



PAINTING A NEW WORLD

Pour nos amis français: www.peindreunnouveaumonde.com

Newsletter October, 2008

Volume 1, Issue 1

Inside this Issue:

[Think of Africa..... 1](#)

[The Journey Begins... 2](#)

[Visiting Kenya..... 3](#)

[With the Masai..... 4](#)

[The Auction..... 5](#)

[André's story..... 6](#)

[Back to Nairobi..... 7](#)

[Parting Thoughts... 8](#)

[Return to home page](#)

**"Shoot for the moon.
Even if you miss it,
you will land among
the stars"**

...Les Brown



Karibu Kenya 2008

written by Agnes Jorgensen

Think of Africa

If you've never been, the first images that come to mind are probably the ones you've seen on TV. When it comes to Africa, the perception of poverty, hopelessness, doom and gloom often dominates our thoughts. Then why on earth would two artists want to take art supplies to Africa, knowing there is so much more they need including the basic necessities of food, shelter, schools and clean water?

This was a question André and I asked ourselves. Family and friends may have thought the same question but were either too afraid or too polite to ask. But that was a very valid question.

Maybe its because we are extreme optimists or maybe it's a greater force than

ourselves pushing us in a direction to help those less fortunate. Or, maybe it's a spiritual path, that together, we have been led on to make the best use of our art skills. Taking us to a level higher than ourselves, to a purpose driven life. Whatever force it is, André and I believe in our hearts that visual art can make a difference.

"Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it you will land among the stars"

.....Les Brown

This became our guiding force.

And so, André and I set out to undertake the most challenging continent; a continent with the least resources to pilot our art project. It was not long after that when things rapidly fell into place. It became clear to

us that when there is love in your heart, you attract good energy.

It was the invitation to travel to Kenya with Craig and Mark Kielburger's "Free the Children" that opened the door and gave us the opportunity to pilot our project.

We were encouraged that we could answer the questions sooner rather than later.... Why we believed art was important to bring to Africa.



Masai women

Free The Children

It's been exactly one week since returning from Kenya together with 18 other invited guests with Free the Children. This was André's third trip to Africa. He told me that once you step into Africa, meet the people, feel their love, you are forever changed. He was absolutely right !If I was to describe Africa in just a few words I would say that the overwhelming love of

the people is pure, and their needs are minimal.

I will elaborate on this subject more but first I want to talk about the philanthropic organization Free the Children, founded by international child rights activist Craig Kielburger.

Free the Children (FTC) is the world's largest network of children helping children through education.

In Kenya Free the Children has constructed 50 schools, providing education to over 5000 children every day.

The organization also runs health, nutrition, water and sanitation programs for six communities in Kenya. It is a world class organization with fantastic, enthusiastic members.

[Next page ...](#)



Inside this Issue:

Think of Africa..... 1

The Journey Begins... 2

Visiting Kenya..... 3

With the Masai..... 4

The Auction..... 5

André's story..... 6

Back to Nairobi..... 7

Parting Thoughts... 8

[Return to home page](#)

The Journey Begins

It is 4:30 a.m. August 24th when André and I arrive in Nairobi, Kenya. To my surprise, the morning air is very cool and to my disappointment our luggage remains in Cairo, Egypt. But nothing is going to dampen our trip so we request to have our luggage sent to Nairobi as soon as possible. We are met at the airport by a gentle, kind man from FTC to drive us to our hotel.

At the Karen Blixen Resort, we are met by Kate, another friendly face from FTC with a bag filled with treats and an overnight cosmetic bag. How she found out our luggage did not arrive I am not quite sure.

Kate is our guide and taking us to different designations that were specially designed for us. We visited the Ramoma Gallery. The director beamed as he showed us his favorite pieces of art created by children who were struggling with life-threatening disease. It broke my heart to hear about the young artists' lives. How could it be that

their artwork was filled with bright flowers, colorful animals and happy people. So much love was painted in these small pieces. Was there something I did not understand?

*"I paint not by sight but by Faith. Faith gives you sight."
.....Amos Ferguson*

I can only begin to understand what he meant by this quote.

From there we went to Kuona Trust at the Go Down Centre. Patrick Mwokabi runs the not-for-profit centre to nurture local contemporary artists.

The Kuona's mission is to generate greater public appreciation of "visual arts" by nurturing skills and opportunities for artists. André and I really like the program and are very happy to see visual arts getting some exposure.

Feeling fresh and rested after a good night's sleep, André and I met the entire VIP invited guests who were also spell-bound by the Kenya trip with FTC. Each and every one of the guests and members of FTC were dynamic and from very different walks of life.

I must admit I was intimidated by their lengthy biographies at first, but after having met them, I realized that we were all there for the very same reason: to fill an honest need to help mankind; to fulfill a purpose-driven life; to detach ourselves from accumulating superficial stuff; to simply experience a very different culture.



Cheering Masai students in Salabwek finish the Under-Sea mural

"I paint not by sight, but by Faith. Faith gives you sight"

..... Amos Ferguson



Zebra and Wildebeest during the Great Migration



Visiting Kenya

With this terrific group of epic individuals we spent the rest of our trip in Kenya. The day began with a visit at the Elephant Orphanage, followed by the Kenya Giraffe Centre and then to the "Kazuri Bead Factory".

This is a local community empowerment program employing over 300 economically challenged women and men. Kazuri means 'small and beautiful'. All the beads are made from clay, dried in a kiln and individually painted. There are no two alike. André and I loved the quality of the beads and the unique, beautiful jewellery the women produced. We both felt we needed to help support this artistic program.

We chose three different varieties of beads to produce 120 bracelets with our logo PNMW. I look forward to flaunting my creative bracelet and hope

all my family and friends will wear a PNMW bracelet with pride in aid of a good cause.

That evening we attend a dinner at the Canadian High Commissioners private residence. Again we met wonderful people, board members and friends of FTC.

To the surprise of Mrs. Vanessa Hynes (wife of) and the Canadian High Commissioner, we were entertained by dynamic singers and song writers Keith Macpherson and Renée Lamoureux.

Their voices bellowed out songs of humor and wit, and their humble, unique personalities were warm and charming. I felt a strong connection to this friendly couple from Winnipeg, Canada.

I believe our lives will cross again, hopefully sooner rather than later.



Kenya Elephant Orphanage



Kenya Giraffe Centre



Keith Macpherson and Renée Lamoureux from Winnipeg entertain the Canadian Ambassador to Kenya, his wife and invited dinner guests in Nairobi



Kazuri Bead Factory

Keith Macpherson and Renée Lamoureux website is found at:
keithandrenee.com

Inside this Issue:

Think of Africa..... 1

The Journey Begins... 2

Visiting Kenya..... 3

With the Masai..... 4

The Auction..... 5

André's story..... 6

Back to Nairobi..... 7

Parting Thoughts... 8

[Return to Home page](#)

"Tell all the people in Canada that we love them, that we are happy, and that we work hard"

... The Masai Women



Inside this Issue:

Think of Africa..... 1

The Journey Begins... 2

Visiting Kenya..... 3

With the Masai..... 4

The Auction..... 5

André's story..... 6

Back to Nairobi..... 7

Parting Thoughts... 8

[Return to Home page](#)

"The richest person is the one who is contented with what he has"

..... Robert C. Savage



The Masai in Salabwek greet us.

With the Masai in Emori Joi

Over the Masai Mara we fly by private chartered planes, spotting wildebeest, giraffes and elephants below. We arrive at the Bogani luxurious rustic cottages built of indigenous materials. Each cottage is included with hot and cold running water, flush toilets, comfortable beds.... Are we in Africa? Pinch me.

After a few Swahili lessons we set out to join the community at the school opening ceremony, to be held at Emori Joi Primary School. As we approach the community we hear singing and clapping, it becomes louder and

louder as we approach, the entire village greeting us with open arms and loving smiles. Emori Joi is not a community of abundance of (what I call) "stuff". I felt an overwhelming genuine love from the people of Emori Joi. They had never met me before, knew nothing about me yet simply smiled, hugged me and told me they loved me. Everyone on the trip enjoyed the welcome we received.

"The richest person is the one who is contented with what he has"

..... Robert C. Savage

The village of Emori Joi had indeed great wealth.



Greeted by the Masai in Emori Joi



With the Masai in Salabwek

Today is day six on the trip and our luggage has still not arrived. We have become somewhat of a popular couple: *The artists that have worn the same clothes in a variety of different ways for all occasions.*

André and I have not been anxious about our luggage until today. Within our luggage are the art kits and prepared murals. We are to paint two murals with 40 children this afternoon at the Salabwek Primary School. It hurts me to think that many of these children have walked a long distance to be part of this special arts project they have been promised. Trust is what comes to mind. So we trust.

The Salabwek community greets us with a joyous celebration of singing and

clapping, and adorn our path with rose petals. There are hundreds of children, Mamas and Papas attending the event, to express gratitude to Craig Keilburger and Free the Children members for the positive contribution they have made in the community.

While the celebration is well under way with the school children singing, dancing and reciting poems on HIV AIDS, we get word that our art supplies have just arrived. André and I are ecstatic and relieved.

Under the dark threatening clouds we quickly prepare our classroom, paints and murals. The sky opened up and the torrential rain came down. The school children, parents and local workers quickly filled the two

classrooms. André had a group of 20 young teens (between the ages of 12-15) working on a Safari theme mural. My classroom was filled with 20 young, eager students working on an Under Sea mural. I watched as the students painted patiently on their knees on the floor for an hour and a half.

The images of these proud Masai students, their smiles in spite of the challenging living conditions, their beauty, their gentleness, will remain with me forever.

"Once in a while you get shown the light in the strangest of places, if you look at it right"

..... Jerry Garcia

With the Masai in Salabwek (cont'd from previous page)

André joins me in my classroom with all his art students. Together we presented the young Kenyan students with a mural painted from kids in a day camp in Montreal. In exchange, they willingly gave us the Safari mural to take back to Canada with us. The ride back in the jeep through muddy, washed away roads was adventurous to say the least, but André and I are happy we were able to complete the mural in the village of Salabwek.

That evening, after dinner, we showed the mural the students had painted.

The guests were all surprised at the quality of the work and asked us



Working on the mural



The completed Safari mural

many questions about the kids who had fun doing it.

One guest came to André and asked if we would consider doing an auction with the mural. We never thought of it was André's reply, but we were open to the idea as long as all the proceeds went to Free the Children.



Inside this Issue:

Think of Africa..... 1

The Journey Begins... 2

Visiting Kenya..... 3

With the Masai..... 4

The Auction..... 5

André's story..... 6

Back to Nairobi..... 7

Parting Thoughts... 8

[Return to Home page](#)

The Auction

The following night the auction was in motion. After an enchanting evening, and with the generosity of the VIP guests we raised \$15,000 for the mural. The mural was chosen to stay with Free the Children at the main office, for all students and visitors to see. The money raised that evening was enough to build a school classroom and a well for access to clean water.

André and I never thought this part of our art project would have such an impact. These students helped themselves build a new classroom and a well, through art.

What a story ! What reinforcement for us and for our objective to help young artists so that they can help themselves and their community.



The completed safari mural which raised \$15,000 at auction.

Far Left: André Chatelain - Far right: Agnes Jorgensen

“Once in a while you get shown the light in the strangest of places, if you look at it right”

....Jerry Garcia



Inside this Issue:

Think of Africa..... 1

The Journey Begins... 2

Visiting Kenya..... 3

With the Masai..... 4

The Auction..... 5

André's story..... 6

Back to Nairobi..... 7

Parting Thoughts... 8

[Return to Home page](#)

“...there are many differences between the two cultures, but a mother’s love, hopes and dreams for her children remains the same.

.....Agnes Jorgensen

Return to Emori Joi

Today we return to the community of Emori Joi. The Masai women are very happy to invite us into their house, built from mud and sticks, and cow-dung. Anna, a very special woman with a beautiful smile was the last to show us her home. She beamed with elation to show us her new house-in-progress, being made of clay bricks and mortar.

(Robin, a community organizer from Free the Children explained to us how the Mama’s raise money with a merry-go-round program. The money the women raise allows them to use the money in whatever suits their family’s needs best. As the pot of money builds, each woman gets to choose how to best spend their portion.)



A Masai woman tending fire



Masai protecting a tree with a stick fence.

Anna is building her dream home one brick at a time, and sending her children to school. The Masai are very proud of their children, their animals, their home and their tradition.

Later that afternoon the Mamas were invited to have lunch with us. We would have the opportunity to share stories about two cultures.

Having spent time talking with the Masai women reinforced the realization there are many differences between the two cultures, but a mother’s love, hopes and dreams for her children remains the same.

André’s Story

I have to tell you this story. This world class, wonderful organization of Free the Children, had invited 4 women of a nearby village to come and talk about their lives to our group of guests: how it was fifty years ago and how it is now. Everyone listened in total emotional silence as they were speaking.

We could ask questions and they could ask us questions too. It was pure magic. We tried hard to make them talk about themselves, and what they wished for themselves should they have the possibility to get anything in the world.

It was impossible for them to talk about themselves. It was always for their children. They would be happy if all their children had a good education and a good health. At one point one guest asked if they had a message they would want us to bring back to Canada. The answer was:

“Tell all the people in Canada that we love them, that we are happy, and that we work hard.”

Well, I can tell you that most of us had tears... and couldn’t speak for a while.



Inside this Issue:

Think of Africa..... 1

The Journey Begins... 2

Visiting Kenya..... 3

With the Masai..... 4

The Auction..... 5

André's story..... 6

Back to Nairobi..... 7

Parting Thoughts... 8

[Return to Home page](#)

Oloololo Escarpment

Situated at the foot of the Oloololo Escarpment on the western border of the Masai Mara Reserve in south western Kenya, we fly by private planes into the exclusive safari camp of Kichwa Tembo. Nestled in a lush riverine forest, the elegant tented suites ensure our every need. I have never felt so pampered in such luxury. Kichwa Tembo lies directly in the path of Africa's spectacular Great Migration of hundreds of thousands of wildebeest and zebra.

Over the next two days we embark on several safari drives in an open jeep with our stunning guide,

Charity. We drive through the Mara witnessing the magnificent beauties of Africa: giraffes, lions, elephants, hippos, buffalos, leopards, baboons, black rhino, topis, gazelles and crocodiles. Charity explained that we saw more animals in 2 days than most people see in a week on safari.

We drive through thousands of zebra and wildebeest as we travel toward Tanzania, directly in the path of the Great Migration. On our return, the rain spews from the sky and we are left very wet with many laughs and great memories witnessing a little bit of heaven on earth.



Lions in wait at the foot of the Oloololo Escarpment



Back to Nairobi

We depart from Bateleur Camp, Kichwa Tembo, and return to Nairobi where Roxanne of Free the Children has made special arrangements for André and I to visit local artist Sophie Walboeffe. We spent a pleasant afternoon with Sophie. André and I explained our art programs.

We shared our experience with the painted mural, how the students were able to build their own classroom and well with their talent, through an art auction, and how we believe that "artists helping artists" can make a difference. Sophie listened intently, had tears in her eyes and came on board to help us distribute art kits to the young artists of Kibera (Kenya's largest ghetto of 800,000 people).

Today is our last day. We are to spend the day with Nicole and Adam, a dynamic couple of Free the Children. They will escort us to the Evelyn College in Nairobi where arrangements have been made for André and I to meet fifteen artists.

We explained our art program to the students and we presented them each with an art kit. The students were very excited about the art program and having their artwork displayed on our PNMW website in Canada. A number of the students focused on interior design or clothing design.

We answered many questions and viewed their outstanding creative portfolios. André and I hope we can open some doors and provide opportunities for this

group of young, talented future leaders. Getting back to the question "why would two artists bring art supplies to Africa" we find this question answered sooner rather than later.

Our trip to Kenya confirmed to André and I that "Artists Helping Artists" can make a difference. We witnessed first-hand how art, together with education can inspire young people of Africa and help to shape a better future for themselves. They will be the ones who will transform the perception of Africa.



Wild animals during the Great Migration



Artists from Evelyn College with André and I



Artists Helping Artists

www.paintinganewworld.com
Montreal, PQ, Canada

[Return to Home page](#)

E-mail:
andrechatelain@pnmwf.com

Parting Thoughts

Our luggage is filled with souvenirs, our camera loaded with photos to reminisce.

I love Africa !

It has touched my heart and I will never be quite the same person. I will share my photos and stories with family and friends. They will look at the photos with their eyes while I behold the photos with my heart. Will they see the immeasurable beauty of the

people, the overwhelming pure love of the Masai women, the smiles of the children in spite of their hardship?

Will they see the naivety of young art students, the vast, open Mara fields filled with majestic animals, the stories and tears shared with each person that impacted my life in so many ways ?

As Artists, I can think of one

way that André and I might be able to capture the spirit of what we saw and felt. We will try to do justice and paint the boundless beauties of Africa.

We hope through our paintings you will see what we saw: **infinite beauty !!**

Asante sana Kenya

To send your comments about this newsletter, or if you want to contact Agnes Jorgensen or André Chatelain regarding membership in PNMW, please [click here](#)

[Previous page](#)

[Back to front page](#)