

Report of the Chair ESS Alumni for 2021-2023

One very significant part of the term was the building of a brand-new Basketball and Volleyball court by ESS Alumni at Eastleigh High School in May 2022.

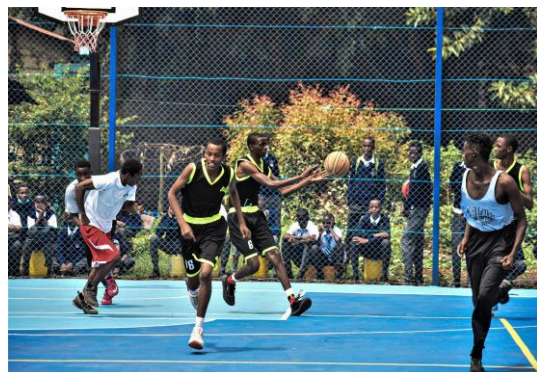
We decided to support the construction of a brand-new Basketball court at Eastleigh High School in December 2021. We had some accumulated surplus from previous years but this project required additional funds of around £7500. We therefore made an appeal for donations from our membership. We planned a virtual meeting of all our members and gave more details about the project. And how well did they respond! The list below shows our generous donors. We were able to commission the work through our Life Member in Nairobi, Gurcharan Singh Gill. All the plans and contracts were signed and the construction completed by April 2022.

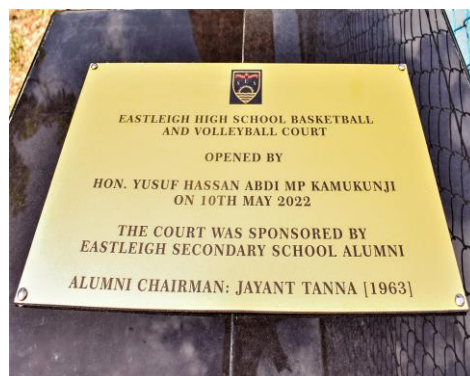
The new Basketball and Volleyball court was opened by the MP for Kamukunji, Mr Yusuf Hassan Abdi, on Tuesday 10th May 2022 at Eastleigh High School. The Acting Principal, Mr Joseph Wainaina, welcomed everyone and thanked the ESS Alumni for sponsoring the court. The Chairman of ESS Alumni Jayant Tanna said the alumni were thrilled to be given the opportunity of supporting the further development of Basketball and Volleyball at the school. Both these games have a strong tradition at the school and he hoped that the school will now produce excellent players who will go on to represent the nation at the international level. He further hoped that students will now be afforded the opportunity of pursuing the Sports option available to high schools in the new design of the national curriculum.

Mr Yusuf Abdi, the MP for Kamukunji, said the alumni were often the lifeblood of a school. He commended ESS Alumni for reconnecting with their old school and sponsoring the building of the new court. He assured the school of his support in pressurising the government for better facilities and resources. He also talked about working with the business community to 'adopt' the school. He emphasised the need for all stakeholders to work together and help the school regain its old glory.

ESS Alumni hope and wish that the new basketball court will start a very strong development of Basketball and Volleyball in addition to Football in the school and that the school will support the new curriculum that has a special emphasis on Sports for the first time.

They also hope that the students will take ownership of the equipment and facilities we provide. Nothing is more discouraging for sponsors and donors than to see their hard work ruined by vandalism and wilful destruction of equipment or property. They hope that the school leadership will take active steps to imbibe in students a strong sense of ownership of their school, its values, its buildings and property. And, of course, a strong sense of 'giving back' to the school once they have settled down in life.





Name	Country	Year	Name	Country	Year
Ashraf Sheikh	USA	1956	Nilesh Raithatha	UK	1972
Khalid Chaudhry	UK	1967	Diamond Mohammed	USA	1963
Nasrullah Moghal	UK	1964	Jaswinder Aujla	USA	1963
Nisar Butt	UK	1963	Ashok Sharma	UK	1963
Shakoor Khan	UK	1963	Gurdeep Singh Bahra	UK	1968
Vijay Patel	UK	1968	Pradeep Luther	UK	1968
Dinash Lakhani	UK	1974	Pravin Patel	UK	1965
Narinder Mann	CANADA	1968	Shashipal Aggarwal	USA	1968
Parvin Sayal	USA	1964	Satwinder Dhand	UK	1965
Chitranjan Patel	USA	1968	Sharad Buddhdev	USA	1968
Daljit Ohbi	UK	1964	Mahendra Patel	USA	1968
Gurcharan Singh Gill	KENYA	1967	Varinder Singh	UK	1960
Jayant Tanna	UK	1963	Anil Lakhani	UK	1968
Kanesh Lakhani	UK	1978	Naresh Dodhia	UK	1972
Raichand Desaur	UK	1968	Pravin Dave	UK	1963
Vikram Tanna	UK	1967	Suriakant Shah	UK	1963
Vijay Modgill	UK	1959	Balraj Sidher	UK	1962
Jagjit Singh Bansal	UK	1971	Yakoob Sheikh	UK	1969
Purgent Patel	UK	1972	Mohan Singh Matharu	UK	1963
Ravinder Laly	UK	1969	Amar Singh Rihal	UK	1967
Deepak Bedi	USA	1968			

We are also grateful to the following regular donors who help us to continue to support our charitable activities for Eastleigh High School: Pradeep and Neerja Luther, Mahendra Patel, Piyush Shah, Raichand Desaur, Dinash Lakhani, Kanesh Lakhani, Anil Lakhani, Vijay Patel, Ajay Mahindru, Dhiraj Shah and Gurdip Bahra.

The second most significant part of this term was the organisation of a very successful ESS and Nairobi Schools' alumni reunion on Sunday 1st October 2023 at the Langley in Watford.

On the day, there were as many 180 participants, including wives and friends of nearly 123 ex-students. The participants' pack included the souvenir magazine, the Programme, a specially designed name badge and a Feedback Form. Each table also had two copies of a list of group photos to be taken to ensure everyone present is included in group photos.

On behalf of the organisers, Pradeep Luther, the Secretary, welcomed everyone. He introduced the Chairman of ESS Alumni, Jayant Tanna. Jayant started by thanking everyone for attending and introduced all members of his Reunion committee. He thanked them for their valuable support.

Jayant welcomed all the alumni present, particularly those from overseas – Prem Sharma and Parvin Syal from LA, Naresh Solanki from Chesterfield, Missouri and Gurcharan Singh Gill from Nairobi. He also thanked the 72 alumni from ESS and 51 ex-students from other Nairobi schools - Duke of Gloucester or Jamhuri School, Duchess of Gloucester or Pangani Girls School, Highway Secondary, Delamere Boys or Upper Hill, City High, Ngara Secondary, Khalsa Boys and Girls and Technical High schools.

As for the souvenir magazine, we had profiles of 74 alumni out of 123 attending this event. The profiles were fascinating! Many congratulations to all the writers who had made their schools proud. In addition to the profiles, there was a goodwill message from the Principal at EHS, the Chair of the local EHS Alumni, Rules of ESS Alumni; Goodwill Messages from all, a list of participants and photos from Basketball court opening; from 2017, 2019 and 2022 visits to Nairobi, and 2018 Toronto Reunion.

There was also a four-page supplement on the Rise and Fall of Hockey in Kenya. It was noted that after the tremendous success Kenya achieved in the 60s and 70s through world class players like Alu Mendonca, Avtar Singh Sohal and Surjit Singh Panesar, the standard of hockey has slumped so low that Kenya hockey has not been at the Olympics for the last 30 years!

The interviews with the six Kenya hockey players and ex-Olympians were very interesting and informative. They had all worked and trained very hard to be selected to play for Kenya in the Olympics in 1968 at Mexico and 1972 at Munich. In addition, they played for Kenya in the Hockey World Cups in Barcelona in 1971 and Amsterdam in 1973. All of them thanked their families and hockey coaches for their inspiration and support. Everyone present applauded the Hockey stalwarts – Harvinder, Amarjeet and Tejinder Marwa, Ravinder Laly, Harvinder Sibia and Billy Ahluwalia.

Jayant talked about the work done by ESS Alumni to support the school including raising funds for Needy Pupils to pay off their Lunch fees. A cheque for K Sh. 330,446/- was presented to the school. And finally, ESS Alumni sponsored the building of a brand-new Basketball and Volleyball court in March 2022. We were able to donate nearly £25,000 for the new court which was opened in May 2022 by the MP for Kamukunji, Hon Yusuf Hassan. The photos are in the magazine. Jayant thanked all the donors listed in the appreciation section in the souvenir magazine. The school pupils were absolutely thrilled and were very appreciative of our efforts.

Jayant reminded the meeting about the excellent website www.essalumni.org.uk that many had appreciated. It has profiles of students, staff, all past school activities, sports and results etc. It has, however, become outdated recently and needs an active driver to revive it.

The Accounts were in a healthy position because of careful spending and meticulous record-keeping by our Treasurer Nisar Butt. We had 19 Biennial Members and 64 Life Members.

Jayant thanked all members of the extended reunion committee, advertisers, all donors, Karam Bharij for providing photography for this event; all Raffle donors and the Raffle team of Saleem Mehar and Neerja Luther; Naresh Raghvani of Liquid Bubble Ltd our printers; Anuradha Shukla and Kiran Thakrar for the entertaining melody and music; Neha Gudka for their lovely venue and catering.

After a sumptuous meal, the music band Strings led by Anuradha Shukla and Kiran Thakrar, provided some beautifully melodious songs, both current and vintage which brought all participants on their feet in applause and on the dance floor.

The Raffle prizes were announced. These were Champagne Afternoon Tea & Thames River Cruise for 2; Three Course Lunch with Prosecco for 2 at Sindhu Restaurant – Marlow; Indian Afternoon Tea for 2 at Soho Wala; Comedy Night for 2; and a Studio Portrait by photographer Karam Bharij. The lucky ones shrieked with delight while others muttered under their breath.

At this stage, Jayant explained that EHS in Nairobi needed funds to support needy pupils. He invited participants to make any donations for EHS in Nairobi if they wished to. Gurcharan Singh Gill donated £500; Manvinderjit (Billy) Ahluwalia, Jagjit Bansal, Baldev Laly, Jaswinder Bahra, Vijay Patel and Ashok Sharma agreed to donate £250 each. Yaqoob Sheikh agreed to donate £200 and Waseem Qureshi donated £100. Jayant thanked them for their generous donations and everyone applauded their charitable contributions.

Everyone smiled happily for their pictures in School and Year groups. All members left with lovely smiles on their faces bidding their old and new friends goodbye! Gurdip Singh Kalsi (ex-Delamere Boys/Upper Hill School) then extended a Vote of Thanks to the Chair and committee for their excellent planning and organisation of the Reunion. He wished all the guests a safe journey home.

The feedback returns were very positive. 70% of the respondents rated the event overall to be Excellent and 30% rated it as Good. 71% of the respondents rated the organisation to be Excellent and 26% as Good. All very positive!

Finally, as the term comes to an end and we prepare for the Biennial General Meeting, I would like to thank all members of my committee for their commitment, time and patience. In addition, I would like to thank all our own alumni members as well as those from other Nairobi schools for their support and participation. I am grateful to all our donors, advertisers and service providers of our events. I thank Gurcharan Singh Gill for his ever-ready support for any project! I thank the Principal at EHS, Samuel Kimathi for his kind co-operation and willing information and feedback. I thank the Chair of EHS Alumni Association, Alloys Batsinduka for his warm friendship and support.

My thanks go to Nisar Ahmed Butt for his positive outlook, sound suggestions, constant encouragement and unwavering support.

THANK YOU ALL!

Jayant Tanna

Chair – ESS Alumni

2021-2023