



TANZANIAN CHILDREN'S FUND

2014 Fall Newsletter

Mission Statement

The Tanzanian Children's Fund provides support for the Rift Valley Children's Village and other community-based programs that improve the lives of the marginalized children of Tanzania.



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Back to School and Busier than Ever!

By India Howell, Founder and Executive Director

It's been a busy year at TCF, full of accomplishments big and small!

In August, we celebrated the opening of our brand new Community Center. This 2,400 sq. ft. facility can hold up to 500 people and is intended as a place for the community to gather and use as their own. The center will serve as a venue for village meetings, women's health training, adult education and vocational courses, and community outreach programs.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by the entire community and featured a dramatic educational performance by the Sangoma dance troupe on the prevention of child abuse. And, of course, there were many long speeches from community leaders thanking TCF for this much-needed resource!

After the ceremony, Ericki, one of my boys from Kiran House, admitted he was a bit mystified



Our Rubondo House girls, happy to head back to class

by one thing. He could *not* understand why the Ward Executive kept thanking Mama India and why everyone in the village kept clapping for me when he never saw me building anything. "Mom, you didn't even lay a single brick!" Kids!

Not all of our accomplishments came with great fanfare; sometimes the quietest achievements can be just as meaningful. One of my favorite moments from the past year happened in June when

little Raymondi Moses came into the office to proudly show me the prize he had received for being #3 in his class. Raymondi, along with his brother and sister, joined our family in February. When he came to us, he was at the bottom of his class and was afraid of his own shadow. It is truly miraculous to see what four months of love and safety can do for a child. Sparkling eyes, standing proud and ready to take on the world!

Continued on page 2....

Oldeani Update: Transforming the vision into reality

This time last fall our plans for turning around Oldeani Secondary School (OSS) were just starting to take shape. Today, I'm proud to announce that we're making great progress and already seeing results!

One of our top priorities was ensuring that the proper leadership was in place at the school. This June, we officially wel-

comed our new Head Master, Mr. Sanka John, to Oldeani. He's already proven to be a tremendous addition to our team and is deeply committed to our vision for the school.

Mr. Sanka is definitely off to a strong start and has already implemented important changes such as enforcing rules about teacher attendance and ending

the practice of sending students home for nonpayment of fees.

While changing the bad habits and mindsets that teachers have developed over years of poor management practices takes time, with Mr. Sanka's support, we are confident of success.

Continued on page 2....

Back to School (cont.)

Gyetighi Primary School

Thanks to the hard work and thoughtful leadership of our Education Director, Chris Renno, Gyetighi continues to flourish. Our proudest accomplishment is having 100% of our Gyetighi students pass the Standard 7 National Mock Exam. They didn't just squeak by, they passed by a wide margin! All of this demonstrates once and for all that with consistent teaching and strong school management, the kids from this area have what it takes to succeed.

Kudos to all of the student teachers and Gyetighi teachers who provided study halls in the evenings and review classes on Saturdays. That extra effort has paid off and they should be extremely proud!



Launch of our ESL Program

Thanks to a grant from the Maine Community Foundation, we were able to hire a full-time English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher for Gyetighi Primary School. The goal of this program is to improve our teachers' English skills so they can be more effective when teaching English to our students. I'm pleased to report that our ESL teacher, Lara Manning, has made great progress over the last six months, and it's been inspiring to see our teachers grow in confidence. Teachers who could barely speak in English at the beginning of the year can now have conversations and actively participate in activities!

Secondary Students

On a very happy note, in May we celebrated the graduation of eight of our scholarship and former student teachers from Form 6 or college! All eight students will assist us at Gyetighi or Oldeani while they await news of National Exam results and/or government postings. Of this group, Lazaro was the super star, graduating #1 in his class from Arusha Teacher's College, and the winner of more awards than I can count.

For a change of pace, during the June vacation we started a book discussion club. The meetings were held at our new gazebo, Lisa's Place, built in memory of Lisa Cronan and her love of reading. The kids all had different books that they had to describe and discuss during each session.



Lisa's Place Gazebo

Once done, they would all have an hour to read in a place tailor-made for reading—Lisa's Place!

In April, after weeks of heavy rains, our road was on the verge of being declared impassable. I gathered all of our big boys together and told them that we needed their help AND that I was ready to pay them a man's daily wage for the work. Never one to miss a chance for a "life lesson," I wanted them to see the kind of hard manual labor that awaited them if they did not finish school. After five days, we had the road back in shape and they all had earned 15,000TSH (about \$10). However, they all had so much fun slipping and sliding in the mud and singing Glee songs while they worked that I am not sure my point got across!

We're off to a busy start, and I feel confident in saying we are never in danger of any dull moments!

Please contact India with questions or comments at india@habari.co.tz

Oldeani Update (cont.)

We're not the only ones who are optimistic about Oldeani's future. We recently received a strong vote of confidence in our efforts when a local parent transferred his two children from another school to ours. He believes that with TCF's involvement, Oldeani Secondary is poised to become the best secondary school in the region. This father should know a little about TCF's track record in local education reform, as he is the headmaster at Gyetighi Primary School, Mr. Thomas Daffi!

Improving the culture of the student body has also been a top priority at Oldeani. Moving the students from a culture of complacency to one of excitement and engagement has been challenging, but will pay huge dividends in the long run. We have launched an incentive program for top students, as well as students who have shown

improvement, which has already increased student engagement.



Having enough textbooks is essential to ensuring that every student is able to study and learn. Not only have we provided textbooks and dictionaries to our students, but we have also equipped our teachers with the basic supplies they lacked such as rulers,

staples, and pens. We've also brought proper science equipment to the school for the first time. These supplies are not just important learning tools, they're also important motivating factors for the teachers and students who work hard because they know they have access to resources many others do not.

Although change is often slow and sometimes difficult, it has been very rewarding to witness the progress we're making. Seeing students using lab equipment or lining up to check out a study book is what keeps us motivated and inspired. We have a long way to go to make Oldeani Secondary a model school, but we are committed to making that vision a reality, and with each week I see us getting closer to that goal.

*Chris Renno
Education Director*

Is TCF Unique? *By Peggy Bacon, Board Chair*

YES!

Over the last decade, I have watched our children grow up and I have seen our community transform itself. However, it is only in the past year—as we celebrate our tenth anniversary—that I can confirm we are indeed one of a kind.

While we have consciously borrowed best practices from other organizations, I know that our multi-pronged approach to eliminating poverty, our strong leadership, and our commitment to partnering with our community make us unique.

At TCF, we recognize:

There are profound consequences to the accident of birth. Children born into poverty experience burdens and challenges that any of us would struggle to overcome. It is our goal to even the playing field and ensure that the “accident of birth” is not a life sentence.

Talent is universal; opportunity is not. It is our responsibility to help address this imbalance.

The causes of poverty are complex, and a multi-pronged attack on poverty ultimately has a stronger impact.

While Tanzania has over 3 million orphans and a plethora of orphanages, our Children’s Village is unique in creating a “forever family,” educating our children through secondary school, and seeing them through to gainful employment. Our goal is to produce educated workers, citizens and leaders of East Africa. The world is waiting.

Our multi-pronged attack on poverty is unique for a small, grassroots organization:

We have created a permanent family and home for 90 orphaned children in our area. The Rift Valley Children’s Village serves as a safe harbor for the most vulnerable in our community. Not only do they benefit from safe housing, nutritious food, and high-quality healthcare and education, but they also thrive on the intangibles that define our Children’s Village such as individualized attention, love, and security. Our children do not “graduate from our program.” Our family is forever, just like yours.

We are making high-quality education available to the entire community. By partnering with the Tanzanian government to transform our low-performing local primary school into a national leader, we’ve created a path to secondary school and new opportunities for the 1,700 primary students in our coffee growing area.

We offer access to free health care for our community of 8,000. RVCV’s nurse holds daily office hours to patients in the community and bi-weekly clinics are held in partnership with FAME (Foundation for African Medicine and Education).

We provide economic opportunities and training. In an area where the majority of the population earns under \$2 a day, a micro-loan can mean the difference between struggling to survive and being able to create a better life for your family.

Our integrated approach to eliminating poverty is a bold vision with serious goals. The “\$1 A Day Club” is disappearing right before our eyes as students move on to secondary school and employment, and parents are able to provide for their families.

Finally, our strict oversight of your investment in our programs also makes us unique. India Howell lives in the community she serves as TCF’s Founder and Executive Director; she watches every penny. We promise big returns on your investment, and we deliver on our commitments.

Bright eyes, energy and smiles mean healthy, educated families with pride and hope in their lives. They will change their world!

Thank you for making this possible.

Please contact Peggy with questions or comments at peggybacon60@gmail.com



Family Forever

Construction Update: Building More, Building Better

Our building sites have also been buzzing with activity...and we’re not slowing down, especially when there’s so much work at Oldeani that remains to be done! Here are the projects we’ve been working on that will help us help our community move forward:

Projects completed in 2014:

- Community Center
- Gazebo (Lisa’s Place)
- Gyetighi Primary School Dining Hall
- Gyetighi Primary School Teacher House
- Endorofta Girls’ Choo
- Oldeani Secondary School Bachelor Teacher Housing

Projects currently in progress:

- Oldeani Secondary classroom (will eventually serve as the lab)
- Oldeani Secondary 100,000 gallon rain water harvesting / storage tank
- Gyetighi Primary School fencing

Many thanks to the generous donors who underwrote these projects!

Student Spotlight: Natalie and Lemomo

Natalie, age 7, is quickly gaining a reputation at RVCV for being a girl genius. And with good reason, as those of you who have met her will know: she's quick, observant, intelligent, and a mean card player—literally mean—she'll rig the deck and have cards up her sleeve before you can say 'go fish.'

At school, Natalie is consistently the top of her class, with English comprehension skills that can rival that of some of her teachers!

She is soon becoming the all-star student for Standard 1.

However, it seems she has a rival: seven year old Lemomo from Kiran house. Quiet and sometimes shy, he's a natural on the soccer field and in the classroom. Lemomo doesn't seem like the intellectual type right off the bat, but he cleaned up with 100% on every monthly exam, stealing the #1 spot from Natalie!

It's exciting times as Natalie is determined to prove that she "Really is smarter than Lemomo....really!"

We will have to wait and see how the rivalry plays out. Competition aside, at the end of the day, we're thrilled that two of our kids have a real drive to perform well in school and be the best of the best!



Friends? Rivals? Both!!

TCF Education Fun Facts

Gyetighi Primary School

- #1 Government school in the district
- In the top 2% of schools (public & private) in Tanzania
- 476 Students
- Average Class Size: 32

Oldeani Secondary School

- 253 Students
- New Headmaster: Mr. Sanka

Microfinance Update

Our Microfinance Director, Grace Christopher, continues to lead our microfinance program in the right direction and to ever greater strength. Her gentle, but firm management style has increased repayment rates and helped the microfinance staff grow in confidence and effectiveness.

The microfinance team is currently managing 480 clients with working loans (75% of whom are women), and added 60 new clients in July. Plans are in place to add another 100 clients in the first three months of 2015 through our handcraft training program.

In addition to their usual activities of client training and loan tracking, the microfinance team recently conducted a survey to determine what type of impact the program is having on its clients and their families. The results are telling:

Since joining TCF's microfinance program...

- Clients who have bought land in order to build a home: 61%
- Clients who have built a house: 21%
- Clients who are now able to pay secondary school fees: 18%

The survey results also showed that for many clients, the income from their business helped them to buy nutritious food for their families for the first time. The ability to purchase a variety of healthy food reduces the incidence of malnutrition and ensures that their children are able to learn in school.

Health Update

The Rift Valley Children's Village's Registered Nurse, Kira Sigal, has settled into her role and has become very popular with the people of Oldeani Ward. As a result, she is treating 30+ children and adults each day. Not only does Kira treat patients from the surrounding catchment area of roughly 8,000 residents, but she also cares for RVCV residents, staff and students from Gyetighi Primary School.

At the beginning of the year, Kira had some help conducting health screenings at Gyetighi Primary School from Dr. Murray and his wife. Together, they completed close to 500 health assessments in nine days.

As if that weren't enough, Kira has also been busy creating an emergency fire evacuation plan for the village (always be prepared!), meeting with arriving volunteers for health orientation, and completing the annual treatment of children with severe ringworm.

This spring, FAME (Foundation for African Medicine and Education) sent us a visiting neurologist who saw nearly 30 patients from the community who were suffering from a variety of neurological issues such as epilepsy. The standout case was a young boy who attends Gyetighi Primary. He had been struck unconscious multiple times due to severe seizures (including during the clinic). Thanks to Dr. Michael and his many consultants, our young patient is now on the proper medication and is doing great.

Volunteer Program



Heather with Eliasi and Dickson

The volunteer program continues to be the key to much of our success. Under the patient and steady guidance of Heather Sibet, we have seen this program grow stronger each and every month that she was with us. However, after two years at the Children's Village, it was time for her to return to her family in Seattle. While we were sad to see her go, we are delighted to announce that Heather hand-picked and trained our wonderful new volunteer coordinator, Brittany Sweet, who joined us this past July.

In addition to daily volunteer activities like supervising play time, preparing breakfast and snacks, and tutoring and teaching, here are some of the special projects that volunteers have taken on recently:

- Holly Perkins taught ballet and yoga to our children.
- Over the June holidays, volunteers helped our kids stay busy and learn new skills, including teaching bicycle lessons and running a book club.
- John Platt, a professional artist from NYC, taught art classes and painted sets for our Lion King play. John will be taking our kids' paintings to a NYC gallery where he'll be hosting an exhibition to raise money for TCF.

Volunteers are essential team members at RVCV, and we need your help making sure that we always have enough on the ground.

If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Brittany at volunteer@tanzanianchildrensfund.org.

Want to help?

Do you have a working iPad that you don't use? Donate it to TCF!

We are seeking an iPad for use in improving teacher performance. iPads are the perfect tool for recording teachers in the classroom, then letting them observe their performance while providing them with feedback and suggestions.

If you have an iPad that you would like to donate to TCF, please mail it to 2 Atlantic Avenue, 4th Floor, Boston, MA 02110.



Volunteer Catie reads along with Natalie and James on the steps

Sponsorship & Communications

Ben Whelan has been a busy, busy beaver helping our children communicate with their sponsors through letters and cards, in addition to maintaining communication with renewing, new, and potential sponsors.

He's also been busy posting photos of our children and students on **Facebook**, so be sure to check out our page! For our social media-savvy supporters, we also recently launched an **Instagram account** and a **Flickr account** that should provide enough adorable photos to keep all of TCF's fans satisfied!

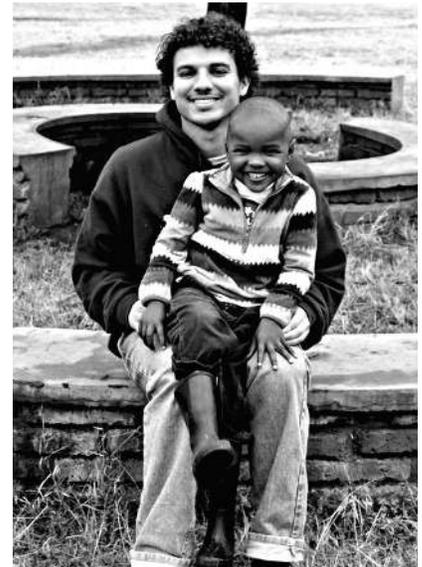
In other exciting news, TCF will soon have a newly redesigned website. Ben, along with our web design volunteers Ross Kinney and Aaron Levenson, have been hard at work on our site to update the content and make it easier to navigate. Stay tuned for the launch later his year.

www.instagram.com/rvcvtcf
www.facebook.com/tanzanianchildrensfund
www.flickr.com/photos/tanzanianchildrensfund

Ben has also made great progress on his "Going Green" initiative to send out sponsor reminders via email instead of postal mail. If you would like to receive an electronic renewal reminder instead of a paper one, please email sponsor@tanzanianchildrensfund.org

Ben has done an amazing job in this very demanding position, and always with a smile. We are going to miss him greatly when he goes back to the UK in October, and India is *really* going to miss his willingness to act as our unofficial IT support in the office! However, we are very excited to welcome Sarah Immelt, who will join the TCF family in just a few weeks to begin taking over Ben's responsibilities. Safe travels Ben and welcome aboard Sarah!

If you'd like to sponsor a child, let us know by writing to:
sponsor@tanzanianchildrensfund.org



Ben with Eliasi, age 4

Check out our 2013 Annual Report
accessible via our website at:
www.tanzanianchildrensfund.org



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Asante Sana to all of our September 2013—September 2014 Rift Valley Children's Village volunteers!

Jeff Bates, Kyle Beatty, Sophie Bellenis, Janie Bellenis, Ellen Berube, Jackie Bilbro, Sheila Bilko, Catherine Bourdeau, Amanda Brown, Ashby Brown, Kelsey Bryant, Eleanor Bryant, Jon Carter, Pamela Carter, Harrison Carter, Sophia Carter, Bill Charman, Henry Charman, Gillian Chestnut, Jill DiOrio, Eleanor Doar, Melisa Drin, Abby Elcock, Murray & Judy Feldstein, Luke Fowler, Libby Gephart, Pooh Gephart, Susan Goth, Jill Gramolini, Will Gray, Antonia Greenberg, David Herrington, Olivia Herrington, Mary Hintlian, Robbie Hugin, Emily Hyatt, Janine Ilsley, Sarah Immelt, James Mellon, Amy Johnson, Kate Kemp, Kylie Knight, Shelley Lapinsky, Chris Lee, Barry LeMond, Kathy, LeMond, Kevin LeMond, Lara Manning, Sarah Marshall Moore, Bridget McNamara, Dave Meaney, Lisa Meaney, Gigi Mondavi, Eileen Mueller, Stacey Nelkin, Julia Nemece, Ryanna Neuman, Catie Olsen, Holly Perkins, Ali Perkins, Ashley Peters, Andrew Peterson, Emily Poole, John Platt, Jo Portinga, Debby Rechler, Laisee Rintel, Lea Rosskamp, Hannah Schmunk, Suzie Schnell, Sue Scott, Jackie Shea, Maggie Sliney, Paige St. Germain, Meredith Storm, Jean Templin, Alyssa Trometter, Lara Ustunberk, Emily Voigt, Kim and Will Whetzel, Karen Wynne

....and many thanks as well to our 2013—2014 Boston office volunteers!

Megan Dupuy, Logan Hallowell, Rose Lantigua, Aaron Levenson, Emma Shorr, Mariya Todorova, Lisa Wartemberg, Alison Woodland

Thank You to Our 2013 and 2014 Event Hosts

While it can be hard to leave the Children's Village—no matter how temporarily—India makes a point to visit the US twice a year in order to keep in touch with and thank our longtime supporters.

A key element of these trips are the house parties which are generously hosted by our TCF friends. These events provide us with an opportunity to update existing supporters, as well as connect with new donors and volunteers.

We'd like to offer our warmest thanks to the hosts who opened their homes to us in 2013 and 2014:

Cindy & Michael Kamm, Lisa & Dave Meaney, The Halebian family, Sallie Bear, Meredith Bowen, Germaine Williams, Ann Crittenden & John Henry, Shelley Lapinski, Brooke Morrissey, James & Barbara Schubauer, Peter & Maddy Gordon, Donna & Bob Storer, Lea Simonds, Sue Scott, Jill DiOrio, Todd Cronan, Brian & Karen Conway, Tim & Laura Bryan, Debbie Lewis & Bob Grinberg, Anne Fitzpatrick, Sarah & Bob Gould, Gay & Tony Barclay, Penny & Bruns Grayson, Nina &

Og Hunnewell, Helen & Whit Wagner, Richard & Kit Aroneau, Mary & Harry Hintlian, Stephanie Brennan, Jody Drake, Rhonda & Luke Fowler, Angela Fowler, Carrie & Bill Polk, John Platt, Mary Wolf



India thanking guests at the July 2014 event hosted by Sue Scott

In Remembrance

It is with great sadness that I share the news that two of our original board members have passed away. Lisa Cronan was a member of TCF's Board of Directors from 2003 until 2013. Her contributions were as numerous and varied as they were valuable, from designing many of the Children's Village buildings, to offering the full measure of her wisdom and support throughout her decade of service on the board.

Ralph D. Howell Jr. was also a founding board member, serving from 2003 until 2007 when he resigned for health reasons. As our first treasurer—and my father—he provided me with the guidance and support to not only dream the dream of TCF, but to also make it a reality. In addition, his advice on construction of the Children's Village means that our buildings will solidly stand the test of time!

All that TCF is today is due in no small part to the contributions of these two friends and mentors. They are missed greatly, but their legacies continue to thrive and change lives.

- India