



## Spring 2021 Newsletter



### President's Message

As spring approaches, we reflect on the turbulent and challenging six months since our last newsletter – but we also take comfort in what has been accomplished and feel hope for the future. We are grateful for your continued support, and we are working to make the most of the opportunities that change brings.



At this time, both Canada and Kenya are battling a third wave of COVID-19. In such uncertain times, Farmers Helping Farmers' work is more vital than ever, and your support helps make it possible.

Once again, the Holiday Campaign set a new record, approaching \$100,000 for the first time, and far surpassing our previous high of over \$70,000 in 2019. Coupled with additional support from Global Affairs Canada, this has enabled our dedicated Kenyan staff to carry out an outstanding level range of work, including dairy training, more vegetable grow bags, school gardens, tree nurseries, energy efficient cookstoves and biogas digester systems, staple crop improvement, and nutrition training.

*President's message continued....*

Looking to the future, FHF is moving into new approaches in Kenya, meeting virtually with our Kenyan staff and developing a cellphone app to deliver messaging and reminders in support of face to face training. Here at home, looking longer term, FHF has begun work to chart its course over the coming decade. In January, the Board established a Visioning Committee to help FHF define where and what it wants to be in 2025 and 2030, and how it should get there.



We welcome your involvement in this work and will be reaching out to you during the coming months. As always, thank you for your continued support and generosity.

For more from our President please click [here](#)

## Environmentally-friendly, healthier cooking stoves funded by Global Affairs Canada

*By Teresa Mellish*

The world-wide pandemic in 2020 had a silver lining for our current project in Kenya.

Because of COVID-19, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) agreed to fund an amendment to our project entitled: *More Food, Better Food: Empowering Kenyan Women Farmers.*

This amendment included funds for a kitchen stove for each member of seven women's groups. It also included funds for a tree nursery for each of the women's groups, as well as support for staple crops. In addition, it also included funds to hire an extra staff person for a few months to oversee the installation of stoves.



READ MORE: [Project provides safer cookstoves for Kenyan women](#)

# FHF Holiday Campaign raises almost \$100,000 for projects in Kenya

*By Catherine Williams*

Farmers Helping Farmers is celebrating another successful Holiday Campaign, raising almost \$100,000 for projects in Kenya. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic FHF was able to surpass our fundraising goal for the 2020 Campaign.

There were a total of 320 generous donors from all across North America. All of the donations to the Holiday Campaign are incredibly meaningful and will make a difference in the lives of Kenyan families and communities.



READ MORE: [Farmers Helping Farmers Holiday Campaign a success despite pandemic](#)



## P.E.I. fundraiser contributes \$10,000 to protect students from COVID-19 pandemic

Almost 5,000 students and over 250 teachers at 21 schools twinned through Farmers Helping Farmers in Kenya are now safer, thanks to the fundraising efforts of Chef Emily Wells.

Wells raised more than \$10,000 in October with her Thanksgiving suppers at The Mill in New Glasgow.

The fundraising meals in support of Farmers Helping Farmers are an annual event for Chef Emily, but the 2020 total was the best ever.

READ MORE: [Farmers Helping Farmers and chef Emily Wells provide masks, soap for students in Kenya](#)



# Farmers Helping Farmers Annual Awards

Annually Farmers Helping Farmers shines a light on volunteer excellence recognizing the contributions of our members, supporters and community through the presentation of four awards. Stay tuned for the call for nominations coming soon! The awards will be presented during the Farmers Helping Farmers AGM, tentatively scheduled for **Wednesday, July 28.**

To see past winners click here: [Awards](#)

## The Village Feast - Update

*By Ilse Peters-Ching*

Greetings from the Village Feast committee! On behalf of the committee, I hope our update finds you well and safe. It's been a heck of a year, and Covid is still affecting most plans.

Village Feast 2020 saw us shift gears quickly. We could not host a physical feast, but we knew that our commitments were too important to ignore. We knew we had to continue to support food production during a pandemic, so we made the executive decision to forego a cookhouse construction, and focus on making sure the cookhouses were full of food. We made the decision to switch to an online campaign, and appeal to our dedicated Feasters and followers. We were successful in raising enough money to cover the salaries of the gardeners at the 16 Village Feast cookhouses in Kenya! During the pandemic, the school gardens supplied vegetables to the school's communities, which ensured students and their families were fed.



Thankfully the Souris Food Bank was in a good position with local and government support and did not require Village Feast funding. Coats for Kids' need was fulfilled through donations and Village Feast funding, and a record number of coats and boots got to those who needed them.

We are now in the process of regrouping for 2021. It will be another year where a physical event is not possible. We are again looking at an online campaign, but will also shift our focus to 2022, and do our best to market and sell out that event. Once Covid is under control, we feel people will be ready to feast again, and we will throw the biggest, best Village Feast ever. We hope to see you then!

# Book inspired by Farmers Helping Farmers is now being shared at twinned schools in Kenya and Canada

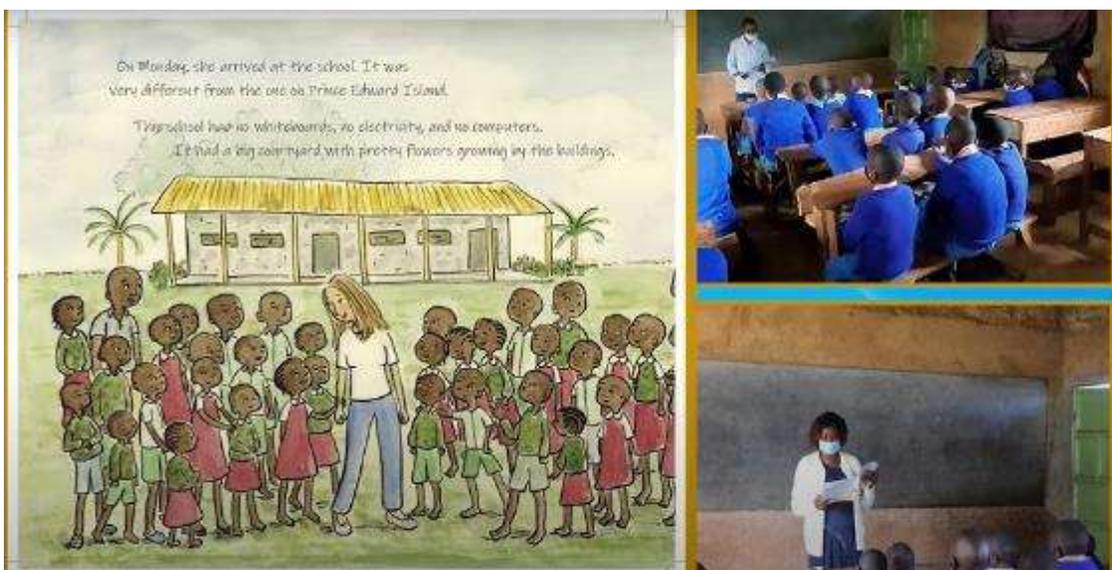


Farmers Helping Farmers is delighted that *Broken Crayons* by Patsy Dingwell is now available at all of our twinned schools, past and present, in Kenya and Canada.

The book's introduction to students was filmed in two classrooms at Mitoone School, with funding support from the Atlantic Council for International Cooperation.

**WATCH THE VIDEO:** [here](#)

**READ MORE:** [“Broken Crayons” arrives in Kenyan classrooms](#)



# New biogas units will save time and money

*By Ken Mellish*

Farmers Helping Farmers has recently installed fifteen demonstration biogas units at selected members of our Meru County, Kenya dairy clubs.

As you can see in the photo, these are a heavy-duty plastic tube with a gas bag on top, and plumbing, to allow for the adding of biomass and the removal of methane and compost. These units will use cow manure as fuel, and provide enough fuel to power a cooker six or more hours a day.

Read more about this project [here](#) .



# FHF explores ways to develop supply of seed potatoes and better variety of sweet potatoes

*By Ken Mellish*

Meru County in Kenya grows a lot of potatoes. With our long Island history of growing potatoes, it was natural that a P.E.I. organization would look at ways to improve potato production in Meru county.

The Unica variety has been developed by the International Potato Center, and in addition to being higher in iron and zinc, shows good resistance to late blight and viruses.



FHF staff found a small supply of early generation seed. This was enough to plant one acre. The project is supporting the Kendi Geetu women's group to grow the acre, and then this seed will be available in the next season for other women to plant.

READ MORE: [Growing potatoes in Meru county](#)

# New variety of beans has potential to improve health of families

by Colleen Walton

Farmers Helping Farmers is introducing and guiding 350 women farmers to grow a new variety of beans called Nyota. The beans have potential to tackle malnutrition and food insecurity in Meru County, Kenya.

READ MORE: [Better beans for families in Kenya](#)



# Funding from 2020 Holiday Campaign will bring latrine improvements as part of Safe and Inclusive Schools Project



While COVID-19 has made it impossible for Canadian partners to travel to be part of the Safe and Inclusive Schools project in person, the work is continuing.

Funds are available, thanks to the FHF Holiday Campaign, and two modified latrines are currently under construction at Mitoone Primary. These latrines will provide safer access and more comfort for all pupils, but particularly for any pupil with physical challenges, due to a seat and hand bars.

Stage 5 of this important project is continuing with Carolyn Francis, Liz Townsend and Carolyn Thorne working by distance with Kenyan partners.

READ MORE: [Safe and Inclusive Schools project continues](#)

# Education Committee Update

*By Peter Cudmore, committee chair*

**Letters:** In March, letters from seven P.E.I. schools arrived in Meru, Kenya via courier.

Unfortunately, no pre-service teachers went to Kenya this year to deliver and return letters in person.

Over five pounds of letters were sent from Island students. It is hoped replies will be back on P.E.I. by early June if Kenyan schools can remain open after their Easter Break.

**Curriculum:** Members of the Education Committee created lesson plans to go along with Patsy Dingwell's book, "Broken Crayons."

Elementary and intermediate teachers used these plans to supplement their Language Arts curriculum, and to help with writing letters to Kenyan students. The committee is also working on a lesson plan to reflect Farmers Helping Farmers as it is mentioned in the textbook "Canadian Identity." This text is used throughout Canadian grade 8 social studies classes.

This lesson plan will help to highlight global citizenship and the efforts of FHF for the past 40 years.



## ***Connect with Us!***

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