

THE DARAJA SOCIAL

Building Bridges Between Communities - Daraja Foundation's Gazette



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IN ZANZIBAR


FEATURED
INDIVIDUAL

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Daraja means bridge in Swahili

BY SHAUNA HARRISON

Let me introduce you to Daraja. We are a grassroots organization that was established in 2013. The foundation aims to create opportunities for volunteers and donors to contribute towards positively impacting the lives of young individuals, implementing change from the bottom-up. Our mission is to create a support network to build connections, improve education and promote health and nutrition. We currently have a presence in Zanzibar, Tanzania and in Calgary - where we continue to build a solid foundation under the metaphoric bridge that connects us globally.

We are pleased to share that we have launched the *Daraja Social* in 2019 and this is our first monthly newsletter. In each issue you can expect to find updates on our programs, feature stories from individuals involved with Daraja and upcoming events in Calgary.

In 2019, we aim to maintain a community of like-minded individuals who are looking to have fun, connect and have an impact on our Calgary-born charity.

An update from Zanzibar

GOING INTO 2019 STRONG

Since our last gala and all of the generous support Daraja received, the Flo House program was able to become a reality and has recently been implemented. After finding the perfect property, the first month was spent cleaning, painting and furnishing the home with the help of volunteers and students. In October, two of Daraja's returning volunteers Sharon and Barb ran a mentor course teaching those involved how to support and guide the transitioning youth.



The Flo House consists of 6 mentors including recent volunteers, former orphanage residents that are now independent and students that have already been involved with Daraja for a few years. The first residents moved in November 1, 2018 and each resident, or mentee, was paired with an older mentor. Mentees and mentors meet twice weekly and the mentors work with them through goal setting, personal challenges, financial management and training opportunities with partner organizations and local companies. Every month a meeting is held with the mentors to evaluate progress, review updates and provide guidance. The home can hold up to eight residents at a time and currently there are four residents between the ages of 20-24. Outside of the house, we maintain a strong family network of young adults that are from Mazizini Children's Home. They meet regularly and are committed to supporting each other and their younger brothers and sisters into the transition to adulthood. Over time, the Flo House will gain additional residents that will be coming directly from the orphanage in 2019 when they turn 18 years of age.



January marked the start of transition programs at the Flo House and each month the classes are focused on a theme that the residents, adults, and those involved will be able to partake in. The different themes will be repeated every six months. Our theme for January was: Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, and February: Health, Prevention, Self-Care and Nutrition - led by our volunteers Alex and Marlies. We are looking forward to the growth of Flo House, an initiative that now exists because of our donors, partners and our internal volunteer team. From long-term benefactors like the Pure North S'Energy Foundation, to complimentary health exams with Dr. Jenny Bouraima, to donated bikes from Bicycles for Humanity, to sponsored hospitality and tour guide certifications with Kawa Training Center and sponsored wellness and treatment training with Mali Spa, to much, much more - we really are in good hands.

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Start with a clear understanding of your goals, of what is deeply important to you - your life's destination. If you always keep the end in mind, the steps you take will never fail to lead you in the right direction.

-Stephen Covey

Volunteering in ZNZ

WRITTEN BY MALAIKA ONANGOLO

Below is a short story from one of Daraja's recent volunteers that helped out in a variety of areas including the start of the Flo House.



My name is Malaika and I went to Zanzibar in May 2018 and stayed until January 2019. During my time in Zanzibar, we looked for a house that we could transform into a safe transition space for the youth after they leave the Mazizini Children's Home. We looked at many different places and went to see plots and houses that would need a lot of repairing. Finally we found a fitting place on a main road that consisted of a little house with a garden. That was the first step and it felt good to see that it was possible.

During the process of implementing the transition house program, I went every Sunday to Mazizini. A lot of my time was spent either playing cards with the kids, drawing, calculating, reading or dancing. They love to dance so much that they also managed to teach me how to dance. We cooked pasta together and enjoyed the meal out of an extremely big pot. Every Sunday, I was able to get to know the kids better and as time passed a bond was created between us. Our aim from being there regularly is to maintain the already strong relationship and trust that the children have in Daraja, through its members and volunteers. As they grow, they will know they have this support. I felt trusted and accepted - and each visit made me more confident that the transition house was the right thing to do for them.

We prepared the new transition house by cleaning it out and painting the inside and outside. Hassan and Hussein from the art club decorated the home and in beautiful writing, they wrote 'FLO HOUSE' on the outside which became the official name of the transition house. It is in memory of an influential woman, and also an acronym for foundation, livelihood and opportunity. Now it was ready! In November, the first residents moved in (how exciting!) and what better way to celebrate than with a pizza and movie night. It was a great feeling to be a part of this project and watch it grow into reality.

Through Daraja I was also able to volunteer for three weeks in the maternity ward of the Mnazi Mmoja Hospital in Stone Town. Volunteering there was a great experience and I was able to learn a lot from the midwives and nurses. In my time spent there I got to witness a lot of deliveries and was lucky enough to welcome ten Zanzibarian babies.

I spent my last few weeks in Zanzibar as a mentor for one of the Flo House residents which was a completely new field for me. The last step was to finish the classroom and it was completed with the help of the other volunteers. We painted a blackboard and created a wall that every guest will be able to leave their name or hand print on as a memory for our residents. In between all the work that we did, we still made sure to take time to enjoy the surroundings. We all went together to Forodhani Park for Eid to have some mishkaki or urojo, spent time at the beach to swim and sometimes just relaxed at the Daraja House in town.

My time with Daraja was an incredible journey. It was great to have been a part of the Flo House initiative. It was a once in a lifetime experience, I learned a lot and was able to really grow as a person. The most important part though is that I became a part of the Daraja Family.

Giving back in YYC

WRITTEN BY SHAUNA HARRISON

Are you ready to try something new and connect with people in YYC, all while raising funds that will go towards Daraja programs? Throughout the year we will be hosting events in Calgary where you will now have the opportunity to mingle and make a difference year-round. Our first event will be sponsored by KULT which is the first studio of its kind in Canada. Be prepared to get sweaty as you experience this high energy workout in a studio filled with fancy lights and upbeat music. It will take place March 27th at 7 pm and the sign-up will be available online one week prior on the KULT website. The raised proceeds will go towards the Daraja programs, so mark it in your calendars and use the link below to see what its all about. Can't wait to see you there!

<https://kult.fitness/climb-studio-brief>



KULT

If you or someone you know is interested in sponsoring an activity in YYC for the Daraja Foundation, please inquire by sending an email to volunteer@daraja.ca