



# Serena News

*Insights and Inspirations in the World of Serena Hotels*

**The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Newsletter for Serena Hotels**

## ONCE UPON A CHRISTMAS DREAM... 'LIGHT UP A LIFE' CHRISTMAS INITIATIVE

Serena Hotels within its portfolio of 24 hotels, resorts, safari lodges and camps across East Africa and Mozambique was once famous for its elaborate Christmas lights and decorations during the festive season. However, for the third consecutive year in 2015, Serena decided to dedicate its corporate Christmas tree decorations fund towards a much brighter and beautiful cause – lighting up young lives with love through an initiative known as 'Light Up A Life'. Working with selected children's homes, schools and hospitals from the communities that surround its African properties, Serena Hotels had a Christmas season of global goodwill that glittered with the joy of giving.

Over 1,500 children were asked which gift would make their Christmastide glow. Their wishes, each as bright as a star, were hung on the 25 Serena Christmas trees as 'wish tags'. Each child's wish was fulfilled through Serena Hotels internally generated funds and the funds pledged by our guests, staff and business supporters.

Participation by our guests, staff and business supporters over the years has been gratifying in enabling Serena Hotels decorate Christmas with the joy of Africa's children. **Below are some of Serena Hotels' Christmas celebration stories.**



Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at Nairobi Serena Hotel

### **Kirawira Serena Camp**

54 children from Bikira Maria Children's Home, located in the Lamadi, Simuyu district of Tanzania, came to visit the Camp where they were given school uniforms, food donations, lunch, a full-day game drive and a tour of **Kirawira Serena Camp**. The enthusiasm shown from guests led **Kirawira Serena Camp** to open a post office box, allowing guests to continue sending gifts to the children. Furthermore, several guests promised to solicit further support for the home, including building a school for the children.

There was strong support shown by the staff of **Kirawira Serena Camp**. Assistant Manager of **Lake Duluti Serena Hotel**, Mr. Godwin Joshua, was also elected as Assistant Director of the Home – Godwin adopted one of the children and will be providing support for the upkeep and education of the child.



Christmas Initiative at Kirawira Serena Camp in Tanzania

## Nairobi Serena Hotel

**Nairobi Serena Hotel** supported the MaryFaith Children Center, a rescue center and home for victims of sexual assault. MaryFaith's vision is to create a safe haven for children, specifically for girls at risk. The Founder of the home follows up on cases in court, helping girls get justice and education - ultimately helping the children be integrated back into society. Started in 2004, MaryFaith is now home to 58 children from the ages of 2 months to 17 years.

On December 19<sup>th</sup> 2015, the gift handover ceremony was hosted at the **Nairobi Serena Hotel** Ballroom, where children were able to spend the afternoon with management, staff and Santa. There was music, children's games, a bouncing castle, face painting and lunch provided. In the end, **Nairobi Serena Hotel** was able to fulfill every child at MaryFaith's wish with gifts, happiness and celebration.



Christmas Initiative at Nairobi Serena Hotel in Kenya



Christmas Initiative at Lake Kivu Serena Hotel in Rwanda

## Lake Kivu Serena Hotel

**Lake Kivu Serena Hotel** celebrated Christmas 2015 with the Key of Life Nursery School. Initiated in 2011, Key of Life was founded by 4 women that help fill the gap of a nursery school in their community. The school currently has one classroom for 50 children between the ages of 3 to 4 years. It is known as a low-cost school, as many of the parents in the village cannot afford schooling.

80 Children from Key of Life Nursery School had the opportunity to spend a day at the **Lake Kivu Serena Hotel** garden, where they indulged in a delicious lunch, played games, were gifted school books and Hotel Christmas gifts.

## Lake Victoria Serena Golf Resort & Spa

The Resort partnered with St. Mary Kevin Orphanage in Entebbe, Uganda. Featured on NBS Television Uganda, Sales Manager, Allen Ampaire, in an interview explained the purpose and history of the initiative. Ampaire explained that in previous years, **Lake Victoria Serena Golf Resort & Spa** would make a visit to the orphanage during the Christmas season and donate food. However, since the 'Light Up a Life' Initiative, they went one step further - staff made a visit to the orphanage before Christmas to ask each child what specific gift they would like, followed by a Christmas party at the Resort for the children. With tons of food, balloons, dancing and individualized gifts, **Lake Victoria Serena Golf Resort & Spa** found this made a greater difference to the children.



Christmas Initiative at Lake Victoria Golf Resort & Spa in Uganda



Christmas Initiative at Polana Serena Hotel in Mozambique

## Polana Serena Hotel

The Hotel partnered with local celebrities and musicians to come out for **Polana Serena Hotel's** tree lighting ceremony, and sold out of their Christmas scrolls a few days after the launch of the initiative. 119 children from AVOMACC were brought to the hotel to enjoy a day at the **Polana Serena Hotel**, where they were provided with lunch and Christmas gifts.





Tree Planting in Ndakiani Dam, Kenya by Serena Hotels Head Office Staff

## LET THEM GROW! – SAVING AFRICA'S FORESTS

The Serena tree-planting program has been in place since 1991, with its initial success program in the Hombu Forest in the Mount Kenya National Park (UNESCO World Heritage Site) that suffered from the adverse effects of deforestation and at Amboseli National Park, where the destruction of forests by elephants is well on the way to being reversed. Serena Hotels have established tree and shrub nurseries at all its properties and over the years, this initiative has grown to see a wholesome transformation of the environment around Serena properties. With a bigger focus, which is now conservation of the ecosystem, there is notable improvement not just in forest cover, but also in the abundant wildlife and increased variety of bird species that ultimately depend on the environment. To widen the footprint, Serena Hotels in the last five years has been in partnerships with several organizations, through which there has been value addition in terms of impact and synergies.

## DAR ES SALAAM SERENA HOTEL STEPS TOWARDS A GREENER TANZANIA

“Did you know recycling one glass bottle of wine could save enough energy to power a television for 2.5 hours?” (*The Recycler Website*)

In partnership with The Recycler, **Dar es Salaam Serena Hotel** is doing its part in taking steps towards a cleaner and greener Tanzania. The Recycler is a professional waste management and recycling solutions company based in Dar-es-Salaam. It specializes in separating waste in order to process and trade to domestic and international markets, and invests in waste management research.

Over a 4-month period in 2015, **Dar es Salaam Serena Hotel** was able to successfully recycle over 4.5 tons of waste! This includes 70 Kg of white paper, 2,007 Kg of cardboard, 1,019 Kg of plastic bottles and nylon, 77 Kg of cans/tins and 1,329 Kg of glass.



## STAY STRONG, LIVE LONG – SERENA WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Serena Employee Wellness Program that began in 2001 is supported by our internal Wellness Champions and the Unit Clinic Nurses who continue to sensitize our staff and the local community on health related aspects.

During the year 2015, the activities revolved around prevention, care and treatment of common communicable infections; counseling and screening; maternal child care in collaboration with the respective Ministries of Health in the East African region and Mozambique.

Over 5,700 persons from the local communities benefitted through the free medical consultations and subsidized medication provided at the Serena Hotels clinics with **Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge** recording approximately 3,600 patients who were seen and supported during year 2015.

Our lodges provide safe clean drinking water to the local communities thus reducing the exposure to a wide range of water-borne diseases. This has helped improve the overall health of the people around our staff, their families and us. Approximately 259,632 persons and 360,000 livestock benefit per annum.

Furthermore, units such as **Kampala Serena Hotel, Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp, Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge and Kigali Serena Hotel**, to name a few, held initiatives on December 1 2015 in commemoration of World Aids Day. These initiatives focused on raising awareness in local communities of the risks associated with HIV/AIDS, as well as provide free check-ups.

In 2015, **Serena Beach Resort & Spa** held their annual free medical clinic at the unit, with 319 patients who visited the Resort's camp. In partnership with Kisauni Sub County Medical Officer of Health, the regional blood transfusion center and Light House of Christ, patients were offered various consultations. These include: 265 diabetes screenings, 275 hypertension screenings, 74 cervical cancer screenings, 194 deworming consults, 24 vitamin A consults, 89 clinician reviews, 138 eye screenings, 18 blood donations and 181 HIV/AIDS testing/counseling.

Other health-related initiatives carried out in year 2015 include: Patients Day held at Rubavu District Hospital by **Lake Kivu Serena Hotel**, Health Fair held by **Polana Serena Hotel**, Polio vaccinations to the local community by **Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge**, medical services offered by **Lake Manyara Serena Safari Lodge**, as well as community health outreach programs in local communities and schools to raise awareness on communicable diseases by **Sweetwaters Tented Camp**.



Health Fair at Polana Serena Hotel in Maputo, Mozambique

*“CSR isn't a particular programme, it's what we do every day, maximizing positive impact and minimizing negative impact.” – Responsible Business Summit*

## COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE READING AND LITERACY IN EAST AFRICA



**Photos (Top to Bottom):** Library launched by Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge at Itilal Primary School, RFC Workshop by Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge at Itilal Primary School and RFC Workshop by Serena Mountain Lodge at D.E.B. Primary School

Research indicates that being read to as a child is one of the strongest predictors of later academic success and reading for pleasure helps to develop children's language, literacy, critical thinking and communication, social and emotional skills.

All over the world, many children leave primary school unable to read and write fluently. The problem is even more pronounced in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. According to results from a large survey undertaken by UWEZO (2011), only 28% of children in Kenya, 4% in Uganda and 8% in Tanzania in Standard 3 were able to pass a Standard 2 level of English exam.

As a way to show true commitment to Literacy and Early Childhood Development, Serena Hotels (in partnership with Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Madrasa Early Childhood Program (MECP) and Lions International) has consciously decided to embark on a task to turn this around through teaching parents about the importance of early childhood development and through ensuring children in local communities are able to read, thus enabling them to be able to contribute to development in the long run. This initiative is known as Reading for Children (RFC), whereby a sensitization workshop (for 2-3 days conducted by Serena Hotels trained facilitators) is held for parents, teachers and other local community members to encourage early childhood development through reading, storytelling and language development. Furthermore, a library consisting of 100 books is launched in the local community, which is then run by librarians chosen and trained in the community.

Serena Hotels has launched 19 community libraries in Kenya in 2015 that continues to have approximately 8,507 beneficiaries. During year 2016, Serena Hotels expects to launch 23 more libraries collectively in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

### Sustainability

The upkeep of these libraries is the responsibility of the community themselves. Through the appointed library committee, the communities are taught how to carry out various activities to raise funds for the library. In addition, they are taught different ways of writing and creating books from readily available materials, such as cardboard, to add to the library.

However, to further build and ensure financial sustainability of the program, Serena Hotels released its first ever set of children's storybooks related to conservation through a Book Development Project. Proceeds from the three books titled *'We All Went to Serena, What is it?'* and *Life History of a Butterfly* that are being sold at the Serena Hotels Gift Shops will be used to print more books, develop additional books and establish additional libraries.

By the end of year 2016 Serena Hotels, together with its partners, AKF, MECP and Lions International aims to promote reading and improve literacy for over 15,000 children and their families.





*The architecture of the Serena Beach Resort and Spa replicates the winding lanes and colourful market places of a traditional 13th century Swahili town.*

## THE SERENA HOTELS PORTFOLIO

### HOTELS KENYA

Nairobi Serena Hotel

### TANZANIA

Dar es Salaam Serena Hotel

Lake Duluti Serena Hotel

### UGANDA

Kampala Serena Hotel

### RWANDA

Kigali Serena Hotel

### MOZAMBIQUE

Polana Serena Hotel

### SAFARI LODGES KENYA

Mara Serena Safari Lodge

Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge

Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge

Serena Mountain Lodge

Ol Pejeta House

### TANZANIA

Lake Manyara Serena Safari Lodge

Ngorongoro Serena Safari Lodge

Serengeti Serena Safari Lodge

Serena Mivumo River Lodge

### TENTED CAMPS KENYA

Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp

Sweetwaters Serena Camp

### TANZANIA

Kirawira Serena Camp

Mbuzi Mawe Serena Camp

Selous Serena Camp

### RESORTS KENYA

Serena Beach Resort & Spa

### UGANDA

Lake Victoria Serena Golf Resort & Spa

### RWANDA

Lake Kivu Serena Hotel

### ZANZIBAR

Zanzibar Serena Hotel

## RESERVATIONS

### SERENA SALES CENTRE

#### KENYA

Williamson House, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

4<sup>th</sup> Ngong Avenue

P.O. Box 48690-00100

Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 20 2842000/2842333

Email: cro@serena.co.ke

### TANZANIA CENTRAL RESERVATIONS

#### TANZANIA

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Diamond Trust House

P.O. Box 2551

Arusha, Tanzania

Tel: +255 27 2545555

Email: reservations@serena.co.tz

### JOHANNESBURG RESERVATIONS OFFICE

#### SOUTH AFRICA

Grayston Ridge Office Park

(Block C, Ground Floor)

144 Katherine Street, Sandown

Johannesburg, South Africa

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[www.facebook.com/SerenaHotels](https://www.facebook.com/SerenaHotels)



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*Tourism and Promotion Services (TPS), operating under the brand name Serena Hotels, is an affiliate company of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED). TPS promotes tourism by building, rehabilitating and managing hotels, resorts, palaces, forts, safari lodges and camps that contribute to economic growth and the overall investment climate in an environmentally and culturally sensitive matter.*