



Tanzanian Children's Fund Newsletter

Mission Statement
The Tanzanian Children's Fund has been established to aid the children of Tanzania. Working in partnership with registered non-governmental, non-profit organizations in Tanzania, TCF will provide financial and intellectual support to projects and programs designed to improve the lives of children in need.

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Volume 1 Issue 2

May 2004

Letter from India Howell

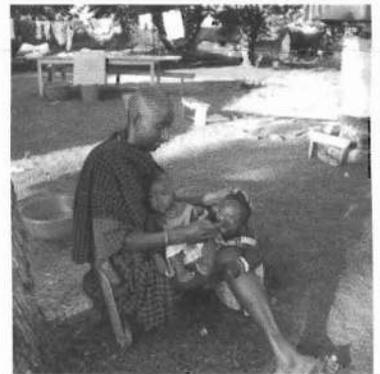
So many wonderful things have happened since our November issue I don't know how to squeeze it all in!

We now have 13 children living with us. Each child is beautiful and perfect (except of course, for when they are being naughty.) I am amazed each day to see that this child or that one has taken another step forward towards feeling more self assured and more part of the family. It's hard to imagine what must go through those little minds after they've been rescued from cruelty and deprivation and brought to a world of love and plenty. You can almost see their hearts growing larger as they learn about hugs and cuddles and the amazing feeling of being loved and valued. Oh to see little James who spent his first month sitting quietly in the shadows now leading the charge as the kids run full tilt across the lawn. Or little Ismail who barely spoke a word for the first

6 weeks and now is a nonstop chatterbox. For me the best part is to experience their first reticence when you try to hug them before going to bed and notice one day that that same child is literally throwing themselves into your arms and hugging back. What a feeling!

The local elders and members of the school board in Gyetighi Village have been so impressed by our work that they have voted to give us land next to the school. The paper work is in process as I write this and we'll be starting to build once the long rains have ended. (This is truly a miracle in action as the land originally promised is tied up in legal knots and could take years to settle.) And we need to start building now!! For every child we have rescued there are dozens more in equally perilous situations waiting for a better chance in life.

We have been blessed with a staff that continually finds ways



Msee Lemomo, Staff Supervisor feeding Yusufu and Edina.

to amaze me with their dedication and love for these kids. It is not uncommon to find the night askari (security guard) helping kids practice their alphabet or the staff supervisor feeding one of the babies (he insists

Reflections from a Volunteer

Last February my 11 year old daughter, Ella and I lived in the village of Gyetighi for 3 weeks as volunteers at Rift Valley Children's Village (RVCV). During this time we also taught at nearby Gyetighi Primary School where some of the children at the RVCV attend. It was without a doubt the greatest experience I have

ever shared with my daughter. In the twenty years I have been in education, the short time I spent with the children in Gyetighi was as warm and rewarding as any I have spent in camps and classrooms in the U.S.

Once we arrived at the RVCV, we were overwhelmed by the beauty of the setting and by our welcome. The moment



Tom Vorenberg, wearing a shuka given to him by the teachers at a school ceremony.

Reflections from a Volunteer continued



Left to Right: Dave and Lisa Meeny, Ella and Tom Vorenberg

Ella stepped out of the land cruiser, Stella, age 13, took her by the hand for a tour of the grounds. Doctor and Juma, boys both 8 years old, struggled to help me with my bags while also trying to hold my hand. The children are healthy, happy, and have lots of room to play. Staying at RVCV felt just like we were cousins coming home to visit our extended family. Love and respect are the orders of the day. This comes through in every interaction India and the staff have with the children. As volunteers, we were expected to follow India's lead. With these wonderful loving children it wasn't difficult at all. They take such pleasure in any activity whether it was kicking a soccer ball, having a story read to them, or creating simple art projects. Of course, hugs were an essential part of every child's day as well.

It was touching to watch how new children are welcomed to RVCV. Ella and I were fortunate enough to help three new children settle into their new home. James, age 5, Lucy age 8 and her brother, Jackson age 6 arrived in the middle of our stay. They arrived at night after spending the day getting physicals at the Lutheran Hospital with the unflappable Msee, Staff Supervisor and India's right hand man.

All of the kids ran outside when they heard the land cruiser arrive with Msee and the new children. Grabbing both their hands the children led James, Lucy and Jackson to the bunk rooms, and helped them get ready for bed with care and sensitivity. Ella found them all pajamas, toothbrushes, and clothes for the next day. She tucked them in and sang a goodnight song.

James was the greatest challenge for Ella. He had suffered a great deal of neglect,

and was suspicious and withdrawn when he arrived. By the time we left, he was smiling and playing, and held Ella tightly when they hugged goodbye.

During our weekdays we taught at the Gyetighi Primary School. The school is a short ten minute walk through rows of coffee trees from the site of the RVCV. We soon found how the role of the volunteer acts as a bridge between RVCV and village life. We were the first Westerners to teach at Gyetighi Primary in the school's forty year history. Since there are 500 students and only 7 teachers, the professional staff and the parents at the school appreciated our help. Our job was to teach music, art, and games. We were blessed with the enthusiastic help of Oddo Ndonde who acted as translator. He is the Children's Service Coordinator for RVCV, and displayed a magic touch with all the children. Under his direction, we were able to create an afternoon sports program in which children and villagers could play soccer or volleyball. We taught simple songs like "Row, Row, Your Boat" to the younger students, and more complex tunes like "Amazing Grace" and "Under the Boardwalk" to the older ones. One of my most memorable moments came while teaching the Standard Seven kids how to make mobiles. We started the project fairly late in our stay, and by the Monday of our final week we had run out of time to finish the project in class. However, on the last day, I was surprised by my students. Here's what I wrote in my journal for that day of teaching: "Last day of school today. Taught five classes. The best was Standard 7. They purposely closed the door to the room. I got there first.. When I opened the door, I said my usual hellos, but I was looking at the empty desk across the front of the room where I always put my bag. The greeting was a bit more muted

than usual, so I turned to look at the kids and my eyes caught some movement above their heads. They had all finished their mobiles on their own, and had hung them on the rafters. Some of them were intricate and carefully balanced. Others weren't. They had all made the effort and they were all clearly so proud. I couldn't help but tear up as I walked around the room, admiring their mobiles."

At the end of our stay it became clear RVCV volunteer program at the school had a successful kickoff. We were invited to a celebration at the school in our honor. We were treated to songs, speeches and other gifts from members of the community.

When we left, Ella and I agreed we had not stayed long enough, and we promised ourselves we'd be back. People of all ages had managed to touch our hearts. One question that was repeated by villagers during our stay was "once you leave, will there be others who will follow?" When I thought of the excellent program created by India, my answer was always a confident "yes."

Tom Vorenberg teaches 6th grade at the Shady Hill School in Cambridge, MA.

Update from India continued

that she eats more when he does it.) Each and everyone, no matter what the job description, puts these kids and their welfare as their top priority. Who could ask for more?

Our volunteer program has gotten off to a great start. We have put together a full package describing our volunteer program so please let us know if you are interested in joining the ranks of people making a difference in our little corner of the world. Thus far, the numbers and quality of people anxious to come and help us is

astounding. At this writing we have 11 volunteers committed over the next eighteen months for stays of three weeks to a full year!

In closing, I will say that the good news is that it is all good news. We have truly been living in a nonstop miracle for the past 2 years. So, the next time you run across a cynic who feels the world is falling apart – tell them about us. We have nothing but hope for the future – and with good reason! Every day we're witnessing the positive effects of our efforts in

the happy faces and laughter of our children.



Godwin helping kids learn to write.

A Day in the Life of Rift Valley Children's Village

We thought you might like to know how a typical day plays out here at RVCV. The scenario goes something as follows:

6:00AM Mama (that's me) gets up, gets dressed and lights some kerosene lamps.

6:15 I begin the rounds of coaxing the school age kids out of bed. Happily there are many days when they pop right out of bed!

6:30 Abiba arrives to help me put breakfast out - peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, fruit, and milk or Tang (we alternate days and don't even THINK about trying to sneak in an

extra milk day!)

7:00 I walk the kids to school while Abiba feeds the second shift - the little ones. The little ones then clean up their rooms (with lots of help from the housemothers) and then go to nursery school here at RVCV.

12:00 all but Stella (our oldest child) return from school.

They have lunch and then we help them wash their uniforms, polish their shoes and finish cleaning their rooms. During this period we attempt to get the little ones to rest.

2:00 - free time to crawl all over Mama (while I am trying to work), play legos, draw pic-

ture, play ball etc.

4:00 - bath time. This is an hour of controlled chaos that finishes with everyone clean and wearing clean clothes and if we are successful - their own underwear and socks.

5:00 - movie time!! (Mama bathes or simply collapses in the living room.)

7:00 - dinner

7:30 - bedtime which is more controlled chaos with lots of hugs and kisses all around and the occasional off key lullaby sung by yours truly.

8:00 FREE TIME FOR MAMA!!!



Our volunteer, Meredith Bowen, reading to the Kindergarten class.

“We have nothing but hope for the future – and with good reason! Every day we’re witnessing the positive effects of our efforts in the happy faces and laughter of our children.”

June Fundraising Events

India Howell will be traveling in Florida and the Northeast during June. Several events have been planned that we hope you'll be able to attend. We've listed the events and hope you'll contact us if, for some reason, you haven't received an invitation to an event in your area. If you want to see India for a personal update you can get in touch with her by e-mail india@habari.co.tz and she'll make every effort to meet with you.

June 4 Gathering at the home of Ralph Howell in Boca Raton, Florida

June 5 Presentation at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

June 12 Gathering at the home of Suzi and John Horgan in Garrison, New York

June 14 Gathering at the home of David Sinclair in New York City

June 19 Gathering at the home of Donna and Bob Storer in Sherborn, Massachusetts

June 25 Gathering at the home of Nano and John Higgins in Cape Elizabeth, Maine

June 30 Gathering at the home of Kim and Debbie Chatfield in Rockport, Maine

I'd like to personally thank the volunteers who've cared for our children by reading them books, helping them with homework, doing art projects, taking them for walks, teaching them songs, and putting them to bed.

Tom and Ella Vorenberg; Dave and Lisa Meaney; Nano Chatfield; Meredith Bowen; Kelly Sherwin; Anna Hewitt; and Jeff Krumrine.

VISIT US AT OUR WEBSITE:
www.tanzanianchildrensfund.org
which we hope to launch by the end of May

Profile—Oddo Ndonde, Children's Services Coordinator

Oddo Ndonde was originally trained as a priest and social worker for the Catholic Church in Tanzania. Prior to joining RVCV, he spent 5 years as the Center Manager for an organization called Children for Children's Future (CCF), which takes street children off the street and houses them in a shelter in Arusha. He has extensive experience in counseling and working with orphaned children. In addition, he has been a great asset when working with government officials and local village leaders.

Oddo joined our team in January of this year after completing a five month course in counseling traumatized children. His unique qualifications have already been invaluable to our efforts.



Above: Oddo Ndonde
Below: Kids wearing their new hats from Disney UK

**So many Thank-yous!!!**

If an organization's strength is judged by the support of its donors we must be very strong!! How can we begin to thank all of you for jumping in and helping us in our earliest stages of growth? What faith you've had in our vision and dream. So many people have come forward to help with donations, time and needed items it's a bit dangerous to start naming names lest we forget someone. But we feel that it's important for everyone to know of those special efforts:

Sara Warner-Phillips of WarnerWebWorks.com who designed our website.

Ric Marshall of The Corporate Library for hosting our site.

Ram Trust Services for their financial services and the laptop.

Beth and Garret Currier and Drake Livada for the many boxes of children's books they have collected.

Lucy LaCasse for arranging the donation of binoculars

from Eagle Optics and backpacks from LLBean.

Disney UK for the huge box of goodies they sent to us for Christmas—what a treat!!

Tom and Ella Vorenberg for the mountains of gifts and sports equipment.

The Ladies of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church who have made dozens of quilts so every child has his/her very own quilt..

Ines Ivanovic a 9 year old who played her cello at Copley Square to raise money for us.

Kit and Richard Aroneau, Anne Childs, Nano Chatfield and all those who contributed toys, Beanie Babies and legos.

To sponsor an orphan in Tanzania is to give a child the opportunity to go to school. There is no free education in Tanzania because parents must pay for uniforms, school books and supplies in order to send their children to primary school.

Sponsorship Levels:
\$100 per year will cover annual education costs.

\$500 per year provides annual education costs, clothing, food and a home with us.

\$1000 per year provides annual education costs, clothing food, a home with us, and supplies for primary school.

Contact Nano Chatfield for more details about sponsorship.
nano@ramtrust.com