



Galvestonians aid African scholars

[By Ed Sulzberger](#)

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A small group of African girls with a talent for science will receive full scholarships next year, thanks to the generosity of Galvestonians.

The girls, all orphans ages 14-17, are secondary school students in the East African nation of Tanzania.

The program, now in its second year, is organized by African Childrens Haven, a Galveston nonprofit that supports projects that help African children lead healthier, more productive lives.

“We receive support from around the country, but are especially grateful for the contributions of our neighbors here in Galveston,” Linda Ercole-Musso, the organization’s board chair, said.

The project recently received a \$1,000 contribution from Beverly and John Frannea in memory of their daughter, Andrea Hufstedler Walker. The donation is slated to be matched by a donation from the ExxonMobil Foundation.

“The funds, \$2,000 in all, will support two of our scholars in 2012,” Ercole-Musso said. “The contributions we receive from Galvestonians have really helped the program flourish.”

Other Galveston supporters include Winkie and Jerry Mohn, Susan, Robert and Harris Lynch, the Kempner Foundation, Cheri Ray, Ritchie Adoue, Sharon Gillens, Maggie Fuller, Joy Gilcrease, Elizabeth Lanier, Deb Naremore, Celia Padnos, Pam Rice, Marilyn Shultz, Cathy Stoval, Stephanie Thomas, Kellianne Vallee, Courtney Walker and business supporters Galveston Computer Solutions and Galveston.com.

It costs about \$1,000 a year to send a girl to secondary school in Tanzania. It’s a good investment, but is largely out of reach for the majority of Tanzanian children. The project pays school fees, room and board and provides mentoring from women volunteers drawn from Tanzania’s science community.

Studies show educating African girls provides a way out of poverty. In Tanzania, primary education is free, but many barriers prevent girls from benefiting. These include early marriage, unwanted pregnancy and high rates of HIV/AIDS.

The scholarship program was organized by Dr. Aichi Kitanyi, one of Tanzania’s leading agricultural scientists.

“Our intention is to provide orphan girls who have shown a talent for science with the opportunity to go to secondary school and put them on a track that will lead to careers in science,” Kitanyi said. “Tanzania sorely needs scientists to grow its economy and address challenging social and environmental issues, especially AIDS and global climate change.

“My expectation is that by working through this small pilot project, we can begin the process of expanding the availability of competent female researchers able to contribute to African science. If we are successful, as I believe we will be, a greater number of African women from diverse backgrounds can begin taking their rightful place in combating the challenges of poverty and climate change and bring to the table new and important perspectives on these issues.”

The project, also known as the Carole Cole Science Scholarship Program, honors Ercole-Musso’s longtime friend and classmate, the late Carole Cole.

“During the last years of her life, Carole followed the development of African Childrens Haven, especially our plans for science education in Tanzania,” Ercole-Musso said.

Cole was an actress and artist well-known for her work in movies, television and the visual arts.

For information, visit www.africanchildrenshaven.org/projects.asp.