



# TANZANIAN CHILDREN'S FUND

## 2015 Spring Newsletter

### Lifting Lives Building Futures Lasting Change



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### 3...2...1...Impact!

*By India Howell, Founder & Executive Director*

For the past 11 years we've been sending you newsletters detailing all of the new projects underway at our Children's Village and in our surrounding community: new construction, new programs to reach new groups...new, new, new. As a result, I imagine that many have wondered, "Does anything ever get finished over there? Is any of this making a difference? Is all of this work having any impact?"

I am very proud to say that the answer to all of these questions is a resounding YES! The impact of what we have done can be measured in a variety of ways, but the most profound proof is found in the stories of those whose lives and futures have been transformed by our work.

On the next page you'll read about Titus Ako, a young man we helped complete his education and become a teacher. Today, he is giving back to his community as one of our top teachers at Oldeani Secondary School, and is also serving as a role model for other young people in our area. Titus is just one example of the 60 young men and women that TCF has helped complete their education



or attend university...and we have another 13 students headed for graduation in 2015! In a country where fewer than 1 in 10 students graduates from secondary school, this is proof positive that our programs are making a real difference.

You'll also hear from our Education Director, Chris Renno, about the very measurable improvements we're seeing at Oldeani Secondary School. The impact of the investments we are making in education has already created a multiplier effect: the 54 young people we've helped finish secondary school and transition into

the working world not only support themselves, they also financially assisting family members. For the first time, whole generations have the opportunity to build a future beyond the drudgery of day labor on the coffee plantations. That's what I call bang for the buck!

In Zach Vosburg's article you will read about the ways in which our Microfinance Program has transformed the lives of our clients. Our microfinance loans often yield results far beyond a single client: the economic oppor-

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### Education Programs Update

*By Chris Renno, Education Director*

We've just begun the second year of our partnership with Oldeani Secondary School, and I'm pleased to report that we're already seeing exciting results.

In February, we celebrated the news that all of TCF's Form 4 (Grade 12) students passed the National Exam! This is a very rigorous test which up to 50% of students fail annually. Not only did our students pass, but they

scored well enough to qualify for advanced level secondary schools, putting them on track to attend university. We were equally excited to learn that almost 70% of Oldeani Secondary students sitting for the National Exam passed as well. We are very proud of this improvement and cannot wait to see what their future holds.

Even more good news - in January, 100% of the Form 2 (10th Grade)

students passed the standardized National Exam for the first time in the history of Oldeani Secondary School! Oldeani has now moved up to number 463 out of 2,097 public and private schools in Tanzania, which puts it in the top 25% of schools in the country. We're already making great strides towards further improving our students' test scores, so stay

*Continued on page 2....*

## 3...2...1...Impact! (cont.)

tunities they create ripple out to their extended families who are finally able to invest in better housing and pay for their children's education. These success stories are the perfect example of what people can achieve when you give them "a hand up" instead of a "hand out."



Sometimes the results are a bit less tangible, although no less important. During speeches made by local officials at our 10th Anniversary celebration last fall I was pleased and surprised to hear the speakers talk about another area of impact: community pride. The total renovation of Gyetighi Primary School, the construction of our Community Center, and our ongoing renovation of Oldeani Secondary School have made a deep impression on the entire community. The finished buildings are more than the sum of their brick, steel and concrete parts - they are symbols of dignity and possibility. Our local leaders have remarked that the people of Oldeani no longer see themselves as "the forgotten ones," and are now engaged members of a community that is on its way up. This shift in mentality and sense of communal pride is a powerful catalyst for widespread and permanent change.

So I can confidently say that TCF's impact is measurable, real, and lasting, and I'm very



proud of what we've accomplished. BUT... we are not done yet! There are still thousands of young girls and boys in our area who can't go to school, parents who aren't able to find work to support their families, and children who are still struggling under the burdens of poverty and disease. We need your help to make sure that our impact extends to all who need it in our community, and that everyone has the chance at a brighter future.

Asante!

*Larissa*

## Education Update (cont.)

tuned for the 2015 results!

These success stories prove that the changes we've been making at Oldeani Secondary School are having a significant impact on students' lives. Here are just a few of the steps we've taken to help put Oldeani Secondary on the path to success:

- ☑ **Additional Teachers** - We added 7 additional teachers so that all grades and subjects have a teacher
- ☑ **Extra Study Support** - We added extra review classes for students on weekends and evenings
- ☑ **More Textbooks** - We purchased \$15,000 worth of text books
- ☑ **Teacher Training** - We have trained teachers in alternative forms of classroom management and methods of supervising students' behavior in and out of the classroom without resorting to corporal punishment
- ☑ **Teacher Incentives** - Our model of providing teacher incentives has dramatically increased teacher attendance

In addition to these academic improvements, we have also been working hard to upgrade Oldeani Secondary School's infrastructure to ensure that the environment is safe and conducive to learning.

### Here are some of our recent construction and infrastructure milestones:

- ☑ **Phase I of the Science Building** - We completed construction of 2 science lab classrooms (5,000 sq. ft. total). Both classrooms are in use and the third will be completed in mid-2015.
- ☑ **Renovation of 2 Classrooms and 1 office** - This first classroom block was our most extensive renovation as the building is on a steep slope and was built on three levels. Using the same foot print, we now have two large classrooms and a large office space for 4-5 teachers.
- ☑ **Laboratory Equipment** - We purchased a full array of laboratory equipment for use in chemistry and biology experiments.
- ☑ **Water Management** - We built a 100,000 liter rainwater harvesting tank to store rainwater for use at the school during the dry season and when the town water supply is not functioning (which is often!)
- ☑ **Furniture** - We have made and delivered desks and chairs for teachers and school desks for students for each classroom.



*ESL Teacher Larissa Siregar*

**At Gyetighi Primary School** we started the year on track to improve upon our record of success. Teachers are excited about encouraging students to reach even higher academic goals, and students are reporting to class on time, working hard throughout the day, and studying extra each night.

Finally, to help our students and teachers continue their progress in English, we are excited to welcome Larissa Siregar, our new English as a Second Language teacher. Larissa comes to us following her service in the Peace Corps as an English teacher in Sierra Leone, and has already started working with our teaching staff to improve their English skills and enhance their teaching methodologies.

As we move forward we are confident that our model for improving educational outcomes is working. While the future certainly holds challenges, we know that each challenge we tackle will bring us closer to achieving our vision for the community.

## Impact in Action: Titus Ako

When we reflect on the impact of our programs, one of the first people we think of is Titus Ako, age 30.

Titus has been a member of our RVCV family from the beginning. In 2004, Titus moved to RVCV with his mother who was working as a cook at Gyetighi Primary School. Whenever he wasn't at school, Titus was at Mama India's house, eager for a chance to improve his spoken English.

Titus has always been a bright and hard-working young man, and he impressed us every step of the way as we worked to help him become the first person in his family to complete his secondary education.



When Titus graduated from secondary school, he wanted to give back to the community that had given him so much, and he could think of no better way to do it than becoming a teacher. To Titus, teachers are advisors, leaders, and valuable members of society who have the power to create positive change within their communities. Through hard work and the support of India and Peter, Titus was able to realize his dream and graduate from Kilimanjaro Marangu Teachers' College.

Today, Titus is teaching English and Geography at Oldeani Secondary School and is proud to be called "Teacher" by his students. The most rewarding aspects of being a teacher for him are seeing students who are eager to learn and being able to give them the same encouragement and support that he received at Rift Valley Children's Village.

Titus' goal as a teacher at Oldeani is to create a friendly and collaborative school environment in which parents, teachers, and students work together to promote academic success. We are very proud to have Titus as a teacher and a role model for our students.



*As Titus said, "Rift Valley is family," and Titus is one of our family members who is helping us change the world - one student at a time.*

## Did you know?

In the Tanzanian school system, on average there is 1 textbook for every 5 students. (UNICEF)

**.....At Oldeani Secondary School, the ratio of text books to students is 1:2 and dropping every month!**

The national ratio of pupils to qualified teachers in Tanzania is 49:1 (UNICEF)

**.....At Gyetighi Primary School, the ratio of pupils to teachers is 22:1**



*Form 3 students on break at Oldeani Secondary School*



Girls with secondary or higher education are **ten times** less likely to become pregnant as adolescents than girls with no education.

Only a quarter of secondary school age youth attends school in Tanzania – in rural areas, the rate drops to 19% (USAID / EPDC)



*New science building at Oldeani Secondary School*

## Why Africa? Why TCF? *By Peggy Bacon*

If your friends haven't asked you, you have surely asked yourself the question "Why Africa?" "Aren't there enough problems in our own communities to keep us busy?"

My answer is always the same: we have to do both. The world is too small and our economies are too interconnected to ignore challenges "abroad."

Assuming that we agree that all communities should have the same opportunities that are

found in our local neighborhoods, the question becomes: to whom should give our valuable time and resources? Since there are untold numbers of nonprofits working to reduce poverty, how do you know who to trust with your investment? With ten years of on-the-ground experience, I can confidently say that TCF is one of the most efficient and effective organizations. But more importantly, it's one that delivers real and lasting results.

Most nonprofits seek to address a single specific issue. Some ask you to send donations to sponsor a child, while others offer microfinance loans as a solution. Others run lunch programs, promote girls' education, or fund medical clinics. You name the issue, and there is an organization that provides tailored programs to address it. However, the causes of systemic poverty are complex and inter-related, and there is no silver bullet. Solving the poverty puzzle and creating lasting change requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses the challenges of education, economic opportunity, and health in tandem, and in partnership with the community.

At TCF we believe that it is more powerful to enable deep and meaningful change for 10,000 than to provide temporary services for 100,000. By maintaining the quality of education at Gyetighi Primary School, continually improving community health standards, growing our microfinance program, and taking on the challenge of turning around Oldeani Secondary, we have demonstrated our patience, pragmatism, and commitment to creating brighter futures and lasting change for *everyone* in our community.

*For questions or comments, please contact Peggy at [peggybacon60@gmail.com](mailto:peggybacon60@gmail.com)*



*Gyetighi Primary School Standard 7 Graduation Ceremony*

## Ralph & Natalie Howell Scholarship Fund: *Make an impact on a student's life today*

In order to honor India's parents' legacy, TCF's Board of Directors has created the Ralph and Natalie Howell Fund to provide full four-year scholarships to Oldeani Secondary School for high-achieving local students.

These scholarships will not only cover the cost of tuition, but will also provide the students with the essentials they need to succeed in their studies: healthcare, school supplies, uniforms, and a healthy lunch. Each scholarship costs \$2,000 and is a sound investment in the future of our students and community.

If you are interested in contributing, we appreciate gifts in any amount. Donations can be made online at [www.tanzanianchildrensfund.org](http://www.tanzanianchildrensfund.org) or by using the enclosed envelope. Asante!



## Birthdays for Breakfast Campaign *Pledge your Birthday to TCF this year!*

Did you know that RVCV currently spends \$1,700 per month on breakfast ingredients alone!?

To help make sure that all of our kids continue to get the nutrition they need every morning, we've created a new Birthdays for Breakfast Campaign.



### Here's how the campaign works:

As your birthday approaches this year, we encourage you to reach out to your family and friends and ask them to make a donation equal to your age in lieu of shopping for a gift. Example: *I'm turning 25 this year. Would you consider making a donation of \$25 to TCF instead of buying me a gift?*

To make it as easy as possible, we put together a crowdfunding page as well as a number of templates and resources to help you organize your campaign and get the word out.

**Check out our Birthday Campaign page on our website for more information on how to get started!**

[www.tanzanianchildrensfund.org/Birthday\\_Campaign.html](http://www.tanzanianchildrensfund.org/Birthday_Campaign.html)

## Microfinance: One solution to the poverty puzzle *by Zach Vosburg*

I was halfway through my three month stay at RVCV when I started to see the bigger picture and learn more about life outside of the Children's Village gates.

On my evening runs it was impossible not to notice the level of poverty in the areas surrounding RVCV. The villagers laughed and waved with friendly enthusiasm every time we passed, but the picture painted by their living situation was still one of immense hardship. There is little land available for family farming, and other jobs are few and far between. For many it is truly a life of dire subsistence, and I began to wonder what I could do to help.

Luckily, as I was thinking about these things I was able to sit down with the Grace Mmassy, TCF's Microfinance Program Director, to learn about TCF's broader mission. I knew TCF had other projects outside of the Children's Village, and Grace helped me to understand why they were so important and how they all fit together.

TCF doesn't *only* work to improve the lives of the marginalized children of Tanzania by bringing them to live at the Children's Village. TCF's mission is also to improve the standard of living of the whole community through their Microfinance Program, community rural health clinic, and educational partnerships with Gye-tighi Primary and Oldeani Secondary schools. It's a grassroots effort to reduce the incidence of orphaned and marginalized children by attacking the problem of poverty at its roots.

The mission and work of the Microfinance Program (MF) struck a chord with me and I was wholeheartedly excited during my meet-

ing with Grace. Sensing my enthusiasm, Grace put me to work creating a brochure to explain how the MF program works. I started by taking photos at the batik dying and soap making classes. These were multi-day training sessions that taught both the skills to make the handicrafts and the business principles associated with successfully selling them. Grace explained that this year TCF will also be offering beading, weaving and candle making classes, as well as a five-day entrepreneurship seminar for 100 program participants.

The second project I took on was writing profiles on a handful of our microfinance clients. This was an eye-opening experience. There were several amazing stories, but a few of our program participants truly stood out:



*Berta Jacob in her "duka" (shop)*

- Berta Jacob has become a serial entrepreneur, running a soda and candy shop, a sewing materials shop, a small restaurant, a tailoring business, raising chickens, and acting as a telephone card reseller. In order to keep her small empire going, she employs two local women.



*Marieta proudly showing off her handicrafts*

- Marieta Shauri has used profits from her beaded products to move her family from the mud huts they used to live in to a new brick house, and is paying for her oldest child to attend secondary school!
- Pius John is one of 12 children and his 3 businesses allow him to support his aging parents and 4 younger brothers.

Visiting our clients' homes and businesses and hearing their stories was enlightening and inspiring. What's most impressive is how every microfinance client ended up using their profits to support their families, and how far-ranging the impact of one loan can be. It is encouraging to know that TCF truly cares about the entire community, and is actively working to improve everyone's opportunities.

## Sponsorship Spotlight: Friends for Life

Sponsors are important people in our children's lives. Our sponsors are friends, mentors, and role-models to the children they support. They help provide the extra love and



*Neema with her sponsor Paige*

attention our children need, and—most importantly—they help bring them joy: receiving a letter from a sponsor is enough to lift their spirits and brighten their entire day. This year we hope to build that relationship with 30 new sponsors.

**For those looking to make that special connection, our two newest additions, Paskalina and her baby brother Raif, are looking to make one with you too!** Since arriving in early December, Paskalina (5 years) and Raif (5 months) have adjusted beautifully to their new surroundings. Paskalina's love for her new home shows on her face as she runs around laughing with her new best friend, Kizzie. Raif is transforming in front of our eyes into a healthy, happy, and precocious baby boy. To watch them grow and learn has



*Paskalina, Natalie, and baby Raif*

been such a joy, and we invite you to experience it with us.

**For further information on becoming a sponsor,** please email our Sponsorship and Communications Coordinator, Sarah Immelt, at [sponsor@tanzanianchildrensfund.org](mailto:sponsor@tanzanianchildrensfund.org).

## 2015 Spring Newsletter



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Cambridge, MA 02138

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### Asante Sana to all of our volunteers in Tanzania over the last 6 months – we couldn't do it without you!

**Volunteers:** Peggy & Carter Bacon, Sophie Bellenis, Taylor Biancone, Marilyn Boehm, Ashby Brown, Debbie Burnard, Eleanor Doar, Kate Fitzgerald, Pooh & Libby Gephart, Susan Goth, Sam Halebian, Janine & Virginia Ilsley, Amy Johnson, Victoria Leeds, Moriah Maron, Bridget McNamara, Marshall Moore, Julia Nemec, Summer Roach, Sally & Sue Scott, Maggie Sliney, Paige St. Germain, Meredith Storm, Kyle Trebour, Zach Vosburg, Lorraine & Chan Wells

**Visitors:** Helen Choo, Scott Choi, Will & Anne Doar, David Erickson, Yvonne Feinstein, Gloria Fortuna, Chris Garren, Katy Heydinger, Debbie Rechler, Bekka Russell, Tawnya Scott, Susanna Sigal, Donna Storer, Glen VanAstwne

### Mama India Needs YOU: Volunteers needed for spring & fall

Would you like an opportunity to make a difference in a child's life? Then volunteer with us!

We need volunteers who can come from anywhere from 3 weeks to 6 months this spring or fall. We specifically need help from May through mid-June and August through December.

For more information, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Brittany Sweet, at [volunteer@tanzanianchildrensfund.org](mailto:volunteer@tanzanianchildrensfund.org)



*Volunteer Moriah sharing a giggle with Boni*

### We're headed your way!

India and our Tanzanian Managing Director Peter Mmassy will be visiting the US this May, and they're coming your way! If you'd like to join us at one of our events, please contact Natalie at [info@tanzanianchildrensfund.org](mailto:info@tanzanianchildrensfund.org).

Boston ♦ Washington DC ♦ New York ♦ Connecticut ♦ Pennsylvania ♦ Bermuda

### Need a Pick-Me-Up?

Visit our Facebook, Instagram or Flickr pages for updates on life at the Children's Village and some of the most adorable photos you'll ever see!



*Esau with his big brother Benja*

[www.instagram.com/rvcvtcf](http://www.instagram.com/rvcvtcf)  
[www.facebook.com/tanzanianchildrensfund](http://www.facebook.com/tanzanianchildrensfund)  
[www.flickr.com/photos/tanzanianchildrensfund](http://www.flickr.com/photos/tanzanianchildrensfund)

### We've Moved...

As of March 1, we are at our new office in Cambridge, MA. Please be sure to address all mail and packages to:

**Tanzanian Children's Fund**  
**9 Waterhouse Street**  
**Cambridge, MA 02138**

...and of course, we always love visitors, so please drop in!