



TANZANIAN CHILDREN'S FUND

NEWSLETTER

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Mission

Statement

The Tanzanian Children's Fund was established to aide the children of Tanzania. Working in partnership with registered non-governmental, non-profit organizations in Tanzania, TCF provides financial and intellectual support to projects and programs designed to improve the lives of children in need.

The Tanzanian Children's Fund is a registered 501 C 3 not for profit. Please direct all inquiries and donations to:

*Tanzanian Children's Fund
45 Exchange Street,
Portland, Maine, 04101.
www.tanzanianchildrens
fund.org*

A letter from India Howell

Now I understand the true meaning of the saying "time flies". This morning when I was helping 4 year old Ismail get dressed I realized that he was putting on clothes that used to be too big for 7 year old Doctor. Wasn't it just yesterday that I was rolling up those trousers on Doctor because they were too long for him?

Like all children, our children strive towards the goal of being "big" like it was the holy grail of life. And it seems that they are getting their wish...they are growing up.

We now have eleven children in primary school. This makes our mornings challeng-

ing as we scramble to find everyone's school socks, shoes and book bags. Of course someone always waits until we have finished walking to school to announce that he/she does not have a pencil (I now carry a secret supply in my pocket!) All of our children are doing remarkably well in school. I made a deal with each child that I would give a sticker every time they got all check marks (correct answers) in their workbooks for the day. I am going through stickers by the dozen!

Our volunteers are responsible for this scholastic achievement of our children. The volunteers are teaching at our local school as well as

working one-on-one with our kids at home after school. They have inspired our kids who have now discovered that learning can be fun! Imagine how my heart swells when I hear several of them singing the ABC phonics song while they wait in line to brush their teeth in the morning. Where did this come from? Recently, a group of volunteers put on a full scale play with props and music to teach the kids the sounds that each letter makes. It was like watching pure magic in action.

Yes the kids do find time for less educational pursuits. (Like removing mirrors, shiny screws and bolts from the car.) So far I am happy to report,

Reflections from a Volunteer by Andy Bryant

Greetings from our Eden in Africa!

Awakened each morning to an amber, iridescent sunrise and prompted by the shufflings, squeals of delight, and occasional cry of despair from our children, the life of a volunteer at the Rift Valley Children's Village is a gift.

There are seventeen chil-

dren at the RVCV who are growing in size and personality so quickly that my photographs can't be snapped fast enough, the ruptured discs in my back can't heal soon enough. Coupled with the accepting and generous friendships we're forming with children and villagers, this place is truly a home.

Our youngest, Rehema, at 14 months, has just found

her walking legs. Her progress is remarkable considering a year ago she was malnourished and weighed less than 4





Volunteer Kate Hibschman with Juma and India

Reflections from a Volunteer continued...

pounds when she arrived. Her laughter now outweighs her cries, which is the finest example of what this organization strives to bestow on our children.

The relationship between the Rift Valley Children's Village and the surrounding villages is certainly one aspect of the organization's mission that has grown and been transformed most in the past year. As efforts to construct the physical structures and to fill them with children are in progress, India has strived to ensure that the end result will be a place that the neighboring Tanzanians will understand, be a part of, and benefit from. We have worked toward this end by holding meetings with village leaders, as well as community meetings to hear the problems and solutions that people in the area feel can improve their daily lives.

I can see the enormous improvements that can be enacted and aided by listening to and nurturing the ideas and efforts of community members. Rather than building a bubble around our kids and home, India has welcomed the input of our outside villages in fashioning her plan for the future of the orphanage and her resource allocation for projects outside of our orphanage. For the local people to feel they have a degree of empowerment in their own lives where none have existed is energizing.

I feel the organization's potential has and will lessen the profound gap between how orphaned children live in these remote, primitive villages and how they could live with our assistance.

I would like to touch upon the idea that you are part of something that is, at once, grand and sobering. And wonderful. My cynic's

heart beats faster and stronger during the infinite moments when I take stock of our work here and wish there were just more hours in the day to clean cuts and scrapes, listen to an elder recount stories of his youth, or wonder which Cabinet position or Top-40 chart position our children will hold when they leave here.

So, yes, I suppose some thanks are in order. The Rift Valley Children's Village exists because of the hopes of hundreds, perhaps thousands of caregivers. Please come and play with us when you have the chance or when you need to be reminded that good things happen to good children.

Andy Bryant first started to study Kiswahili last August and can now manage in the classroom without a translator! He is a volunteer from the Princeton Africa Program. Andy has been at the orphanage since late August 2004 and will stay through June 2005.

“I can see the enormous improvements that can be enacted and aided by listening to and nurturing the ideas and efforts of community members.”

Letter from India continued

they haven't actually lost any of the important parts. There is also time for soccer, heart pounding games of Go Fish and hide 'n seek. Normal child's play. And that's the beauty of it. After years of abuse and neglect, these children are now happy, healthy and curious kids. Our plan worked! Children do heal and can enjoy a childhood filled with games, friendships and hugs.

This naturally motivates us to get our Village built so that we can offer this kind of life and hope for more children

in need. Since January the driveway has been laid and the water line installed at the site. Now we can begin building the houses for the orphanage. We now have the funds to complete the first phase of construction without skimping on the necessities for the children already in our care.

So once again my letter sounds a bit like a movie clip from *Pollyanna*. But how can I help it? As I listen to the kids outside playing and laughing, watch the volunteers working so diligently and effectively, and marvel at the

way our staff continues to throw their hearts and souls into these kids, I know with all my heart that we are making a difference in our part of the world. And, thanks to each of you for your generous support. Without your contributions, this never could have happened. On behalf of every life we have touched.....

THANK YOU!!!



Siadi and Andy Bryant climbing trees

Helping in the Community by Nano Chatfield

Tanzanian Children's Fund supports the orphanage, Rift Valley Children's Village, as well as many local projects in Oldeani and Kiran villages. Knowing that the future of our children is tied to the well being of the community we have taken steps to provide assistance to projects that benefit our children as well as the community. This translates into donating supplies, support and money to local schools, clinics, and hospitals used by our children as well as the many needy children in the area. Sometimes this is committing to the purchase and delivery of cement to complete the construction of a clinic or providing first aid supplies, which have been donated to us by safari visitors; or providing paint, books and general school supplies; or the hiring of Teaching Assistants for the Geyteghi Primary School. (Most of the classes have one teacher teaching 80 students.)

In 2004 we committed to the sponsorship of 13 orphaned children who are living outside of our home. Through the regular delivery of food, clothing, payment of medical fees and school expenses we have enabled these children to stay with loving relatives as well as to attend school.

We are now sponsoring 5 talented students for secondary school. Our commitment is to provide school fees, living expenses, transport, clothing and medical care throughout their secondary education. When even one member of a family is able to complete their secondary education (and become employable) it can transform the future of the entire family.

We have sent 14 volunteers to Geytighi Primary School in the past year to teach English, Science, Art, Music and Sports. We hired a local woman to cook lunch at

the school every day so that the children will not need to miss class for this chore.

We provided a nurse volunteer, with 4 years of Peace Corps Village Wellness experience to help design a village wellness program with our local hospital.

We are indebted to the village leaders and citizens of Kiran Village who have made this possible through their support of our efforts. Their donation of 7 acres of land for our children's village is further demonstration of this support. The Village is poor. Most of the people are living in dilapidated coffee plantation housing and survive through subsistence farming. Employment opportunities are limited to the plantations who hire maybe twenty

people a month for work. This only makes their gift to us more poignant.

In 2005 we plan to continue providing volunteers, and assistance to our school and our community. One project is providing materials to complete new pit latrines and another project to plant trees in critical areas to cut down on erosion. In both cases the villagers will provide volunteer labor. Since there is no other car in the immediate area we will continue to provide transportation to villagers and teachers on our regular trips to Karatu. We will continue to provide ambulance services for desperately ill villagers to the hospital. We feel we have become valuable members of Oldeani and Kiran Villages by contributing in small but significant ways and by recognizing and responding to some of their needs. They have welcomed our orphans and our volunteers with open hearts and minds. Their precious gift of 7 acres of land for our home will insure our future and theirs.



Siadi, Lucy, Peter and India

Profile: Peter Leon Massey Assistant Director

Peter Leon Massey joined RVCV as the Assistant Director in August 2004. Before 24 hours had passed we all wondered how we had managed to function without him! He is a natural leader, a compassionate and caring father to the kids and wizard when it comes to working through the Tanzanian bureaucracy.

Peter is a graduate of the College for Community Development Training Institute in Tengeru and has many years of management experience from previous employment.

Peter grew up in the village of Mto Wa Mbu on the shores of Lake Manyara. This village, like the Rift Valley Children's Village is a melting pot of tribes and cultures giving Peter the ideal background for working in our blended family.

Thank You to All Our Volunteers

May Fundraising Events

Bryn Mar, PA	May 6
Torrington, CT	May 10
Far Hills, NJ	May 13
New York, NY	May 18
Bellingham, WA	May 20
Tacoma, WA	May 23

If you would like to attend any of these events or know of friends who would like to learn more about us please contact India Howell at India@habari.co.tz

In 2004 and 2005 to date we have had 20 volunteers who served in a variety of roles from helping at the orphanage; teaching at Gyetighi Primary School; helping with our new kindergarten; building a chicken coop; reading, writing, playing and singing with our children! The volunteers' hard work, dedication and commitment play a key role in the development of Rift Valley Children's Village.

We are including their names and home towns here so that you can contact any of them if you are interested in volunteering with us and would like to get an inside view from a veteran.

Thank you Tom and Ella Vorenberg, Watertown, MA; Dave and Lisa Meaney, San Francisco, CA; Nano Chatfield, Cape Elizabeth, ME; Kelly Sherwin, Shaker Heights, OH; Meredith Bowen, University Heights, OH; Emma Parker, Somerset, UK; Mary Jane Lucas, Sloansville, NY; Ashley Best, NY,NY; Gretchen Wiker, NY, NY; Leslie Saiten, NY, NY; Emmalee Olsen, NY, NY; Emily MacMillan Bampton Oxon, UK; Andy Bryant, Laramie, WY; Anne Healy Omaha, NE; Kim and Debbie Chatfield Rockport, ME; Mack Duke Rockport, ME; Anna Hewitt, Falmouth, ME; Kate Hibsichman Kittery Point, ME; Louise Lampere, NY,NY

Penny Abbott Camden, ME; Peggy Wiles, North Yarmouth, ME; Sue Martin, New Boston, NH; Bee Healy Camden, ME; Laura Douglas, Nelson, British Columbia; Cynthia Salten, Boston, MA; Bee Healy, Camden, ME; Pooh Gephart, Newton Square, PA.

Thank you for caring for our children and staff--- your sharing of time, energy and ideas have been invaluable to the success of our children's healing, well-being and growth. Your presence, your kindnesses, your spirit have strengthened the bonds that tie us to one another; to our children; to the Gyetighi Primary School and to the people of the villages of Kiran and Oldeani.