



2026 President and Founder Report

I thought for a change that as this period of time of living in Eswatini with our daughter Thula is closing out, that I would share with you a few personal aspects to living in Eswatini, as most of you will never go and you likely know very little about such a country or worse have unwarranted misgivings.

My best friends in the world are now from Eswatini. This is not to say that I don't have great friends in Canada, but my friends on the continent are of a unique, varied and eclectic variety. To name a few, they come from: Columbia, Portugal, Mozambique, Sweden, Israel, South Africa, England, the US and Eswatini. As their backgrounds and economic situations are all so variable, these people are bound together by the common theme of loving this country and its people and choosing to live their lives and raise their children there. If it had a cooler climate and if my family was there, I would also live there. I have always felt a bit on the edge or outside of the social circles that my life navigates in Canada but in Eswatini I am dead center. Everyone there is just a bit quirky, different yet hugely big hearted, generous and lovely. I miss my friends down there daily.



The other aspect to my life there has been the ability to get out and explore the continent.

Here are just a few highlights:

- I have lounged on the beaches of the Indian Ocean with only a handful of others within line of sight.
- I have swum with wild dolphins (twice!) in that same Indian Ocean.
- I have sat in silence with red lights and watched a female loggerhead sea turtle methodically dig and create a nest and lay her eggs at night.
- I have gazed from under a tree up at an adult female leopard as she shares a fresh caught meal with her six-month-old female cub.
- Heck, I have seen leopards and lions mating!
- I have stood next to and hugged an immense 2,000-year-old Baobab tree.



In 2025 a small group of us travelled overland into the Okavango Delta and camped in the real wild for a week. Out there with no rangers, no fences, no guns, no 911 to call. We bring our own drinking water, fuel, food, our own everything. This might be my absolute favourite thing to do down there, to go so far out that only you and a handful of other intrepid travelers plus the animals dare to go.

- A lone bull elephant wandered right through our campsite daily. Did you know that a slowly moving elephant is literally silent?
- I have attended about ten Bushfire Music Festivals. This is the largest event within the entire country of Eswatini each year. It is culturally stunning, the music is amazing, the crowd fun and the whole thing so memorable.
- On another overland adventure, we crossed the Lipopo River with unusually high water, on a small metal dock like structure with local guys pushing us with long poles (see my truck in the “ferry” picture).
- I have hiked countless amazing trails and mountains in Eswatini.
- I have bathed and floated in a Zimbabwean river in the distant company of a hippo and a crocodile.

In other words, my cup runneth over with more than a lifetime of amazing experiences, places seen and friends earned and loved. And now, enough about me....

March of this year, saw our 5th trip of students to the Eswatini from Brentwood College, Mill Bay, BC. Their support staff have been here each time, which makes these trips also product rich, as we have become old friends at this point. The students raised enough money to pay for the building materials for three projects; building an IT lab, creating a home for a destitute mother of five and a preschool upgrade.

All in all, a very productive year. I enjoy most the structures and working with our graduates into real jobs. None of this gets old.

Best, Pam



Brentwood Teachers Neil and Sue Reflect.

The Brentwood College School, Eswatini Learning Service Trip with Swazi Kids holds a special place in our hearts; it provides our students with a genuine opportunity to push beyond their comfort zones. This year, our itinerary took us through Mlilwane Big Game Park, Hlane Big Game Park, and Kruger National Park, with several stays at Mandela's Guest House. We used this beautiful base as a reprieve from long, hot days of service at Lozitha High School—where we constructed a new IT building—and at the site of a brand-new home for a Gogo (senior-mother) raising five children.

We also revitalized a local preschool that was in desperate need of painting and decoration. During our downtime, we explored local culture at Swazi Candles, Gone Rural, and Ngwenya Glass.

After five iterations of this trip, several key takeaways have emerged. For our students, understanding their place in the world can be a challenge, as they are often immersed in a single, dominant worldview. Stepping outside of that bubble to empathically experience such a unique and deep culture is a true awakening. The trip teaches students how we can impact others, but more importantly, how others impact us. For some, this realization happens on-site; for others, it takes root during later reflection and debriefing.

A vital component of the itinerary is our connection with some of the sponsored Swazi Kids themselves. Whether they are helping us at the job sites or meeting us for a meal, the conversations are always deep and meaningful, and the joy exchanged between our students is heartfelt. We know the Brentwood students truly value these connections and embrace the relationships they forge with people like Mcolisi, Collan, Mlonji, Simba, Marvellous, Ncamiso, Zethu, Phindy and more... as well as our All-Out bus drivers, Sipho and December. Collectively, they bring personality and kindness to every activity we do in our short time together.



The opportunity to give back in such a meaningful way is inspiring. Throughout the journey, Brentwood teachers encouraged students to remain present and “live in the moment,” absorbing every experience before it passed. We truly feel that happened this year. Beyond the trip itself, we hope this mindfulness is a skill they carry into all their future adventures.

We are extremely proud to share that every participant worked tirelessly to provide something worthwhile for someone else. The cohesion, camaraderie, and generosity of this particular group was exceptional. Lastly, the essential ingredients we love about this trip are the balance between the hard work, downtime, and exploration, which is, in our opinion, perfect. It is an experience we wish we could give to every Brentwood student. This trip impacts every participant tremendously, which is why we continue to advocate for it and will do everything in our power to be back with a new group in 2028.

Sue and Neil Robinson,
(teachers at Brentwood College, house parents a trip participants and organizers)



Project Manager Reports From the Field

Our Graduate Enhancement Program (GEP) cohort continue to make advancement in their lives. Most of them are finding jobs on fulltime and contract bases. Others are also trying to secure opportunities in income generating activities such as farming, baking, selling cosmetic products.

During this summer we had visits to Eswatini by Swazi Kids' directors; Connie Olsheski who travelled with her brother Wayne Olsheski and a friend Karen Willison.

Also Bruce Carlson had a session delivering a powerful framework on unlocking results under pressure in work and life situations, teaching the group how to pivot from rigid stress reactions into skillful, high-performance results.



Reach Out!

Our ongoing efforts to improve the lives of children in Swaziland require significant funds. If you wish to make a contribution make sure to fill out our **Ways To Help Swazi Kids 2026** form.



Any more questions, just ask!

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Ways to Help Swazi Kids 2026

I wish to help out in the following way(s)
Please fill in the appropriate blanks

An elementary student is helped in various ways and \$200 per year goes a very long way, (but does not get them a new uniform):

I would like to help _____

Our secondary students need \$500-750 per year, this is due in large part to expensive exam fees and uniforms:

I would like to help _____

Uniform \$175 _____

Graduation Enhancement Program

\$350 will get one of our grads through this new program and onto employment

Use my funds as you see fit for Swazi Kids work: _____

METHODS OF DONATING

1. Using credit card or Paypal, directly from our website. If this is your method, cut and paste this URL address into your address bar on your search engine; <https://swazikids.org/donate> It will take you to our donate page, which is a self-serve method of easy payment using your credit card or Paypal
2. If sending via an e-transfer, please use email address: swazikids@gmail.com and use password: swazikids
3. Please make donation cheques payable to Swazi Kids Society and post the cheque along with this form

Swazi Kids Society
4531 Gaspardone Rd,
Kelowna, BC,
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Does a service trip to Eswatini interest you?

I guide groups ranging from 6-30 people in Eswatini. The trip can be quite customized to suit the group. Couples, singles, families, extended families, friends are all welcome. I have done this many times and can provide great contacts from happy previous travellers and testimonials. I know Eswatini like the back of my hand. The trips are usually 2 weeks long and include: service with children/building (no skills required), sight-seeing, hiking (all abilities accepted) and an amazing safari.

For anyone captivated by the African bush and its amazing wildlife stories, I encourage you to read this blog about a legendary female leopard. This is one that I have seen up a tree when I was on safari a few years ago. I found this story to be particularly moving and beautifully written. It's an animals life documented in memories and amazing pictures. [Read the blog](#)



Contact me, Pam Carlson, for more information on my trips: Pambigdog3@gmail.com



Note that for liability reasons, my trips are run by a separate entity, called Jacaranda Journeys and although my connection is to Swazi Kids, the trips are not. However, we work on and view many of Swazi Kids projects and we engage with students younger and older from our program.