

ESS Alumni

Report from the Chairman Jayant Tanna – 2017-2019

We have continued to provide opportunities for our members to meet, stay in touch and to engage in sharing life's joys and sorrows, challenges and opportunities. At the same time, we have engaged with the current students and teachers at Eastleigh High School and supported the maintenance and development of the school. We give some examples below.

1) Report of the BGM, – Sunday 21st May 2017, Mumbai Junction

There were 23 members present and 27 Apologies.

The Agenda included the visit to EHS in Nairobi. We had helped repaint the whole school and paid fees for 10 most needy students. Mr Manundu took over as the Principal from Mr Awuor. We also donated £10,000 towards new desks and chairs for the whole school. There was a report about the 2016 Reunion when we had 186 members taking part. The accounts showed a credit balance of £8919. We changed the Rules to allow alumni from other Nairobi schools to become Associate Members. The election of the new committee included Jayant Tanna, Vijay Patel, Nisar Butt, Nasrullah Khan Moghal, Bhagwant Virdee, Hasmukh Nanda, Anil Lakhani, Pradeep Luther and Harish Luther.

2) Programme of Sunday Lunches

We had another lunch on Sunday 22nd July 2018 Everest Lounge, 80 Peel Road, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 7QU. In addition, we gave an opportunity to our members to be informed about a number of health issues. We were fortunate to have 2 of our committee members giving us the benefit of their expertise. Dr Bhagwant Virdee, a General Practice doctor, talked about heart conditions in Asian families and how these might be avoided or reduced. We also had a presentation from Dr Pradeep Luther, a researcher with University College, London, on skeletal and heart muscles and the importance of maintaining strength in old age. There were lots of questions from members that raised important issues from which everyone benefited.

3) ESS Alumni Nairobi schools Reunion – Toronto

On 9th September 2018, ESS Alumni together with a group of ESS alumni from Toronto organized their first-ever reunion in Canada that also included alumni from various Nairobi schools. Over 130 alumni and spouses, representing about 15 schools, attended the highlight event at the Toronto Hilton/Markham Suites Conference Centre. Almost forty percent of the attendees had travelled from the UK, USA, Kenya, Spain and other locations within Canada.

Some reportedly were meeting their schoolmates after 50 years or more! There was a lot to catch up with and get reacquainted. Groups of attendees posed in front of the Reunion Banner, stylized as a fusion between the Toronto skyline and a Kenyan landscape. Check these pictures on the website www.essalumni.org.uk

A souvenir magazine for the reunion contained not only profiles of many of those attending but also interesting and insightful articles. A fabulous dinner was followed by some musical entertainment. An evaluation of the 2018 Reunion showed the Reunion was very well received and many attendees mentioned their interest in keeping in touch more regularly, whether through formal events or informal get-togethers. The event made a surplus of CA\$2,100 which will be used for organizing similar events in the future or as Toronto committee members may decide.

4) Report of the visit to Eastleigh High School Nairobi – 17/9/19 to 30/9/19

On behalf of ESS Alumni, I went to Eastleigh High School, Nairobi from 17th September to 30th September 2019 (at my own expense). I had a very busy, exciting and rewarding experience which I outline below.

The IT Room, network and Internet access: The current provision is 30 computers. Pupils studying IT as an examination subject in Form 3 and 4 have ready access to the computers as a part of their school IT curriculum programme. However, the numbers taking IT as an Option subject are low as most others choose subjects like Business Studies instead. This is a worrying trend which needs to be addressed.

Maintenance: The school is once again in poor state of repair, particularly inside some classrooms, corridors and toilets. Rain is seeping through the newer ceiling boards having a huge number of holes. The school, however, is using its Repairs and Maintenance budget well to replace ceiling tiles in the corridor areas. They now need to be painted. In addition, the Principal Mr Manundu has signed a 12 month contract with Crown Paints to repaint sections of the school in return for their advert on the school perimeter wall. This has enabled the school to have the admin block repainted recently. If the contract is renewed in the same way every year, the rest of the school will be repainted over 4 to 5 years. In addition, the school has covered the inner quadrangle and the entrance area around the flag post with gravel to stop dirt and mud in the rainy season. The entrance road into the main school gate has now got useful and inspiring exhortations all along the pathway for students to remember and follow e.g. 'Change is the end result of all true learning' etc. Included at the entrance gates are student attendance scanners which take a digital impression of each student on entry and exit. The system then generates SMS messages to the parents to indicate arrival and departure times of their sons.

Boarding facilities: The school is not going for boarding facilities any more as the government has rejected the idea in favour of more neighbourhood day schools.

New furniture: The new desks and chairs towards which we donated £10K are being used as needed from the stores. They are also used during examinations in the hall. The school had already received 500 new chairs and 670 new desks. The balance of 150 or so chairs will be delivered as soon as they are ready.

Lesson visits: We have now donated six laptops and 2 projectors for use in maths, science and other subjects. A projector is now in a fixed position in the lecture theatre and the second will be a fixed one in the science laboratory. As a part of my agreed programme, I visited lessons of mathematics and science lessons to see the use of laptops that we provided. There is still a long way to go as laptops and projectors are not used enough in lessons. With the extra projector now provided, I hope the teachers will now have more access to the rooms with fixed projectors and that use of laptops will increase. We hope that with more government support, standards in mathematics and science will now improve. The Woodwork and Metalwork workshops are now operational and well used. Art and Design is another popular subject that students are opting to study.

As far as examination results were concerned, the trend over the last three years was consistent improvement in English and stable in Physics, Computer Studies and Arabic. The trends in mathematics, chemistry, biology, business studies and metal work were low and inconsistent. The trends in the Humanities were fairly stable.

Economic aspects of the school and pupils: The annual tuition fees of KSh. 9374/- per year are now fully paid by the government for all students. Parents now have to pay only for the mid-day meals, which come to KSh 16,466/- per annum. Many of the pupils come from very poor backgrounds and are not able to pay their lunch fees. Some had built up debts from previous years. We were able to pay off the outstanding dues of 14 of these pupils and their lunch fees for 2020. The total amount came to K Sh. 358,155/- which we paid by cheque to the school.

I had a meeting with members of the guidance and counselling committee who make decisions about which students qualify for support. It was clear that more precise criteria were needed to enable parents and guardians to apply for support with lunch fees. It was agreed that the committee would draft new criteria and application forms and send them to us for our views and suggestions.

Meeting with the needy students and their parents: The school organised a meeting with the parents of Needy Students. They were all full of appreciation and praise for the work that ESS Alumni had done for the Needy Students and for the school.

Presentation: The Principal Mr Peter Manundu and the Vice Principal Mr Lumumba together with three governors were present when I made the presentation of a **another Epson projector** and a **cheque for KSh. 358,155/- (£2850)** for the Needy Students to the governors on 26th September 2019. This was in addition to a projector, 6 laptops and £1980 for needy students' fees we had presented earlier in 2017/18.

Meeting with Nairobi Ex-ESS colleagues: I met Peter Kinyanjui, the Chair of a local Eastleigh Old Boys Association as well as other alumni - Bachu Patel, Ashwin Patel, Jaswant Babra, Gurcharan Gill and Ashwin Shah. We talked about the school and how we had helped in our roles as the alumni. And then explored what we needed to do in future to support the school and the students. It was felt by the Asian members that they needed to be replaced by younger more committed African alumni. It was also agreed that Ashwin and Peter would meet to discuss how the two organisations would merge into one single alumni group of Eastleigh High School in Kenya. Other alumni I met included Nazir Lone, Pramod Shah, Vijedi Muhando Wicks, Dennis Ndalo and Victor Bwibo who all had good ideas and suggestions for the future.

5) Membership

We have 57 Life Members and 59 Biennial Members. Money, as we all know, is the backbone of any organisation and ours is no exception. I therefore urge all of you to support us and become Life Members (£100) or Biennial Members (£20) and encourage other ex ESS family members and friends that you know to do the same.

6) ESS Alumni website www.essalumni.org.uk

We have developed an excellent website and most of you have appreciated our efforts. If you have not already done so, please let me have your profile and photos. If you have any of the missing school magazines, photographs or other memorabilia, please lend these to us for posting on our website.

7) Financial Report

The Accounts show a healthy position as a result of careful spending and meticulous record-keeping. The current balance at present is £11,520.00. The accounts are displayed elsewhere.

8) Acknowledgement

I would most sincerely like to thank all the generous donors for our ESS projects like computers, new desks and fees for needy pupils. They deserve special praise. I am most indebted to all my committee members - Nisar, Vijay, Harish, Pradeep, Anil, Bhagwant, Hasmukh and Nasrullah. I would like to thank them all most sincerely for their co-operation and support.

9) Finally.....

I thank you all for your encouragement, good wishes and very helpful and supportive feedback. I wish you all good health, happiness, peace and the very best of luck in your lives!

With every good wish!

Jayantilal Tanna
Chairman - ESS Alumni

24th November 2019