

Excellence in Education

Chesley District High School ~ Trip to Kenya, Africa

Chesley District High School teacher, Cory Munro; retired teacher Louise Sweiger, and students Kerri VanDerWielen, Zach Misch, Krista Young, Brittany Cruickshank and Brandon Messerschmidt, attended the April Board meeting in order to share a brief report of their recent trip to Kenya, Africa.



Over the March Break, staff and students from Chesley District High School had a remarkable opportunity to travel to the rural Maasai Mara region of Kenya, Africa. It all began in October when CDHS student Kerri VanDerWielen won the trip for her and six others at “We Day” in Toronto. The group travelled to Kenya to take part in the “Free the Children” Adopt a Village Program.



When the group arrived in Kenya, they didn’t quite know what to expect. Over a 10 day period, the group had many life changing experiences and had the opportunity to immerse themselves in the local Maasai and Kipsigi cultures and to see many of the issues facing local communities.

Over the week, students had the opportunity to travel to a local market to interact with the locals, participate in a water walk to the local river with the “mamas”, visit a local family at their home, and go on a full day safari where they saw giraffes, zebras, elephants, lions, buffalo, etc. roaming over

the savannah. The group also had the opportunity to tour many of the “Free the Children” facilities and saw amazing projects being funded by donations. Some of these projects include the many schools in many different communities, the Kisaruni Girls High School, many medical clinics, a tree farm, a medicinal garden, and many water wells that have given thousands of residents’ access to clean drinking water.

The group was stationed in a community called Pimbiniet in the Great Rift Valley and were housed in tents. While in the community, students spent four days helping to build a portion of the community’s new school. The group worked hard building walls for the school kitchen. The group also had many opportunities to interact with the local school children and community members who were so grateful for the help. The highlight of the week for many came at the end of the trip when hundreds of local school children, teachers and parents from the community gathered for a ceremony to thank the group.

Local children and teachers sang, danced, made speeches and presented the group with necklaces and bracelets to express their gratitude.





Now that staff and students have returned, their real journey has begun to bring awareness to the issues facing some of our global neighbours. Staff and students will be sharing their journey at local schools through slideshows and discussions in the coming months in an effort to raise awareness and to highlight the amazing projects that “Me to We” and “Free the Children” are implementing as a result of youth empowering other youth.



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For more information please contact:
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