



MJI WA NEEMA (HOUSE OF HOPE) ORPHANAGES NEWSLETTER

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SAIDIA NEWS REPORT from Jane Kinuthia



It is time for another report about how we are doing. Things are moving on well and we started the year very well despite the sad news that all of us were going through (Jill's death) since there is nothing we could have done, we have to keep going. Angus, Jane and all the mothers have been working hard to keep things going well. We have

two chickens, two turkeys and a few rabbits moving around the compound. They have become the center of interest to the small babies; they move around chasing them until they are tired. The compound looks neat, trees growing well and two pawpaw trees giving us fruits. James Kanyare takes care of the rabbits and John Muiruri feeds the two turkeys and Peter feeds the chicken. They are always very committed in the morning and in the evening after the school.

Education

Two of the children joined class one this year while all the others went in a new class and they all seem excited. What was very amazing, Damaris and John Muriu who joined class one could not get into the school bus, because they thought the bus was taking them a way from the orphanage forever. The bigger children explained to them every morning for the first two weeks that the bus would bring them back. She got into the bus very sad but she is catching up now and she looks happy.



We have four girls in the Secondary school previously in Coulson Secondary School but we have transferred them

to Good Shepherd Secondary School and they did an interview. The academic level was so low so they had to repeat the same class they were in, that is form three.

Mary Wairimu a std 8 student who did her examination last year was among the best students who performed well at St. Peters and was called in a very good government school in Central Province and all of us gave Mary a hug because we were not expecting her to perform well due to her psychological hearing problem which was caused by the grandfather's sexual abuse before she was rescued at Saidia.

Esther Epeche has completed her tailoring course and she is now practicing in another woman's shop who is a fashion designer to get full experience practically. Right now she is helping a lot at the orphanage in cookery and washing.

Health

A big improvement on the health of the children both boys and girls, we have had very few medical cases, children look strong and healthy, performing very well on all the allocated home duties after school and during the holidays. Very much involved in the learning of the day to day at the orphanage. What is very unique is the family unit that even when they work together they don't quarrel or fight.

Rafiki Club

15 women still suffering from HIV and AIDS, are still going on, with counseling at Saidia Children Home. They look happy and ready to cope with the problem, it makes a difference now because no longer do they disconnect their children from school to feed them when they are sick.

In fact we have 30 children at school and continuing with education, and one of the girls is in secondary school and performing very well. The women no longer share their painful emotions with the children, I meet with them every Friday and we share an open forum. A little food is given to them when they are sick to avoid disconnecting children from school into child labour. This food is borrowed from the community and Saidia gives a little support.

Bonden Feeding Program

72 children feeding at the centre and getting the nursery education, 42 children have gone to the public primary from the centre since we started, so the programme has changed Bondeni, no children garbaging there. The biggest worry is how they could get quality education; I wish we could get somebody to start Bondeni Education Programme.

CHILDREN AT SAIDIA GET CREATIVE!

Sian Lamprey and Mia Harris report on a visit to Saidia.

*We set up **Creative Kids International** in 2007 after spending some time volunteering and visiting the children living on the streets of Zambia's capital. Since then we have spent nine months in total working with children and young people at schools, play centres, children's centres, community events and festivals. We work in partnership with Barefeet Theatre, which in turn works with vulnerable street children and those affected by HIV and AIDS, and also with Ngombe Open Community School in Lusaka. We also run workshops in the U.K. to enable children to learn about life in Zambia through the arts and have initiated a link between a Bristol primary school and Ngombe Open Community School.*

If you would like to see more about the work of Creative Kids International, visit the blogs:

www.creativekidsinternational.blogspot.com

www.myspace.com/creativekidsinternational or

e-mail creativekids.int@hotmail.co.uk



Last year after three months working in Zambia we were excited to head to Kenya for the first time. We stopped at Gilgil where, after zipping round the shops to buy some materials for the workshop we planned to run, we went to Saidia.



We spent the afternoon making two HUGE banners with the children, one which was left to decorate the dining room and one which we brought back to show at our exhibitions and events. At first both the staff and children were a little bemused as the children took it in turns to lie down on huge pieces of white fabric and draw around each other's body shapes.

After that the children cut and stuck pieces of kanga fabric (kanga fabric is the fabric used for women's clothing) inside the shapes. They soon got into the swing and really enjoyed getting messy. Some of the staff remarked that they had never seen or done anything like this before, but they could see how much the children were enjoying themselves. The banner is something the children are very proud of and hopefully it will decorate the centre for years to come.

Although our time at Saidia was very limited, we thoroughly enjoyed meeting everyone and getting creative with the kids! We were really impressed with the Home. It was one of the cleanest and most well-kept centres we visited. We hope to go back to Gilgil in the future but now face the on-going task of fundraising!

TERESA WAHITO



Teresa is a wonderful woman, full of compassion and loved by all – especially children. I first met her eleven years ago when she was working as a Social Worker for the Roman Catholic Church in Naivasha. She had just found a young girl of 12 who was working as a prostitute at a bar in Naivasha in order to earn

money to care for her younger brother and sister. Teresa could find no way to help this little trio and decided that she would take them in herself. She so much wanted to do something for the many orphaned children she came in contact with in her work. Discussions with Jill led to the start of Mji wa Neema, the orphanage in Naivasha. The local community in Naivasha was able to take over the Mji wa Neema orphanage after three or four years and we decided to start a second one in Gilgil. Again Teresa was one of the founding members and is now in charge of the Granny Club and other outreach projects in Gilgil.

She sent me this story of her life. Anne

“I was born in the Nyeri District and come from a middle class family of peasant farmers though they are not alive for more than 30 years now. I am single but have one son who is now married with two children, both girls. So I am a grandmother and all Saidia children call me ‘kuku’ meaning Granny.

I lived with my parents all my youth time. After primary education which I passed, but not well enough to join secondary school, I managed to be employed as a nursery school teacher. I did that for ten years, first in my home village, then in Naivasha. After that I was the social worker for the Comboni Missionaries and started working with communities, still at Naivasha, in the year 1982. My major role was to mobilise people and organise self-help projects. Mainly I worked with women’s groups, youth groups and children with special needs.

While still doing the job I did a course in Community Development which gave me skills to do my job effectively. I worked in that job for 11

years until I retired in April, 2003. As a social worker I got involved in working with needy children from poor families who needed education, shelter and emotional assistance.

It was during this period in a social meeting I came to meet Jill Simpson whom I may say God used as a helpmate in meeting the needs of many children. Through her good relationship with her outside friend she found financial help for school fees for many orphans. Together with Anne we started the Mji wa Neema Orphanage in Gilgil which is now run by a local community committee and supported by the Roman Catholic Church in Naivasha.

I came to join Saidia in 2004 and a new chapter of my life opened. I work as the outreach worker with orphans living with old grannies and run the Granny Club. I see Gilgil as my home now and am buying a plot of land on which I hope to build a house of my own in time.

The Future

After all of us have gone or are too old to work, it would be good to dream of a real structure we have put in place where many children would get a good foundation in education and morals and where future leaders of Kenya can be raised who would in turn say “I was helped to be a person so I must as well give my life to serve others”.

If I have a home, I visualise seeing many of the children being real men and women and coming to visit. We sit under a shade, listen to their stories of how and what they are doing in their society and in their own families.

I am proud to be part of this great project, more so for being one of the founders. I thank the great many people who are behind the success, who gave their hard worked for finances, ideas and encouragement.

Keep up the good Spirit. May God add life and blessings to you, your families and those who answered when you begged for a penny for the work of helping the poorest of the poor within the Kenyan society.”

OTHER NEWS

Future Plans

The Inspectors have stated that the boys should have a separate dormitory building. We have been able to fund the cost of the land and another organisation has said that it will pay for the building. So far no appropriate site is available so we must just wait.

Cyrus

Cyrus was the first baby to come to the original orphanage in Naivasha. He has just passed his final school-leaving exam with an A- grade and is hoping that he will be able to go to university to read Information Technology. Teresa adopted him and his brother David but the Naivasha Orphanage would not allow them to come to Gilgil to Saidia when she moved there. We have been holding some money donated specifically for them and will pass his share on to him but we think that we will need to raise money to see him through.

Sanchat Restart Project

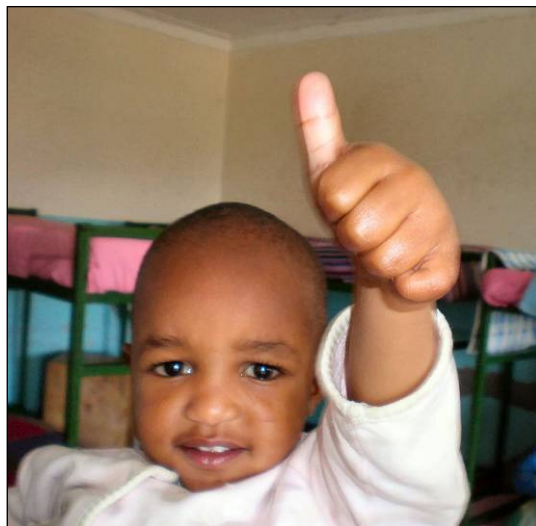
The Project is doing very well and has already trained several of the older orphans in the area in agricultural skills. If you would like to see more about the work that the Project is doing, go its website www.sanchat.org

Thank You All

We would like to thank everyone who has helped us so much with all that is going on in Gilgil. Who would have thought that so much could have been accomplished in the seven years that Saidia has been running? From five orphans to 53 have found a home with us; more than 80 children in Bondeni get a daily meal and nursery school; and young single mothers get help and advice on how to find a way to earn some money to feed their children. While the Grannies are not directly funded by us, we pay school fees for their grandchildren and Teresa helps them to earn money with their hand-woven baskets and jewellery and in numerous ways.

None of this would have been possible without the continuous and generous help from all our donors and sponsors – we can't manage without you! I hope to go out to visit Saidia later this year and will bring you all the news then.

Anne



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