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THE DARAJA SOCIAL

Building Bridges Between Communities – Daraja Foundation's Gazette



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Daraja is a child being raised by a global community

BY ARSHEEN DHALLA, BOARD MEMBER


When I reflect back on our first Board of Directors meeting that was held in 2013, I had no idea where we would be in a few years time. At that meeting, I sat around a table with six women who were eager to hear a story and selflessly offering their time to support an idea that originated on the other side of the world, within the Zanzibar archipelago off the coast of East Africa. The phrase, "*it takes a village to raise a child*" is very fitting when we look at how much we have grown from that day. Daraja is like a child being raised by a global community. Hundreds of people have been involved in this upbringing in one way or another as time has passed and you know who you are.

Daraja continues to learn, grow and adapt with your guidance. Being a receiver of kindness, compassion and strength allows for us to share it with so many more people. Without our volunteers, donors and community partners we could not have made it this far. Daraja itself has started to be recognized as a facilitator, a mentor, a guide, as well as an entity with its own identity and persona. All of our supporters who parented Daraja from inception are the reason why people continue to trust in Daraja today.

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An Update from Zanzibar

ALWAYS MOVING FORWARD

Flo House. Since we established the Flo House in late 2018, we have come a long way with the transition program and continue to adapt our approach to foster its growth. Our mentor-mentee initiative has been the core of our success so far and is the reason why many things are coming together. Each resident in the Flo House is paired with an older mentor who guides them and aims to keep them on a forward path. The mentors also have a support network where open

discussions take place, challenges are addressed and milestones are celebrated. Mentors work closely with mentees to plan for stability, financial security and a smooth transition out of the Flo House. All Flo residents work, attend school or do both, creating a thriving atmosphere. There are currently 7 mentor-mentee partners, 2 new residents and 2 more residents that will move into Flo this month. Daraja has also started an outreach program for adults not residing at Flo who are engaged with Daraja and would benefit from mentor support.

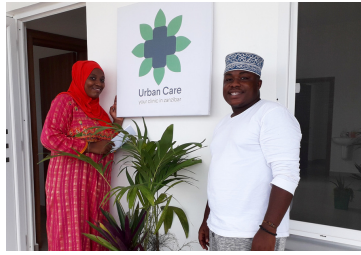
Mazizini Children's House. One of our volunteers Chrisi joined Daraja at a critical time, as five youth exited the orphanage. She worked closely with and advocated for each youth, secured educational sponsorships, sought out part-time work and extra-curricular activities and helped start the process for their move into Flo House.

Bike Program. Our volunteers Alex and Marlies worked with house residents on a business plan for partnership between Flo House and the Lost & Found Hostel. In support of Flo, the hostel will rent out Flo Bikes to their guests.

Health & Education. In collaboration with the Zanzibar Nurses and Midwives Council, we ran a nursing skills and procedures seminar for nurses working at the local hospitals in Zanzibar. Feedback from participants was positive after they had the opportunity to refresh their skills and watch presentations on a variety of beneficial topics.

ZL4LF. Many students have received educational sponsorships and small business loans through the Global Bridges Program by Daraja in partnership with Zanzibar Learning 4 Life Foundation. This initiative was supported by our great partners Bicycles for Humanity, One Love Africa Foundation and the SAIT School of Business. Stay tuned for updates in our next issue.

Gratitude. We are excited that Suzanne from One Love Africa Foundation and Celina from Bicycles 4 Humanity (Edmonton) will be visiting us in June. We would like to thank Recycle at OZTI for donating seating solutions made from recycled plastics and up-cycled materials for our classroom, Dr. Jenny and Urban Care for continuing to provide complimentary health consultations for residents of Flo, Kawa Training Center and Stars of Zanzibar for creating endless educational opportunities for us and Zanlink for enabling use to connect globally and share our stories and experiences online.



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You can not get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make.

- Jane Goodall



Challenges to Triumphs

WRITTEN BY AMINA JUMA

Below is the journey of one of the Flo House residents, in whose life Daraja has made a significant difference.

Hello, my name is Amina and I live at the Flo House as the big sister looking after the house and the youth residents. I decided to live here because I wanted to be there for the girls and boys that I grew up with and help guide them when it is their time to leave Mazizini Children's House.

I arrived at the orphanage at the age of ten in 2004 with my three brothers after our parents passed away. I stayed there for eight years then had to leave the orphanage after completing my exams in 2012. I knew I could stay with my grandmother but it wouldn't be easy. I moved in and tried to find work that would support us both financially but it was challenging because I needed to get proper training first. That same year, she passed away and I was back on my own.

I was trying to find my way and in some instances I found dead ends. I worked for a lady on the mainland as a cleaner in exchange for a small salary and a promise of financial support to repeat my exams. I needed better results to improve my opportunities for further education but unfortunately soon after, I realized it was a false promise. Next I went to live with a relative and tried to help her with the money I had saved from the previous job. When there was no more money though, I was no longer able to stay. My older brother helped me find my own place and I started a small business selling eggs, soup and bread. Luckily, a customer of mine helped me find a job and I was then able to get experience in the airport and hotel industry.

Wherever I was, I always knew Daraja was supporting Mazizini Children's House and that they were helping my brothers who had recently left. I came to Daraja with my business ideas and then was supported with a loan. Volunteers gave me guidance, support and friendship. I was also cared for and given the necessary support throughout my pregnancy when I was expecting a child.

I was involved with a lot of activities through the Daraja Foundation and I started to help with the big vision. I believed in what Daraja was doing and knew I was the right person to help in the transition house. Currently, I'm responsible for looking after my two year old son, our Flo House family and also work at the front office of the Lost & Found Hostel in Stone Town. In my spare time, I am still building a business with my own brand and selling products that I make at home such as pure coconut oil. I love my son, Amir, my Daraja family and my job.



After facing difficulties when I left the orphanage, I am proud to be a part of the transition house. After leaving the orphanage, it is such a shock because one day you know where you will be eating and the next day you don't. That is why a transition house is so important and valuable. The Flo House is a place for people to stay during this confusing time and is extremely helpful when young adults are just starting to learn about life. It helps teach you how to save money for the future and acquire the necessary skills for a successful future.

Daraja has been supporting us in our small business ideas and volunteers have come to teach us many things in a variety of different areas. As the Flo House continues to help us learn more about life through different workshops and teachings within the community, it will keep having an impact on many. I am very proud of this foundation and what it has become. Thank you very much for your support, Daraja Foundation, and all of the people involved. I would also like to leave readers with some advice, what I always tell myself. Stay close to people who feel like sunlight. Never, ever give up on what may challenge you and don't stress yourself out too much. No matter how bad a situation is, time will change it.

Giving back in YYC

WRITTEN BY SHAUNA HARRISON

Daraja's first social event happened on March 27th at a fitness studio in Calgary called KULT. The evening included an exercise class, socializing and champagne to celebrate the success of our first event. The event raised over \$300, with all proceeds going towards the Foundation. This money will be used to purchase beds and mattresses for the new residents that will soon be moving into the Flo House. Please follow the link below for a quick video from Zanzibar explaining how the charity class has made an impact.

<https://youtu.be/xuuUREMVHGY>



Coming together and participating in these small Calgary events help to make a big impact. The funds that are raised go directly to the foundation and will allow for Daraja's projects in Zanzibar to be sustained throughout the year. We look forward to connecting everyone again and seeing new faces at our next event, a paint night at Raw Canvas, on May 31st, 2019. For details and to sign-up, please follow this link: bit.ly/DarajaPaintNight

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

March & April Highlights



Hijja moved into the Flo House in April after leaving Mazizini Children's Home. He is currently studying English and plans to enroll into a chef training program when he has completed this course.



Within 2 months of receiving a loan that was raised by a student from the SAIT School of Business in Alberta, a small ZL4LF student business called Mashallah already paid 50% back.



Flo Bikes, a new small business managed by Flo residents, signed their first agreement for bike rentals with Lost & Found Hostel in Stone Town. Their bicycles were donated by Bicycles 4 Humanity in Calgary.



Salama, a valued member of many student clubs, a mentor at the Flo House and a recipient of a Daraja sponsorship for education, graduated with a degree in Community & Economic Development.



We celebrated International Women's Day with EQWIP Hubs and hosted a women's event at the Flo House combining our girls' clubs from Daraja, EQWIP Hubs and Zanzibar Learning for Life Foundation.



Khadija moved into the Flo House in April after leaving Mazizini Children's Home. She is currently taking an English and Computer course at Kawa Training Center and will continue secondary school in Form 5.



Students from the International School of Zanzibar and the International School of Turin helped us with painting and gardening at Flo House and organizing the classroom at Mazizini Children's Home.



Hamad completed the Stars Hospitality Course at Kawa Training Center. His excellent training and performance lead to signing a full-time work contract at Bellevue Guesthouse.



In collaboration with the Zanzibar Nurses and Midwives Council, we successfully ran a nursing skills and procedures update seminar for nurses working at the local hospitals in Zanzibar.