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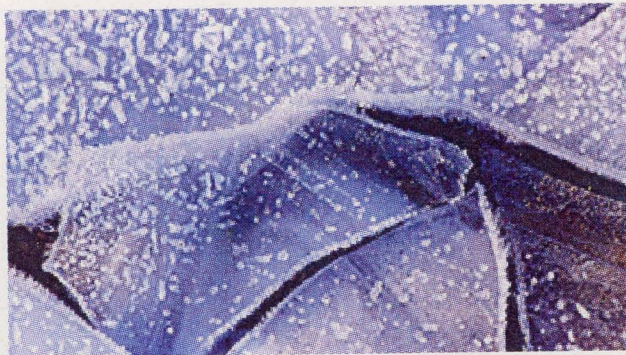
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Anne Willis photo

# THE ISLANDS' WEEKLY

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## Lopez non-profit aims to help Kenyan school.

By JANE K. FOX  
Staff Writer

Before she even saw the Burguret Primary School, Liz Scranton knew she wanted to help.

It was 2008 and Scranton, accompanied by 17 family members, was traveling in Africa. "My mother had always wanted to take the family on safari," Scranton said. The trip to Kenya satisfied that wish, but for Scranton, there was one more thing to see.

"I had just finished reading 'Three Cups of Tea,' and I really wanted to see a school," Scranton said.

The book by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin deals with Mortenson's

efforts to fight poverty and educate children in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The book's message of education as a tool against poverty and violence inspired Scranton.

"It confirmed for me how important education is, with our planet and the problems it has, education is the only way we will find solutions," Scranton said.

At Scranton's request, therefore, an extra item was added to the safari itinerary; a trip to a local school. "The travel agency had never had that request," Scranton

said. However the company researched the family's route and chose the Burguret Primary School, in the Rift Valley near the town of Nanyuki.

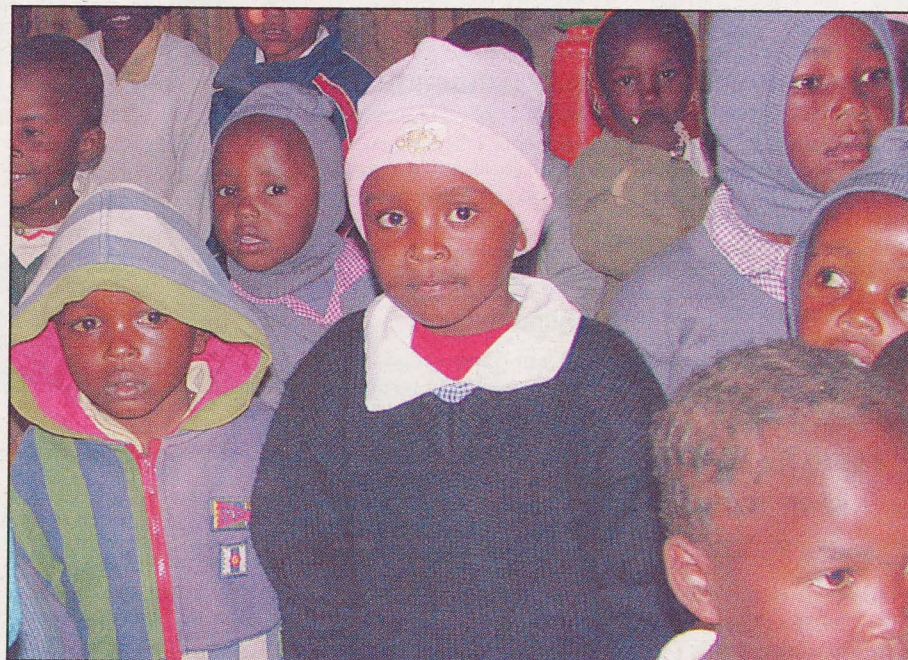
**"No matter what our economic level, we have so much."**

— Liz Scranton

The trip that Scranton and her partner Teri Linneman took there marked a turning point in their lives. The building they saw,

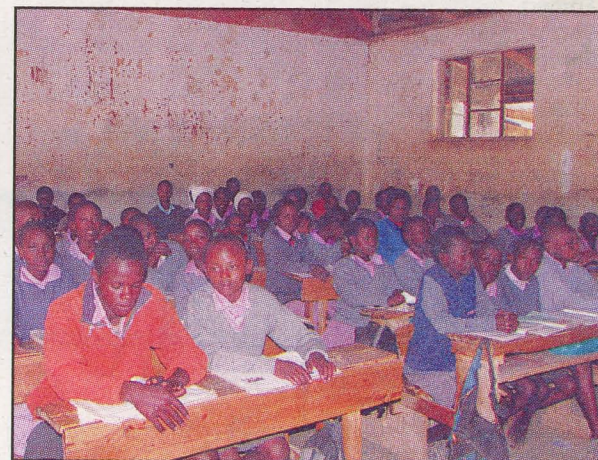
the children they met and the time they spent there resulted in their non-profit The Kenyan School Project. It took a further two years to gain non-profit standing and on Dec 23, they began their first stint of fund raising.

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Terri Linneman photo

Students in the pre-school section of the Burguret Primary School.



Terri Linneman photo

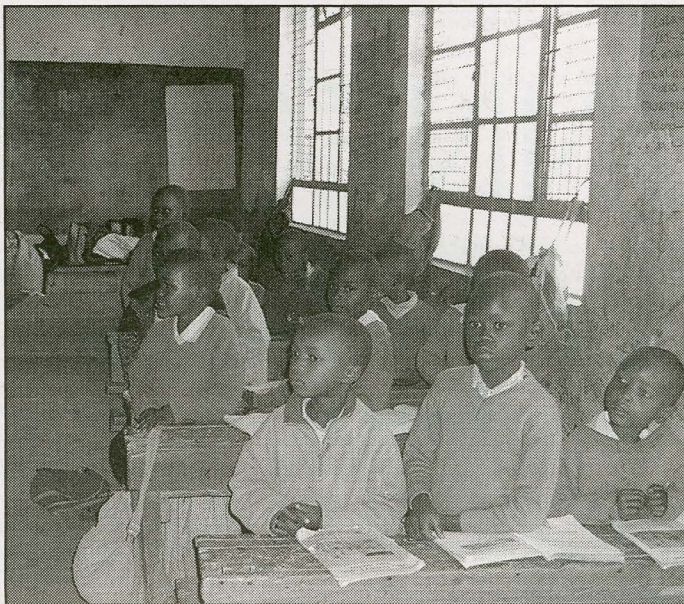
A class room of older students at the Burguret Primary School.

# KENYAN SCHOOL

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Scranton had arrived at the school predisposed to help. "I had in the back of my head we might be able to do something," she said. Following an email sent to family and friends, Scranton had collected a large number of educational text-books to donate to the school. When they got there, however, they realized the donation was not enough.

Set in a semi arid landscape of over-grazed pasture, the school consisted of one larger cinderblock building and a smaller structure for the pre-school. "It looked tidy, it but needed some love. The wind and air is hard on buildings," Linneman said.



Teri Linneman photo

Students in the upper grades at the Burguret Primary School listen to a class presentation.

The pre-school, the two

added, was little more than a shack. Over all, Scranton and Linneman said approximately 360 children were educated in the two buildings.

Scranton and Linneman were struck by the seriousness the students brought to their studies, "school is a big deal for them, they walk miles to get there," Linneman said. They were also given a warm welcome that forged a greater connection between the women and the students.

"I was moved by the presentations we were given, they touched me deeply and made me want to do more for the school. We decided to start the non-profit to help this one school, then maybe it will extend to other schools, there is a big need," Scranton said.

Although the possibility of expansion exists, the two have not set overly ambitious targets for fundraising. In addition, these targets are set by the school, for the school. They have no interest in dictating to the staff what they think they need.

Scranton said that they asked the school to send

them a list of prioritized needs. The list included improvements to the pre-school building and a better water catchment system. Number one on the list, however, was a kitchen. "There is no food program there," Scranton said, adding that some children have to drop out of school because of a lack of food means they cannot concentrate.

This is something Scranton and Linneman are eager to alleviate and what they are currently fundraising for. "It is not a lot of money," Scranton

said, referring to their target figure of \$7,535.

Through donations and a Lopez-based fundraiser planned for spring, Scranton and Linneman are hoping construction will begin in fall. Following the kitchen's completion, the non-profit will partner with other organizations and apply for grants which will help facilitate a food program.

Those who wish to donate are asked to send checks, made payable to The Kenyan School Project, to 4559 Center Road. The non-profit offers these figures as an idea of what your gift can do:

- 50 people giving \$10 will raise 15 percent of the goal

- 30 people giving \$50 will fund one fifth of the goal.

- 35 people giving \$100 will fund half the cost of the school

"No matter what our economic level, we have so much," Scranton said.

Online: [kenyanschoolproject.org](http://kenyanschoolproject.org)