

## *Newsletter Spring 2025*

### **President's Message**

As we look forward to Spring in PEI, we at Farmers Helping Farmers are finishing another very busy year for the organization. In partnership with Alinea, the Gender Responsive One Health (GROH) Project has finished year one and we are

embarking on year two of this four-year project having learned and accomplished much over the past 12 months. Partnering with another organization and not being the lead on the Project has quite frankly been a new experience for Farmers Helping Farmers. Our relationship with Alinea has grown over the past year and they have witnessed firsthand what we can achieve through our networks in Kenya.



As you may recall, the Project is focussed on increasing awareness of diseases that can be spread from animals to humans and educating people on how to avoid that spread. We have been doing this while at the same time continuing our training on dairy farms, poultry – egg production, human nutrition as well as education for paravets. Staff are also working on entrepreneurship opportunities with the women's groups. You can read more about the Project and what we have achieved so far elsewhere in this Newsletter.

The generous commitment that we received from the Pindoff Foundation for three years of funding allowed us to begin work this past year on improving gardens and replacing screen houses at the twenty three schools that we partner with in Meru County. These new screen houses will be pest resistant and will withstand severe weather as well. This work will continue through until March of 2027.

We were extremely fortunate to again have a committed team of fifteen volunteers travel to Kenya in late January. This group worked very closely with our staff, schools and women's groups over a period of three weeks. The commitment of these volunteers in terms of time and their financial resources is much appreciated by Farmers Helping Farmers and those whom we help. For the first time in many years, we also had a group of four education students from UPEI travel to Kenya in February accompanied by

Carolyn Francis and Emily Wells. This group hopefully represents the return to an annual commitment of education students to working in Kenya.

Back in Canada we had a very successful Christmas Campaign thanks to the generosity of people like you. Monies received through the Christmas Campaign allow us to address areas of need that are not covered by projects such as the GROH project. The Farmers Helping Farmers Annual General meeting will be held in July at the Farm Centre. As usual, the meeting will start with a dinner and proceed to the business portion of the evening. Please stay tuned for the date!

The Souris Village Feast is scheduled for July 6th at the Souris Regional High School grounds. The Village Feast has been a big contributor to Farmers Helping Farmers having built 17 cookhouses and supporting school gardens over many years. Please support this outstanding community event and in the process support the children of Meru County.

The Farmers Helping Farmers Barbecue will be back again this year on August 9<sup>th</sup> at the North Shore Community Centre in Covehead. Please come and enjoy a wonderful steak dinner, socialize with friends and support the important work of Farmers Helping Farmers.

Thank you for your continuing support and please continue to spread the word on the good work of Farmers Helping Farmers. Have a great spring and summer and I look forward to seeing you at the AGM or one of the fund-raising events.

Ron Herbert  
President.

## **After six years a return to Kenya for Carolyn Francis and UPEI pre-service teachers**

**by Carolyn Francis**

Again, this February Carolyn Francis had the opportunity to assist four UPEI Bachelor of Education students with the beginning of their practicum placements at Kiirua Primary and Kiirua Secondary School. In previous years these were unique experiences for the students, and this time was no exception. All four settled in quickly and embraced both school and community life fully – including climbing Mount Kenya, churchgoing, market shopping, and fully participating in school life. They were also present to offer condolences at the passing of Salome's mother.

Even though the student teachers were busy in their schools, as mid-term exams were being held, the teachers had some free time. With Mwenda's assistance, farm visits were organized so they could see how FHF assisted local farm families, in particular women farmers.

Emily Wells of The Mill Restaurant was with us and worked with James, a FHF nutrition staff member, as he worked with school nutrition clubs. She also arranged for other initiatives, including arranging for cabbages left in the fields due to low prices, to be transported to schools for inclusion in the lunches. Emily was a great travel companion for both me and the students and accompanied me on most school visits. She was also able to get the necessary support and action to have the uji moved earlier in the day at all twinned schools so any student who had not had anything at home for breakfast might be better able to work in the morning classes.

I visited 12 schools to complete updates of needs assessments and take current photos. This assists in decisions as to the assistance each school may receive from FHF from any school fund-raising donations and the Christmas Campaign designations. Also schools that exchange letters get updated photos and information on their Kenyan twinned school.



In addition to these school visits, a teachers' workshop was held to continue the Safe and Inclusive Schools project. The one-day workshop's theme, attended by 25 teachers from 12 schools, was positive discipline and teaching strategies to engage all students in class instruction. It was very well-received with a score of 4.6/5 by the participants and a desire to have this on an annual basis. The student teachers also assisted with this workshop.

A highlight of my experience was also meeting with the two secondary schools to select one needy but academically capable student from each school for a scholarship. See the article following for information on the recipients. This initiative is a pilot project of the FHF Education Committee that may expand as monies are available to do so. If Franklin and Glory continue to have academic success, the \$200 Canadian award will continue for their three years of secondary schooling.

It was such a pleasure to get to live with Emily and the four student teachers and also to work with Kenyan colleagues – FHF Staff, Jennifer Murogocho, Henry and Sportsmen's Safari drivers, Job and Dixon at our home for the duration, other local drivers, teachers and school administration at the schools which exchange letters with PEI schools, and others who are always welcoming.

**READ MORE HERE:** [Kenyan Schools Facing New Challenges With Courage](#)



## Scholarship Pilot Sees First Recipients Awarded

As part of the new initiatives of the Education Committee, it was decided to offer renewable scholarships for several secondary students. I was pleased to consult with staff and administration at KIIRUA and MICHOGOMONE SECONDARY SCHOOLS in the selection of the first recipients of the pilot initiative to assist a needy but academically capable student to be able to complete secondary school.

This award will continue for the two students, given ongoing academic success, into grades 11 and 12. This will give them a much greater chance in completing secondary school. In both cases, the parents have been unable to pay student fees, putting their continuation at school in jeopardy. Both recipients are capable, dedicated, and hardworking students.

At Kiirua Secondary, the award was given to Franklin Mutembei – his favourite subjects are Physics and Mathematics.

At Michogomone Secondary it was awarded to Glory Kirimi- her favourite subjects are Agriculture and Science. In a heartfelt thank-you letter, a grateful Glory states;

“Being a student from a very humble family with limited financial resources, the assistance will go a long way to assisting me pass and complete schooling.”



## Dairy Training Yields Very Positive Feedback

Project update: Dairy Production Training by Colleen Walton, Leah Kariuki and Stephen Chandi



Dairy production training is delivered to Kenyan farmers by Leah Kariuki and Stephen Chandi. They provide seven training sessions over 12 months. As part of the training, the farmers observe demonstrations and are provided with some basic materials and supplies, such as seeds for forages and silage bags, to use to

implement the training topic. Within the *More Food Better Food* and *GROH* projects, each year they train more than 300 women and men farmers in 23 groups from FHF partner Dairy Societies.

The feedback has been very positive. One member of the Rugirando dairy club, stated her “cow’s milk production increased from 10 to 16 kilos as a result of the training. Planting lucerne [alfalfa] really boosted her production”. Another skill taught was challenge feeding for cows nearing calving. A member of the Ruibi dairy club said “putting the skill into practice increased milk production up from 18 kilos in last lactation to 25 kilos a day. It had never gone up that high before.”

Other skills taught mineral supplementation, feed monitoring, calf housing, silage making, heat timing, and body weight estimation. Animal health improvements leading to milk production increases are important for regular farm income and for family nutrition. Continued support from the Island veterinarians, veterinary students and Farmers Helping Farmers staff and supporters are key to reinforce new concepts and monitor results.

**READ MORE HERE:** [Dairy Dreams-Empowering Farmers One Litre at a Time](#)

## Trees for Kenyan Schools by Teresa Mellish

During our recent visit to Kenya, Ken, Evelyn and I, along with Kenyan staff, visited some of the 23 schools which have Village Feast supported cookhouses. At these cookhouses, meals are prepared every day for 6,000 children. In the cookhouses, I was checking on the new floors and cleaned walls funded by the Gender Responsive One Health (GROH) project. I was also making plans for other improvements to be funded by GROH, including hand wash stations, water tanks and new kitchen sinks to mention a few improvements.



Evelyn was delivering letters written by Island school children and getting letters to take back to PEI. She was also delivering metallic plates, spoons and cups (funded by GROH) to replace the plastic ones which are difficult to clean and she was delivering soccer balls for the children funded by Farmers Helping Farmers.

Ken visited the Ruuju Primary School, the first school where we built a cookhouse. He always likes to visit it whenever he can, to check on the mango and banana trees he planted there more than 15 years ago. Since it was mango season, he was thrilled to find a great crop of ready- to- eat mangoes and to find stalks of bananas in the kitchen ready to be served as soon as they are ripe.



The first school Evelynn and I visited was the Runkuru Primary School which the Village Feast funded in 2023. Evelynn carried letters to the grade 9 students there which were written by the students in her grade 9 classroom at the Montague Intermediate School. And she carried back a response to each and every letter from the Runkuru Grade 9 students.

We all visited the King'o Primary School for a field day, funded by GROH, which cooks and gardeners from all schools attended along with all head teachers. At eight learning stations located throughout the school grounds, they learned about improving nutrition and food safety. None of the other schools have fruit trees, so we are going to establish at least 20 trees at each school every year for the next 3-5 years. We know it will take years for the trees to produce fruit for the children but we have seen how much the children welcome the fruit!

**READ MORE HERE:** [Field Day of Training for Cooks and Gardeners](#)

## Championing Continues by Katie MacNeill



I had the amazing opportunity to return to Kenya as a nutrition volunteer this past January. It has been two years since I went to Kenya with Farmers Helping Farmers for the first time. It was an extremely rewarding experience to see the progress of all the women's groups, students and farmers who I had the privilege of working with when I went in 2023, compared to now. When talking with many of these individuals, they stated they still use all of the nutrition recommendations that were taught to them two years ago. They expressed how



implementing these has been beneficial to them and their families lives. I was also able to meet many individuals from schools and women's groups that were new to working with Farmers Helping Farmers since my last visit. The joy that comes from these individuals when they receive training or education is unlike anything I have seen before. Whether it is the excitement they feel when explaining how they've implemented the education into their everyday lives, or the gratitude they have for being chosen to work with the organization, it is clear that this is something that means the absolute world to them. I am excited to return one day to have the opportunity to see this continuous joy and impact firsthand again.

**READ MORE HERE:** [Championing the Champs](#)

## Supporting Community Health by Nancy MacFadyen



On January 24th, 2025, I was privileged to be part of a group of dedicated people traveling to Meru County, Kenya. My contribution involved helping to implement a plan of action for a project funded by Alinea Canada. This project called Gender Responsive One Health (GROH) has a goal to positively impact human health of citizens of Meru County and surrounding sub counties.

The focus of our actions would consider many influences on human health including zoonotic diseases, gender and the health related concerns of people in the area. I was privileged to meet with multiple groups leaders and individuals who greeted me with open arms and respect and with hope that we could aid them in all their struggles regarding the health of their families and friends. Everyone graciously shared information and concerns and help to guide our actions and plans for the first steps to implement the project. Of course they taught me much more than I could teach them.

Through our discussions we were able to formalize plans and present them to the funding organization. Because of the people who I interacted with I feel that we are on the right track and feel some assurance that we are focused on the actions that will have the most impact on the health of families and communities in which the work will be carried out.

Having the opportunity to be part of this project in Kenya has been very special. The people were beautiful and spirit and grateful for everything they received. The individuals that I met are thirsting for knowledge and skills that will benefit their neighbor and families and anxious to get started to make a difference. I would encourage anyone

who has the opportunity to contribute and participate in any way to go with Farmers Helping Farmers. The organization is well organized and takes care of the volunteers. It would be a life-changing experience and so worth it.

**READ MORE HERE:** [Community Health - Building Capacity](#)

## FHF Education Committee Update-Letters



Over six hundred letters from ten schools and two church groups were sent to Kenya in January, with the hopes of sparking a true connection between Island and Kenyan students. Evelyn Mellish, on her first trip to Kenya, oversaw the distribution of the letters and led the creation of the responses, contributing to a great cultural exchange in 2025.

The excitement of receiving, reading and responding to a letter is an experience that doesn't happen very often for many children these days. Much was shared about family members, favorite things, pastimes and hobbies, and mementos such as coins and pins were also shared.

Several schools requested a response be sent back to Kenya, which usually can't happen due to scheduling conflicts. However, this year Colleen Walton agreed to take responses in early May back to Kenyan schools. Responses should make their way back to Island students in early June.



Schools such as Stratford Elementary raised funds for their Kenyan twinned school. Lydia MacDougall's students raised \$1000 with which they collectively decided to buy hygiene kits for girls, which was something that they learned about in health class. Cost effective and complete kits were sourced and will soon be distributed at Michaka Primary and surrounding schools. We thank Lydia for her and her classes' amazing contribution!



## Save the Dates!

- **The 17th Annual Village Feast** July 6th, 3p.m., at Souris Regional School. Join Chef Michael Smith, his Fire Brigade, and volunteers for a delicious grilled feast that helps fund Kenyan school gardeners. Buy tickets online at [Village Feast Tickets](#)
- **Farmers Helping Farmers Annual General Meeting** July 16th, 6p.m. at the Farm Centre, Charlottetown. Join us for a review of the year and help plan the year to come. Meal available to purchase by Makena Ambassa.
- **Farmers Helping Farmers 41st Annual Barbeque Fundraiser** August 9th, North Shore Community Centre, West Covehead. Mingle with FHF board members, FHF members, volunteers and supporters over a delicious farm fresh barbequed meal. Check [www.farmershelpingfarmers.ca](http://www.farmershelpingfarmers.ca) for ticket sale updates.
- **The Mill Annual Fall Harvest Supper** October 2025. Details to be announced soon!

## Connect with us

*Website:* [www.farmershelpingfarmers.ca](http://www.farmershelpingfarmers.ca)

*Email:* [farmershelpingfarmerspei@gmail.com](mailto:farmershelpingfarmerspei@gmail.com)

*Facebook:* [www.facebook.com/FarmersHelpingFarmers](http://www.facebook.com/FarmersHelpingFarmers)

*X ( Twitter) :* [www.x.com/FarmersHelping](http://www.x.com/FarmersHelping)

*Instagram:* [@farmershelpingfarmers](https://www.instagram.com/farmershelpingfarmers)