

At left, Lee Monson (center) is given a tour of the new Mukuru School by Kenya Airways CEO Titus Naikuni (right). Boeing contributed nearly a quarter of the cost to build the new school—which is shown below, with the old school in the foreground on the left.

“I was amazed by this young man’s story,” Naikuni said. “I asked him if there was anything I could do to help him, and I was surprised by his compassionate response that he would prefer that I offer assistance to his old school.”

Naikuni contacted the school’s headmaster—who asked only that the airline build an additional classroom. Naikuni looked around and told the headmaster: “I’ll do you better than that: We’ll build you a new school.”

Shortly after, Naikuni shared the story of meeting Ali with representatives from Boeing and KLM, which owns part of Kenya Airways. Both parties agreed to provide funding; Boeing’s contribution covered nearly a quarter of the construction cost.

The two-story school is now finished and currently being equipped with furniture and supplies, including computers. The school boasts eight modern classrooms, a library and a well-drained sports field.

“Being able to look back and know we’ve partnered with a customer on improving something as meaningful as education is a great testament to our close working relationship,” said Lee Monson, Commercial Airplanes vice president of Sales for the Middle East and Africa.

This project marks Boeing’s latest involvement in contributing to educational improvement in Africa. Mike Smith, Commercial Airplanes international Sales director responsible for Kenya Airways, initiated a school sponsorship program in 2003 that provides supplies to five Nairobi-area schools. The airline and Boeing also work together on an annual student exchange program for U.S. and Kenyan students.

Ali will graduate from Drew in 2010 and plans to pursue a career in international affairs. “I hope Mr. Naikuni’s generosity and efforts to make positive changes continue to improve education in Africa—and that others will benefit as I have,” he said. ■

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Cause and effect

Kenya Airways, KLM and Boeing bring good works full circle

By BRIAN WALKER

Drew University sits on 186 serene, heavily wooded acres in Madison, N.J.—and is about as far from the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, as one might imagine. For Nairobi-born Mohamedin Ali, an 18-year-old scholarship student attending this college, the disparity is all too real. And, while he considers himself very fortunate, Ali’s story typifies the Kenyan spirit of giving.

The Mukuru School Ali attended in his youth consisted of three buildings, constructed mostly from corrugated tin and rotting plywood, surrounding a courtyard

that became a muddy pit during the rainy season. Up to 80 students filled classrooms that would be crowded with half that number. And a lack of teaching materials and supplies further hindered education efforts.

Ali was one of many gifted, but vulnerable, children identified by AmericaShare, the nonprofit arm of tour operator Micato Safaris. Enrolled in AmericaShare’s School Sponsorship Program, Ali continued to excel in his studies. Before long, he’d outgrown Mukuru, and AmericaShare found Ali an American couple that sponsored him to attend high school in the United States.

It’s a touching story. But a chance meeting while traveling set the stage for Boeing to take part in creating even greater opportunities for Kenya’s less fortunate youth.

“I was so excited about coming to America to go to school that I wanted to share my story with the gentleman sitting next to me on the airplane,” Ali said. That man was Kenya Airways CEO Titus Naikuni.