



MJI WA NEEMA (HOUSE OF HOPE) ORPHANAGES NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 4

June 2006

The orphanage is doing well. The children are happy and settled there and the atmosphere is one of a big family. Repairs to the building are more or less up-to-date - bits needing to be done to the roof, the kitchen and one of the staff bedrooms, but nothing too major at the moment. We are still negotiating to buy the building, but the owner has upped his original quote to an exorbitant level, so we are also investigating the possibility of building from scratch on the plot we already own.



A Short Report from Jill in Gilgil

Saidia Children's Home is on the map! We have 24 children and are expecting another two at any moment. They will be coming to us through the Police.

We have had a good year and terrific support from the local community. Groups of youngsters come in for the day to help. The first time I saw some 15-20 able-bodies invade the Home I was horrified and mentally thinking of where a meal for them was going to come from..... but I was totally wrong. They came with food and started to prepare it. Gales of laughter from the kitchen area as they worked. Some found buckets and all sorts of clothes were washed with the soap they provided, some played games with the children while others fixed up general little things. What a HUGE gift from the local youngsters. A big thank you to them. With their support our children are becoming part of the community where they belong and will one day go

back to to make their own way. Scholastically, hmmm... not so good. The standards are appallingly low. Many of the teachers are paid so little and that is often late, so they are 'moon-lighting'. Can one blame them? The methods of teaching are not good. Imagine my horror when I found that a wee soul, been at school for just over a year, was totally unable to read her own name! They can write MUG, draw a picture of a mug, but when asked to get one... complete blank. We have taken on a teacher who comes in the afternoons and is trying to help all the school children to actually read and understand what they are reading. It is very sad that small children suffer bad teaching and lack of equipment when certain people down in Nairobi grow enormously fat, own several new cars, etc., etc. when Kenya has the ability to progress in all directions given the chance.

Granny Club. The club, which is for Grannies struggling to look after their orphaned grandchildren (and in some cases great grandchildren), is to my mind a very important development. It is much better that children are looked after by their own kith and kin if possible. Some of our hopes have not materialised and we have realised that most of the grannies belong to the generation that did not go to school and are therefore finding the whole scene difficult to understand. I sometimes feel the same when I see my grandchildren whizzing round the computer that I spend hours on laboriously trying to do something simple!

So, what next? We are trying to help them with slightly more modern methods of agriculture, like not grazing a paddock endlessly, worming their livestock, etc.

We have now got three grannies who have sold their baskets, made a little money and are now buying water for themselves from a community pump. Milk goats, well... fewer goats is what I personally would like to see because they eat every blade of grass and most shrubs leaving behind a virtual desert. But then I'm not starving so don't

need to sell a goat's milk. Making maandazis (small maize meal doughnuts) is still a project but we will have to see about selling rights, permits, etc.

We have had people up to talk about health matters such as AIDS and how to care for sick and often dying relatives. This was a very severe lesson to me – how lucky we are, we can afford doctors, medicine, sometimes hospital; we have a roof over our heads and food in our bellies, and they have

All that's left is to thank you all for your support, donations and the interest you take in these children. Thank you."



The Story of the Fence

Last year we were so excited when we were able to buy the field next door to the Orphanage. Jill set about getting it all fenced in and prickly plants put round as a deterrent. Areas were dug and beans, bananas and trees planted. All was going well when some goats managed to get through the fence one night and ate the lot! So - a goat-proof wire mesh fence was put up and more planting done. Then came the drought and it wasn't possible to keep everything watered so again some plants were lost. In January the house next door burnt down one night. The fire engine arrived but could do nothing as there was no water! Our children were all right

but, with all the things scattered around and all the onlookers, our fence was destroyed or broken and some wire 'disappeared'. Start again!

Drought

Earlier in the year the drought was the biggest problem in the area. There was no water in the taps so Jill and Angus have been carting some down from their borehole each day. The river that supplies the town was very low and the nomadic Masai people walking through the area were making holes in the pipeline to water their starving cattle as they went by. The water then continued to run and didn't reach the town. Local people were able to collect a little by finding the holes and collecting water from them. Jill has a friend with a better bore hole whom she asked to bring down water in his tanker to fill the orphanage tanks. She said "No one is safe from my begging!"

We bought in stocks of food in as the price was rising steeply. Maize-meal which is made into Ugali, the staple food, gets weevils if kept too long so it was bags of beans to the fore.

The rains have now started and we are hoping that they will continue long enough for the crops to mature and be harvested. In other parts of Kenya the onset of the rains brought on flash flooding, adding to the devastation in the country, and the food shortage in the country and subsequent high prices are likely to continue for some time.

We have been given solar panel which will run ten lights. The children will now be able to work in the evenings and catch up a little.

Thanks:

For the money sent for the children at Christmas. It was spent on a special party.



Jill writes:

“All the children and Grannies from Granny Club with their children came to a Christmas Party. A group of local youngsters from one of the local churches came in and helped to get all the food for about 100 people prepared. Three goats had been bought and fattened up a little. Extra maize flour,

rice, vegetables and fruit were also bought. Special treats of Pepsis, lots of popcorn, three iced cakes made by Jane the manageress and two enormous Italian-style cakes donated by a friend made it a very special party indeed. Father Christmas came and everyone received a lolly. Then a man came in to play his guitar and we all sang. The kids did a ‘thank you’ bit too. A big thank you to the people who sent us the money to give the kids a great Christmas”

For the sewing machine and the wages for a seamstress, who teaches the older children to sew and makes and mends the children’s clothes.

For our new playground equipment

For the rabbit hutches

For text books

And thank you to all our sponsors and to everyone who has raised money for us.

UK bits:

The building fund now stands at about £8,000. To have raised this much so quickly is very encouraging, and it looks as though our dream of buying the building will soon become a reality.

Bob Hughes and his partner will be running for us in the British 10K in London on the 2nd July. They have already raised a substantial sum in sponsorship money, and expect to raise even more. A group of Bristol runners will also be running for us in the same event, if you would like to sponsor a runner please get in touch.

Poets John Hegley and Adrian Mitchell gave a benefit show on our behalf. Playing to an almost full house in the Bristol Old Vic, they gave the audience a truly great night out. We don't have a

final figure for the box office takings yet, but the collecting buckets in the foyer alone brought in more than £500

Pepe and Ian Shaw visited Gilgil last month, and brought back some great photos of the children.



Contacts:

For information and enquiries regarding the sponsorship scheme or web site contact:

Mark Mitchell
Cottage 2, Little Float
Sandhead
Stranraer
DG9 9LD

Phone: 01776 830242
email: mark@naivasha-orphans.org.uk

For other enquiries contact:

Anne Mitchell
4, Sage Close
Portishead
BS20 8ET

Phone: 01275 817153
email: anne.s.mitch@lineone.net

Website: www.naivasha-orphans.org.uk