cubs and Beavers



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"Supporting One Man's Dream for Quality Village Life in Kenya".

**We're on the Web
at
[www.easysite.com
/theronniefund](http://www.easysite.com/theronniefund)**

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are a humanitarian organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of Kenyan people. Our mission is to assist our Kenyan friend Ronnie Mdawida achieve his dream of empowering the people of his village of Wongonyi and the Kenyan people to a better quality of life than the disadvantaged life they are now a part of.

OUR MANDATE

Our mandate is to alleviate poverty, improve the standard of living and strengthen the social fabric by empowering Kenyans through:

- cultivating compassion and intelligence
- encouraging confidence and skilful means
- helping women and people decrease hunger and eliminate global poverty
- empowering citizens through education, economic opportunity
- combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and other preventable diseases like TB, malaria
- building a network of mentors and world partners

The Wood Family Head to Wongonyi Village

This August the Wood family (Kathy, Peter, Martha and Jeremy) will be spending their own funds and vacation time to visit Ronnie and the village of Wongonyi. We are very excited as we make preparations to meet Ronnie's family and all our new friends. Ronnie is already very excited too, *"It is something I envisioned but not this soon"*.

As you can imagine, Ronnie already has extensive plans for our trip and all the people we are to meet. First in Nairobi, we will be introduced to all the World Corps Kenya staff, the youth group in the slums that Ronnie assists, Mr. Mwemba, the district Scout official and several others. We are also looking forward to meeting Ronnie's sister Waiko, who delivered a baby girl on Good Friday and named her Kathy. When we get to the village we can't wait to meet Martha, a baby born in July

2006.

When we arrive in the village we will meet all the stakeholders so we can hear their views and goals, both personal and for village improvements. We will visit the primary and secondary school, the library, the chief's office, village bank, water office, and health center (located in another village). Also on our agenda to see will be individual farms, the water source, village vocational training center, bible training center and visit Aids orphans living in Wongonyi.

Sunday will be busy with visiting St Lukes Anglican church with Ronnie and the Pentacostal service with his mother Getrude I (Kathy) am really looking forward to talking with the village women and learning of their concerns and needs which might improve their quality of life.

As well Ronnie is scheduling the Martha & Jeremy soccer tournament with local youth during which time, we will be able to address the youth on issues of social concern. Martha and Jeremy can't wait to join in the soccer game.

Our suitcases will be full to overflowing and overweight with tools, books and other items for Ronnie and the villagers. Many of you have already donated some of the tools that we are taking. Multitools are especially in demand and we will try and slip in as many as we can.

Although life in the village is pretty primitive compared to our standards, we were amused to learn Ronnie is planning to build a new latrine and bathroom (a tin shack with plastic basins) for our visit. Our next newsletter will tell all about our visit and those we have met.



Some of the village women we hope to meet on our trip to Wongonyi this summer to hear their stories and learn about their goals.

