

Our Kenyan Kids

Helping young Kenyans - One child at a time



August 2017

Amazing Grace

Margaret had a successful trip to the United States during July, speaking with administrators as a guest of the Davis & Shirtliff Company (Water and Energy Solutions Provider). The Davis & Shirtliff Company is generously sponsoring the water project at Amazing Grace Children's Home, providing them with funding for well drilling as well as a green house.

Margaret continues to fund raise for piping of the water and she has opted to use solar panels for electricity in order to keep the costs down. Installation will initially be more expensive, but she is looking ahead to not having monthly bills. She is now busy looking for additional funding to do this in the amount of ksh 600,000 (approximately \$7,300 CDN).

The greatest immediate and daily need at Amazing Grace has and always will be the need for food for the children. The home relies heavily on rain-fall for farming and unfortunately this year there has not been enough rain. This is posing a great risk to the current food supply as well as food in the months ahead, since the crops are drying up and the harvest will likely be very poor. We are relying on fall fund raising activities in Brockville, and the support of our donors to raise the additional funds needed to help provide food.

Mission Statement:

Our Kenyan Kids supports children and youth affected by poverty and or HIV/AIDS, in Kenya by providing education, training, humanitarian aid, and nurturing relationships, one child at a time.



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Kawangware Sponsored Tailoring Project

This project has been working diligently to comply with government regulations, obtaining a new fire extinguisher (dollars supplied by a private donation during the last PET trip), licenses, and permits. There were recent difficulties with their tailoring teacher, and a replacement had to be found. However, the number of students attending the school has increased to near 30 and although many are still struggling to make payment for school fees, we are hopeful that this project will find stability soon.

It is an objective of Our Kenyan Kids, that when a new project is taken on, this project is to one day become self-sustainable, having grown and progressed, and no longer in need of assistance from Our Kenyan Kids. We are hoping that the Kawangware Sponsored Tailoring Project is well on its way to reaching this goal as they were one of our first projects when the organization began in 2004.

Hope House Babies Home

Hope House is happy to announce that they are once again admitting new babies from birth to 6 months of age and caring for them until they are adopted. This has only become possible because they have partnered with the Child Welfare Association; their private registration is still experiencing hiccups. This partnership however, allows for some of the children to be adopted and also for the home to accept new children. The adopt-a-cot program is in dire need of sponsors and we hope more sponsors will come forward to inquire about this worthwhile opportunity to support a child at Hope House. When you adopt-a-cot through Hope House (\$150 CDN per year) you will be linked with a child for the duration of their stay at Hope House. You will receive photos and updates for your baby every three months. You will be given the option to renew your sponsorship at the end of each year. Your donation is used to support the cost of feeding and caring for the babies.

Kambui School for the Deaf

Our Kenyan Kids is now completing the final phase of improvements at Kambui School, made possible through a grant from The Retired Teachers of Ontario (RTO/ERO).

In this final stage, Winnie was able to purchase a variety of resources for teachers and students to use in classrooms, as well as tables and chairs for a library, and many, many books. Kambui School now has a two-roomed library and Our Kenyan Kids hopes to continue to help to fill shelves with a variety of books for students to enjoy.

Nairobi Children's Rescue Centre

Seven children have recently left NCRC, some to other partner homes and some have been reunited back with their families. The two wee twins who had previously been rescued (shortly before the team arrived earlier this year), have been returned to their parents (who had previously been arrested, but have now completed their sentences). We can only pray that they are safe and will be cared for properly going forward. OKKids will try to continue to update on these young twins. There are currently 46 children living at the home and Winnie informs us that the general hygiene has improved tremendously.

Sadly, the water system/pump has broken down at NCRC. They have received a quotation of over ksh 157,000 (approximately \$2000 CDN) to repair or replace pipes and pumps (pressure system) and are trying to fix it but they have not been successful in securing funds to do this. They made a request to receive financial support with the cost of repairs, and although the Canadian board for OKKids has discussed it, it is not possible at this time. It is very tough to say NO sometimes.

Machakos Vocational Rehabilitation Center

Machakos Vocational Rehabilitation Center has recently joined our list of partners, when the two boys who were previously attending Merstan SNE center were transferred there. Machakos V.R.C. is located 63km southeast of Nairobi and is the capital of Machakos county. This rehabilitation center is right in the middle of town and therefore easily accessible; it's a government institution with good learning opportunities and boarding facilities for up to 40 students. The school is well established to take care of special needs students, especially those with physical disabilities. The students that Our Kenyan Kids sponsors have some significant learning challenges and we hope they experience success here. Our Kenyan Kids now sponsors four boys there, who have all joined the masonry class and though for this term it was more of introduction, the teachers and the administration have assured us that they have potential of getting to master the skill, though at a very slow pace.

St. John Ambulance & the Grandmothers

Sadly, earlier this year, one of the women from the Rwika Kwimenya Support Group became ill with cancer. When the team from Brockville visited in April, we were able to lend a hand with some of her hospital costs. Lois had her surgery and was released from hospital. Unfortunately, she again became ill and passed away. Just prior to her passing, Paul Willis of Cypress Systems Inc (the company who so generously supplies us with selenium) generously offered to sponsor Lois' daughter, Marion, enabling her to continue her education. Thank you Paul

During Paul's visit to Kenya in May, he, Winnie and Nelson (from St. John Ambulance, Embu) were able to provide "the grandmothers" with some snacks and cereals which included maize, sorghum, beans for consumption and more beans for planting. A good number of the women engage in farming and getting seed and other requirements is still one of their biggest challenges. Sharing these gifts and the selenium with the women made them really feel loved and cared for, and benefit them both emotionally and physically.

Paul Willis has informed us that the factory in Kampala Uganda, which will be producing selenium, is very near completion and should be in production by mid-October. Once selenium is produced in country the supply will be very stable and easily transported to the locations of need, with minimal cost. St. John Ambulance staff at Embu have recommended new partnership opportunities with staff at St. John Ambulance, Kitui (180 km east of Nairobi) to distribute selenium to people living with HIV/AIDS in their area. We are hopeful that this can occur in the future.



Paul Willis visited the Grandmothers with Winnie and Nelson in May 2017

What we've been up to!

Paint Night

Our first Paint Night was a big success!! Thank you to artist Jesse McMahon for sharing her talents with 26 aspiring artists, and also to St. Lawrence College for providing the space to host the event. It was a lot of fun. We hope to host another Paint Night in the spring. Hope to see you there.

Maitland Garden of Hope

Saturday, July 29th was a perfect day to wander through the beautiful gardens at Maitland Garden of Hope. Thank you to Colleen O'Connell and David Cybulski for their continued support of Our Kenyan Kids, and for welcoming guests to their gardens for the afternoon, as well as the Kenyan store.

Upcoming event

A night of Dinner, Murder and Mystery

Experience an evening of entertainment at a Murder Mystery Party on Friday, September 22.

Dinner includes lasagna, salad, garlic bread, dessert and beverages. Cost \$25. Call 613-342-5401 x21 or drop by the Church Office at Wall Street for your ticket. Board the Orient Express and help Detective Pardot solve the mystery! Advance tickets only. See you there.

Gathaithi Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Centre

This year, Our Kenyan Kids has two children in Form Four at Gathaithi. Both Winnie and Simon are doing well and will be returning to school when classes begin again on August 29th for the 3rd and final term of the year.

Unfortunately there has not been any progress on the water project at Gathaithi and they are still waiting for communication from the people who were drilling the well. The group of people who are in-charge keep reassuring the staff that all is well and they will come to complete the project soon. We are hopeful the project will be completed by the end of the year.

A note from Winnie about the Jiggers Program:

Gathaithi OVC located in Kiambu is one home that enjoys great support and warmth from the neighboring communities. As a way of giving back to the community, the home has a program for treating jiggers in community members who are infected. We use *potassium permanganate* as the main substance for this activity. Previously potassium permanganate was readily available in the market for any willing buyer. Later, it was discovered that the militia groups were using this same potassium permanganate to manufacture bombs. This led the government to put a ban on this precious substance and only a few licensed organizations are now allowed to have access to it. One of these organizations is *Ahadi Kenya*. We were able to purchase 1kg of potassium at ksh 6000 (approximately \$73 CDN) from Ahadi Kenya, which also gave us free towels, nail cutters, disinfectant and soaps. We did the first outreach on 28th April 2017. Winnie, the OKKids projects coordinator, Steve, the Kenyan board chairman, Dan, a board member in charge of Gathaithi OVC, Patricia Gathaithi OVC Manager, Joseph a social worker and 2 community health workers were actively involved in the outreach. We were able to reach out to one family (the Munenge's family) which had 3 couples (3 brothers and their wives) and about 8 children. This family is living in extreme poverty and they are seriously infected to a point some children have had to drop out of school because they could not walk anymore. The jiggers could not be cleared on one visit and so we liaised with a volunteer community health worker at a local health facility, which is much closer to their home to be checking on them. After this initial visit, we all agreed it would be great to try and raise some support for the family and other people who are infested with jiggers and whom we are yet to reach out to.

Our Kenyan Kids supports the jiggers program, reducing the numbers infected every day.



Report from the Chair



Our Kenyan Kids currently relies on donations from approximately 140 individuals and we are proud to say we have been able to keep this organization going for over ten years now. Our small group of donors have big hearts and because of them, we **are** making a difference, one child at a time. I want to sincerely thank each and every one of you! Please talk about us and share news of our work with your friends and families. I also want to take this opportunity to send out a thank you to Verdure Sciences, an organization who made a generous donation earlier this year, on behalf of Paul Willis of Cypress Systems Inc.. It is through partnerships such as the one that we have with Paul that allow

more and more people/companies to hear of the wonderful things we do in Kenya.

There are days, admittedly, when the task of supporting those in need in Kenya seems daunting. We appreciate our donors, and we also fund raise and fund raise and still go home at night feeling like it just isn't enough – but we must never give up because our children are our future. No child deserves to grow up in poverty, without parents, without family, without love. This year continues to be a struggle financially as weather challenges have caused food shortages and raised food costs, and many of our partners have experienced challenges with dry wells and broken water systems. On Monday September 25th, we will be making a short (1hour or less) presentation at Wall Street United Church, upstairs in the living room (6pm) on the upcoming Project Experience Trip. If you (or someone you know) might be interested in traveling to Nairobi with us on January 25, 2018 (to Feb.13) then by all means drop by and have a listen, ask some questions and perhaps this trip will be the one when **you** get to visit the projects first hand. I promise, it will be the experience of a life time.

Jan Murray, Chair
Our Kenyan Kids

Don't forget!! September 25th, at 6pm is our open meeting for those interested in coming to Kenya with us and visiting the projects first hand! Hope to see you there! Everyone is welcome.