

## 2013 Swazi Kids Newsletter



*Linnea Burgess and friend in May 2012 trip to launch the WORTH project.*

### Swaziland by Numbers

63% of the country lives below the international poverty line of US \$1.25/day.

Wives in Swaziland only have ownership over domestic tools; stove, refrigerator, radio, etc.

Husbands have all the rights to all land and buildings of the homestead. They also own all the livestock, which is a mainstay of their economic wealth.

Life expectancy in Swaziland is currently 48.7 years, one of the lowest in the world.





## The WORTH Project in Partnership with PACT

Six women from Canada travelled to Swaziland in May 2012 to gather information and oversee the implementation of this project. The project starts with 11 groups of 25 women each with plans to expand to 25 groups. Thanks to Jane Lister, Annette Sharkey, Karin, Emma, Linnea Burgess. In addition to the WORTH project, the team inspected all aspects of Swazi Kids operations. Karin Burgess is our tireless photographer and Emma Burgess designed and maintains our web page. ([www.swazikids.org](http://www.swazikids.org)). Check out the details of the trip and the project on the blog ([www.swazikids.wordpress.org](http://www.swazikids.wordpress.org)).

In May 2012, Swazi Kids launched its much-anticipated effort into village banking. The goal of this project is to provide basic financial literacy to people who otherwise lack access to banking and credit. Interestingly, microfinance has a deep history that includes foundational forms in 15<sup>th</sup> century Europe that helped create the modern market economy.

Its modern form was pioneered by Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus, who won the Nobel Peace Prize for his effort to provide banking and credit to people too poor to qualify for traditional loans. (Check out his book, *Banker to the Poor*). The model is simple: people are poor in part because of their circumstances not their abilities. We are working with PACT ([www.pactworld.org](http://www.pactworld.org)) an international NGO that developed the WORTH program. This teaches financial literacy to groups of women already working together in lending, borrowing and entrepreneurial skills training. No money is actually lent to the women, the program's costs are in the training and mentoring, with the women lending and borrowing their own

funds. This is a very important distinction from "microfinance".

Since this is a complex endeavor, Swazi Kids chose to bring village literacy to Swaziland via an established partner and with a proven program. PACT pioneered its WORTH lending and saving project directed primarily at women in Nepal in 1999. Today, WORTH operates with partner NGOs in many countries. WORTH encourages small partnerships of up to 25 women to establish village banks, provide basic financial services, and generate income, develop financial competence, and generate social, economic, and community independence. Swazi Kids has partnered with the Gone Rural *boMake* ([www.goneruralswazi.com](http://www.goneruralswazi.com)) cooperative to bring the WORTH project to 275 women in 11 communities. WORTH is building on the existing strengths of Gone Rural to provide peer-led business training and economic empowerment.

Gone Rural *boMake* is a fully transparent, account-able, and audited organization. This is the fourth partnership between Swazi Kids and Gone Rural *boMake*.



## Gone Rural *boMake* Development Project.

In 2011, Swazi Kids embarked upon a new construction project, the building of community centers for the Gone Rural women's cooperative. The first of these was opened in the Lamghabi region on December 1, 2011. Swazi Kids is very pleased to announce that construction of a second community center began in Emdlangwe in December 2012.

The Gone Rural cooperative is, by definition, a profit making enterprise, although one that maintains principles of fair trade and sustainability. It supports hundreds of women directly through its cooperative operations that provide production guidance and collective marketing for a wide range of woven and ceramic products manufactured using traditional hand-made techniques. The Gone Rural project started with 30 women and has grown into an international company of 731 rural women whose goods are sold in over 32 countries worldwide. Income from their work allows women of the Gone Rural cooperative to support their families and communities throughout Swaziland.

In order to expand its focus from trade to community support, the cooperative founded a non-profit organization, Gone Rural *boMake* ([www.goneruralswazi.com](http://www.goneruralswazi.com)) in 2006. *BoMake*, which means "many mothers," focuses on supporting local communities through education (funding for 280 students), health (education outreach and a mobile clinic), community development (water infrastructure and housing) and women's empowerment (the Joy Project). Many of *boMake's* goals and projects align with those of Swazi Kids and we have partnered with them on the Joy Project and on the construction of community centers. As





with the Lamghabi project, this community center will house the work of the Gone Rural cooperative and the community support programs of Gone Rural *boMake*.

The Emdlangwe project was funded by Judith and Heather Bisiker. Special thanks to Judith and Heather Bisiker, Amy and Emily Dunning (center photo at left), Barbara Melymick, Brian and Berneice Piwek and Bruce, Jeremy and Thula Carlson for their moral support, participation and hard work at Emdlangwe.

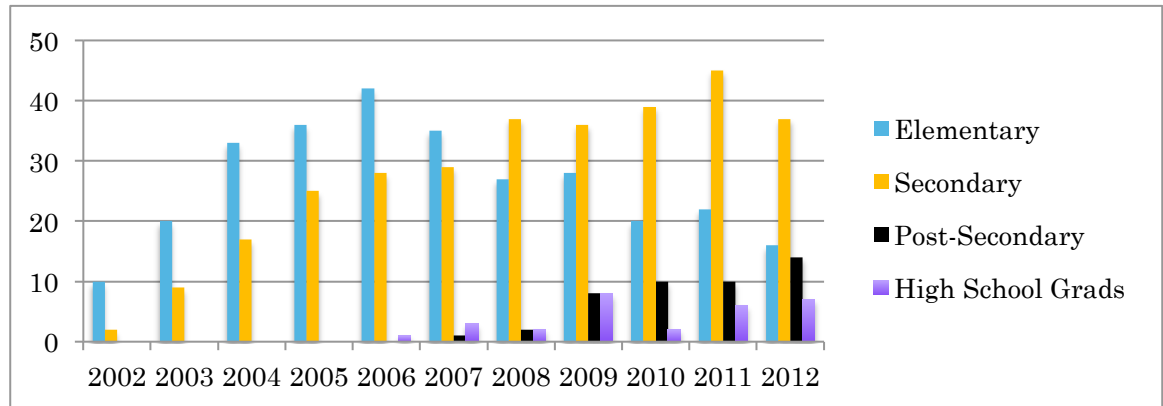
As described in a blog entry ([www.swazikids.wordpress.org](http://www.swazikids.wordpress.org)), the construction project was designed to be a synthesis of modern engineering and traditional earth-block construction. Funds were used to train a building team on the principles of earth-block construction, skills that the team then passed on to the construction crew and community. A total of 2300 earth blocks were manufactured and stored in October 2012. The Swazi Kids team arrived on October 8 and the building was constructed and roofed quickly. In December, a violent windstorm ripped the roof off the building, leaving the earth-block construction vulnerable to the elements. This event delayed construction and pushed costs beyond the budget. Fortunately, Brian and Bernice Piwek stepped in and funded a new roof made of higher-grade aluminum, a design feature that we will include in future building projects.





## Student Support Program

Student support was the founding purpose of Swazi Kids and remains a cornerstone of our efforts. As illustrated in the chart below, the total number of students supported continues to grow as does the progress of students through the grades. In 2012, we saw the largest number of high school graduates in our program, 4 boys and 3 girls from 4 different schools. We are committed to supporting students to the completion of



high school and into post-secondary. Due to the enormous support from one family, we are able to offer full or partial scholarships to an increasing number of university and college students, a total of 14 in 2012 and 18 in 2013. These gifted students cover a wide range of fields including nursing, pre-med sciences, electrical, civil engineering, teachers college, business and office skills, and accounting/book-keeping. Many of our supporters direct their assistance specifically to the education program and are able to support the same students throughout their education.

### Mentors Joseph and Cynthia

We continue to be indebted to our employees, Pastor Joseph and Cynthia Aryee. Joe and Cynthia are originally from Ghana but have called Swaziland home for over 10 years. They have three delightful boys. In addition to being a pastor and working for Swazi Kids, Joe is a full-time science teacher at St. Michael's private school in Manzini.



## Four More Jungle Gyms In 2012



In 2010 we initiated a project to install playground apparatuses for children at the Manzini half-way house. In 2011 we constructed a second playground at a facility in Mbabane. This year we expanded the program and built 4 structures at the two community center locations in Lamghabi and Emdlangwe. We were able to do so in part due to the tremendous efforts of 11 year-old Jeanah Gunn (photo at left), herself a Swazi-Canadian. Jeanah single handedly raised \$1500 by speaking to elementary and middle schools on 8 different occasions to bring awareness of the challenges facing Africa in general and Swaziland in particular to children in her town of Salmon Arm, BC. Jeanah's funding paid for 2 of the playground structures.



*Judith mixes lime by hand.*







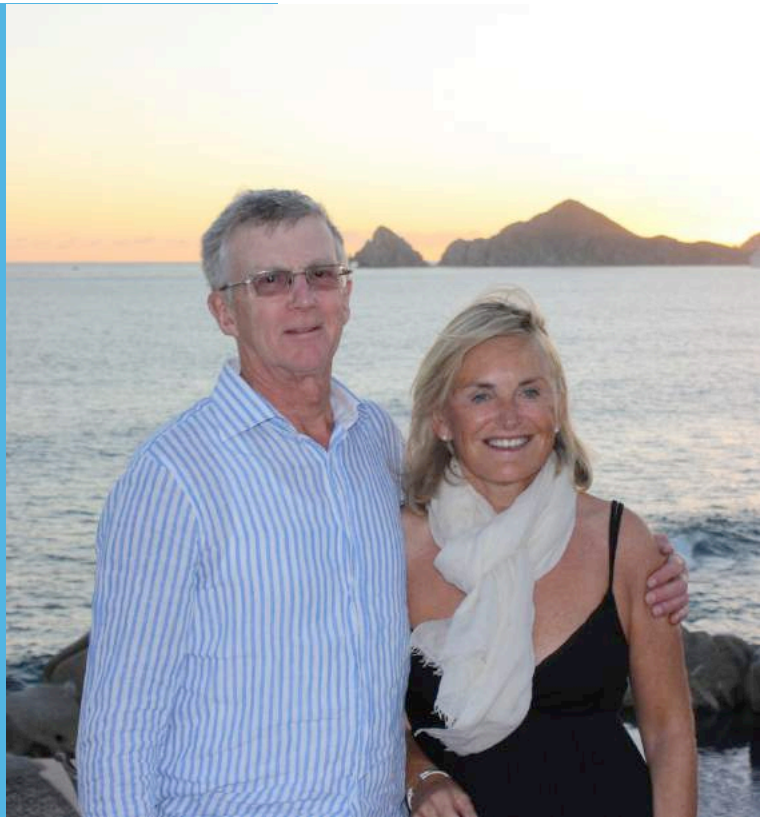
## Upcoming for 2013

2012 was a busy year with 2 trips and so many projects initiated. As we look ahead to 2013, SwaziKids is planning less expansion and focusing on maintaining and developing existing programs. We remain committed to helping children complete their education as this is the single most effective way to improve their lives. We are also excited about our continuing collaboration with the Gone Rural cooperative and its *boMake* project through the WORTH project (financial literacy) and the Community Development Project (construction of community centers).

In 2013, the Carlsons are moving from Vernon to Kelowna for increased work opportunities for Pam. After a 12 year hiatus from full time work, she is re-entering chiropractic practice and beginning all over a brand new business, as such her energies for Swazi Kids are more limited than the past growth years of Swazi Kids. Thanks to all of you for your continued support, both moral and financial.

## Featured Sponsors

Swazi Kids held a successful fundraiser in June of 2012 at the UBC Boathouse. Featuring live music and live and silent auctions, \$7000 was raised and an additional \$5000 was pledged. Special thanks to Roy and Maureen McIntosh (photo at right) for donating a one week holiday at their wonderful waterfront home in Cabo San Lucas at the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula in Mexico. The holiday included use of a boat (with a captain) with all proceeds donated to Swazi Kids. Thanks to all who came out and supported our programs.



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## Swazi Kids Works



Our ongoing efforts to improve the lives of children in Swaziland require significant funds. We thank all of you who so generously donate to our projects. Donations to specific projects are welcomed:

- Community Center #3
- Elementary Student (\$200/year)
- High School Student (\$500/year)
- School Uniform (\$75)
- Medical/dental care for orphans

Send a cheque payable to Swazi Kids or visit [www.swazikids.org](http://www.swazikids.org) to donate online.

***swazikids@shaw.ca***

***Swazi Kids Society  
280 Kalamalka Lakeview Dr  
Vernon, BC V1H 1G1 Canada***