



Kenyan Orphaned Children's Foundation

Newsletter
December 2008



Dear Friends of Mama Orphans,

2008 has been a turbulent year for the world in general and Kenya in particular. In December 2007, presidential and parliamentary elections were carried out and results were held in dispute for several weeks following. This led to widespread civil unrest, with western Kenya being one of the most heavily affected areas. For several days, Mama, her family and the children were confined to the house while violence and looting erupted throughout the town. Food and other essential commodities at that time were very difficult to acquire and prices for all essential items dramatically increased. While the Children's Home was fortunate in that no-one was killed or injured, the price increases which have continued since this time, have been a heavy burden to manage.

Though civil unrest had subsided by February, other security issues continued to be a concern. By late in 2007, the children had moved into the new dormitory. However during the troubles, they were forced to return to the old and crowded dorm rooms because of concerns about break-ins. A brick wall was eventually built around the dormitory to secure the area and the children were able to move back to their new rooms. At the end of May the new dormitory was officially opened, with Barack Obama's grandmother as the guest of honor!

On a visit to Busia in June, the home looked to be in very good order. All of the bunk beds and new mattresses were in place, though Mama would still like to see all the mattresses protected with plastic covers. Hooks for bednets had not yet been installed, as money is not yet available to pay for them.

The children are enjoying their wonderful new bathrooms now that all the toilets and showers in

the dormitories are connected to the water supply. Water is pumped from the well up to the water tower. Though the pump is working well, the electricity costs to run it are very high. In January and February the well generally runs dry. At this time of year water must be purchased by the bucket and hauled to the dormitories.

A permanent kitchen has now been built next to the dining hall. There are 2 new large wood burning stoves which can cook very large pots of ugali (boiled maize meal), rice or beans. The dining hall is now in regular use for its intended purpose and the kids no longer eat their meals outside on the ground but on chairs and tables in the hall. The storeroom in the dining hall was filled with large sacks of maize which Mama purchased with the last money we sent. As food prices are increasing constantly, she tries to purchase in large quantities as much as she can.

September was a very difficult month for Monica and the children, as they suddenly lost 12 year old Babu to an unknown illness. Despite strong efforts by Monica's son Mark, to get Babu care, doctors were unable to save him. Babu will be sadly missed.

Once again Mama and the children have enjoyed the help and hard work of international volunteers. Leslie Shaw, a young woman from Surrey, BC spent three months in Busia beginning in January. Leslie helped out with meal times, bathing and laundry and spent a lot of time playing with the children. You can hear more about Leslie's story on our website.

We are also anticipating the arrival of two more BC volunteers early in the new year. Others interested in helping Monica in Busia can contact us through our website.

Friends of Mama Orphans have been very generous this year. Through the hard work of Kathy Bradwell,



Leslie Shaw serving ugali to the children

our board treasurer, we received our charitable status and registration number. This has been important in giving us more legitimacy and has encouraged several donors to begin making monthly contributions. In September we received a very generous donation from Calgary that has allowed us to increase our quarterly donations for the coming year, to \$6000 and to fund a security wall around a new around a new plot of land adjacent to the dormitories.

The annual budget was revised in June in order to reflect the growing number of children and the increase in the cost of essential items. The budget is higher than last year and will require our continued efforts at fund raising and finding income generating ideas.

There are several projects we are hoping to help Monica fund this coming year. Monica would like to purchase a van that could be rented out as a taxi during the day and could be used in the home during the evenings. This is a very common income-generating activity in East Africa. We would also like to begin an education fund that would support students who will be entering secondary school in the coming years. Primary schools fees are covered by the Swiss organization Sid Ecole, but secondary school has no such support. As most children are sent to boarding school, school fees are very high. In the coming years many children will be moving on to secondary school and will need our support.

Monica's long term project is to build a primary

school that both the children can be a part of and the public would pay to attend. There is some commitment by the Swiss organization Pro Victimis to pay for half of the costs, but the orphanage would need to come up with the other 50% through other means. Currently this is not in the range of projects which our Foundation in Canada would be able to support, but we are looking for additional donors, elsewhere.

To help generate funds here in Canada, we will be selling African print wine bags, that the children helped to make, at Christmas Craft fairs. We will also be putting donation gift cards onto our website. Those wishing to make a donation in someone's name as a Christmas gift, can download the gift card and fill in the appropriate details. The Foundation also did presentations at St. John's United Church in Calgary and St. John's United Church in Surrey. People's interest, and generosity at these events was very much appreciated.

As we again come to the end of another year, we want firstly to congratulate Monica on the wonderful work she does and secondly to thank everyone for the very generous support they have given Mama Orphan's Children's Home over the year. Please pass on our information about Monica and her children to your friends and family and please consider donating again.

We now have the ability to accept automatic monthly donations; if you are interested in participating in this program, please contact us at admin@kenyanorphans.org for further information.



Rev. Monica Odour, Mama Orphans, with her children

Those wishing to donate online can go to our website at www.kenyanorphans.org or send a cheque to: Kenyan Orphan Children's Foundation #303 1450 Laburnum St. Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6J 3W3