



# TANZANIAN CHILDREN'S FUND

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May 2007

## A Letter from India Howell

These last six months at the Children's Village have been jam packed (as always) with events, progress and of course, pure delight. But first, I must tell you that I am writing this from our new solar powered office! After 3 years of having the office "space" wedged into a small corner of our rental house this new space is heavenly. Everyone has their own desk! Everyone has their own chair!

I think if you asked our 41 children to name the biggest event in the last 6 months they would unanimously shout "Christmas!!" Thanks to the enormous efforts of our volunteers and the generosity of so many people, we were able to provide Christmas gifts for all of our children at home, all of our children and their relatives in

our Kids Who Live With Relatives Program, and our staff and their children. In total more than 160 children and adults received gifts for Christmas.

For 24 of our children at home, Santa visited for the first time in their lives. They all created ornaments for the tree and decorations for their homes. On Christmas Eve everyone was given new pajamas—an old Howell family Tradition. Christmas began with the opening of gifts (one from their sponsor, one from Santa and one from us).

Two of our volunteers wrote and produced the first ever Children's Village Nativity play Doctor, age 9, the play's Master of Ceremonies, announced it as, "the first Children's Village



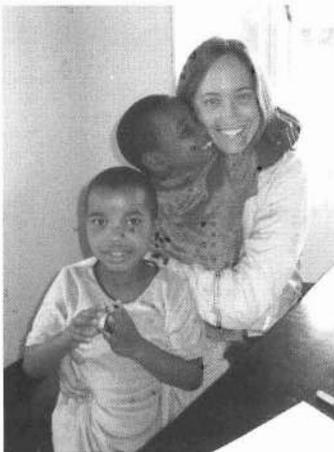
*Kiran House Kids with Mama India and Dr. Frank*

**Activity** play" Semantics... The play included dancing wild-life (bet you didn't know that there were elephants, lions and cape buffalo at the nativity!) Simon, age 7, was so into his

part with his elephant mask on that we couldn't get him to stop dancing! It was pure magic.

In February we initiated the official start of our "bush clinics"

*Continued on p. 3*



*Marietha, Nuruana and Lisa Desrochers*

## A Day in the Life at the Children's Village by Lisa Desrochers

At 4am, roosters begin to crow and two hours later, you can hear the sound of bunk beds being scraped along the floor - a sign that our children are awake and making room to tuck sheets and quilts into tricky corners on their beds. By 7, we begin to gather in the courtyard to get

ready for school. Backpacks need to be checked for school supplies, uniforms straightened, shoes tied, peanut butter and jelly wiped from missed spots on bright faces. Simon, age 7, needs a new daftari (notebook) and Jane, age 7, has lost her pencil. Nuruana, age 6, shows

yesterday's math scores off proudly, Danie, age 10, gets a few kicks of the soccer ball in before he must give it up for the day. It's April, so it's raining, again. We scurry to find another raincoat - Michael, age 9, has misplaced his. The short walk to school is always an

*Continued on p. 2*

## A Day In the Life at the Children's Village cont.



Family Meeting Day at Serengeti House

event – Mole, age 6, is eager and observant, “Come!” and shows us a frog that’s fallen in a hole; Coletha, age 7, decides to jump in a mud puddle – her newly washed school uniform is now covered in mud -; Eva, age 7, is tired and lingers in the back – she has woken up on the wrong side of the bed today.

After the older children are settled in primary school, it’s our youngest children’s turn to walk up the hill to our Kindergarten class. Too fascinated by the piles of construction materials to resist, Joshua, age 4 and Vicente, age 5, climb the mountains of rock and sand while Josephat, age 6 and Boaz, age 5, poke their heads into the frame of the future Recreation Hall, examining the scaffolds and piles of bricks that workers will piece together later in the day. Finally, they fall into line behind Elisha and Elizabeth (our Kindergarten Student Teacher and one of our volunteers) and walk like four little ducks, splashing in puddles with their rain boots.

Some of our children are home for the morning, and won’t join school until their session begins at noon. Ester, age 7, and Marietha, age 8, curl up on the lower bunk in the Tarangire House and share private conversations between their dolls. Despite the rain, Isaka, age 8, Joseph, age 8 and Cristina, age 7 brave the rain and play volleyball with Prentice, another American volunteer. Happy, age 8 plays with Baby Vicente, 16 months helping him fit a tall giraffe puzzle piece into the matching shape. At noon, the switch takes place and younger children return home for nap-time, while the group that stayed at home goes to the afternoon session at our primary school.

After school, children shed their uniforms for play time – thankfully, the sun has come out and the mud has begun to dry. Balls fly everywhere, legos are built on the verandahs, a few diligent children correct their schoolwork and practice some more. Everyone is dirty now and it’s time to climb into the

shower and shed the day’s worth of dirt and mud. Cristina, age 7, vigorously scrubs her feet with a nailbrush while Christopher, age 7 and Paulo, age 6, take turns washing each other’s backs. Squealing, silly and wet, bath time is happy chaos.

Tonight is family meeting night when everyone in the family in each Children’s House (children, housemothers, volunteers, student teachers and our 2 social workers, Arael and Jonathan) gather together in the living room to address any problems or special things that happened in the last week. Laurie, one of our volunteers, is concerned about how many pencils are getting lost each day and asks the children to pay closer attention to their things. Katie, one of our volunteers, thanks the children for doing such a good job keeping their rooms clean this week. Mama Opendo asks that children wear only flip-flops inside to keep the level of mud down in the houses. Confidently, Joshua, age 4, raises his hand. Mole, age 6, is keeping him up at night by running around after bedtime. The other boys are not slow to follow – in a chorus of Kiswahili they explain to Kaka (brother) Arael that Mole is always too noisy at night. Kaka reminds Mole that bedtime is a quiet time and he needs to stay in bed. Soon, everyone’s hand is jerking in the air with something important to share. Finally, when the last story has been told, and the fidgeting has gotten unbearable, the meeting comes to a close and it’s time for dinner. With cheers and bustling to get their first, the children run to wash

their hands and sit down for a favorite meal, maharage and wale (beans and rice) with mchicha (spinach).

The sun has gone to bed, it’s time for teeth brushing and pajamas, stories and kisses. With each set of girls and boys gathered in their rooms, volunteers read simple stories while children point out what they recognize in English –the color “red”, “a banana”, “a bird.” When the story is finished, each child climbs into bed and sits, ready for nighttime prayers and thanks, for another day of fun and love. The girls want the light (from their kerosene lamp) to be brighter, enough to see their dolls and caress them to sleep. The boys are laughing, telling stories of the day. One more reminder that it’s time to be quiet and sleep – “Lala salama, ndoto njema (Goodnight, sweet dreams).” And then, finally, it’s quiet, until the roosters crow again.

*Lisa Desrochers was a volunteer at the Children's Village from September 2006-December 2006. In January 2007, Lisa Desrochers became our Interim Volunteer Coordinator at the Children's Village.*



## A Letter from India Howell cont.

in our new infirmary and welcomed Dr Frank Artress and his team. Twice each month we will hold 2 day clinics to provide free medical care for the people in our neighboring villages. This is a big leap from the chaotic impromptu clinics held in my dining room with kids running in and out. In addition this new improved program gives us the ability to keep proper medical files on each patient and perform a proper triage to allow Dr Frank to see as many patients as possible during each visit. Our village is

getting healthy!

We now have 9 buildings finished and occupied. We have 3 Children's Houses; 4 buildings for staff and volunteers; our Main Office Building and a Storage Facility. We hope the Recreation Hall and Library will be completed by the end of April. Work on my house has started and should be completed by August. I guess I'm going to have to start thinking about packing up my 17 children for the big move!

I confess that my heart is of

two minds on the move. I cannot wait to have all of us in one location, yet it will be sad to say goodbye to our leaky old farm house for that is where all of our dreams for the Children's Village began to take shape. I can already imagine when our original 17 children will ask to take a walk up the hill to see the old house and ramble down memory lane a bit.

As I wrote that last paragraph, I got a bit sentimental. To think that just 3 1/2 years ago, this was all just a dream!

Today I look out my office window and see 9 buildings. I see hordes of children laughing and playing. I see volunteers and staff giving their time and their hearts to our work! And I think of all of you who made this dream come true for me and the dozens and dozens of children whose lives we are helping. They say that you can never say thank you enough and it's true. When I see all of this, all I want to do is to shout out loud THANK YOU!!!

## A Letter from Nano Chatfield, Chairman, Board of Trustees

This January and February I volunteered at the Children's Village along with Peggy Wiles, one of our Trustees. We both witnessed how the Children's Village community has evolved since our first Children's Houses opened in June 2006. We have 41 children in our care: 24 of whom arrived in June or August. The Serengeti House and the Tarangire House are now families—each with 12 children who will grow up together and who have already bonded as we watch them taking care of one another on the playground, at school, AND on the soccer field. Many of these children didn't speak Swahili or English, had never seen running water or electricity, had never been to school or owned a pair of shoes or a book. Now they sing their ABC's while brushing their teeth, ask our volunteers to read to them, ask our Stu-

dent Teachers to tell them a story or to play soccer with them.

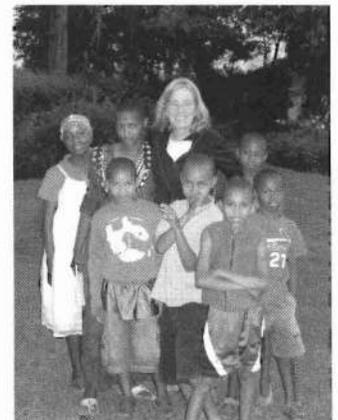
Our volunteers also provide the 'extra attention', our children need, teaching them new songs and games to play; reminding them to listen and share; spending individual time with a child whose feelings are hurt. Often when volunteers return to the U.S., they e-mail us how much they miss their kids! Clearly, a loving bond is established; as each of us develops a special friendship with one of our kids who we grow attached to and call our own!

The Children's Village is no longer just a dream or a construction site: it's a family and a village—on a given day, there may be up to 80 people working, volunteering, and caring for our children. I am amazed at how much India, our Director

and Founder, and Peter, our Deputy Executive Director, and our staff have accomplished in the last year. Although the Children's Village is still under construction, we are now living in or using 9 buildings, which our children and our staff now call home.

The Children's Village is a powerful presence in our village because we have hired many of the villagers for construction; maintenance; cleaning; as well as for cooks and housemothers. Some of whom have never had a job before in their lives, except, perhaps to pick coffee beans. We have also contributed to our local primary school, where 30 of our children attend, by supplying volunteers and Tanzanian Student Teachers to teach in the overcrowded classrooms. We are now providing services to our community by offering the

hot lunch program at the school as well as free medical care 4 days a month at the Children's Village. In a rural community like ours, where a bar of soap or a roll of toilet paper is a luxury, our contributions and our presence, have surpassed many of their dreams. Of course, none of this work would be possible without our friends and their friends and their friends who have given so generously to us so that we can provide for the children we serve.



## Asante Sana!!

No matter how many times we say 'thank you' to our volunteers, it will never be enough...for our appreciation for their hard work and loving hours they spend with our children. We are always surprised as we work, live, and eat side by side with our volunteers how they make friends easily with us and inspire us with their energy and ideas, and how they learn to "improvise" without the necessities and luxuries of home. Our world is enriched by their friendship, their laughter, their suggestions,



*Mr. and Mrs Peter Leon Mmassy*

and their affection. Our world is a bit better after each volunteer leaves---whether by a child who has learned his letters or learned how to sew or to sing a new song.

We'd like to thank our volunteers for giving so much to the children we serve. Thank you, Ashley Frechette, Boston, MA; Patti Shaw, Scarborough, ME; Lisa Desrochers, West Barnstable, MA; Tim Shields, Seattle, WA; Meghan Lind, Boston, MA; Kimberly Bakker, San Francisco, CA; Krista Tye, Las Vegas, NV; Sue Harrington-Spier, Bury St. Edmonds, England; Nano Chatfield, Cape Elizabeth, ME; Peggy Wiles, North Yarmouth, ME; Lynn Miller, McLean, VA; Laura Armitage, Richmond Hills, VA; Pamela Murray, Brisbane, Australia; Vanessa Murray, Brisbane, Australia; Kris Quinn, Gig Harbor, WA; Jennie Schueler, Brooklyn, NY; Donna Jackson, Brooklyn, NY; Katie Cosgrove, Irving, TX; Laurie Lawrence, Denver, CO; Holly, Prentice and Ramsay Stabler, Denver, CO; Beth Laskin, East Chatham, NY; Christina Sidoti, NY,NY; Elizabeth Vance, Charlottesville, VA; Yvonne Feinstein, Old Brookville, NY; Caitlin Storey, England.

We'd also like to thank Vanessa Murray for shipping 84 boxes of donations. Vanessa distributed 450 backpacks to all the students at Geytighi Primary School in April.

## Family News

We are happy to announce that Peter Leon Mmassy, Deputy Director of the Children's Village married Grace Christopher Lyimo on January 6, 2007. Peter and Grace met while studying at The Community Development Institute in 2001. Since graduating, Grace has been working in Arusha at the Akiba Commercial Bank. While working at the bank, Grace discovered she loves working with numbers. Which leads to more BIG NEWS!! Grace joined our team as the bookkeeper for the Children's Village in March.

We are happy to announce that Habiba Msee Gau, one of our cooks, had a baby boy, Lemomo on September 18, 2006.

We are happy to announce that Godwin Lemomo our night askari became the proud father of Logolie (boy). Godwin and his wife, Ndanin now have 3 children, Baraka age 6, Jayson age 3 and Logolie. Godwin's wife and 3 children live in Maasai Land in an area called Eiselale.

Our volunteer Louise Lamphere Beryl and Louis Beryl were married in February 2007.

We are sad to share that Babu Raymond, our cook, passed away in February of 2007.



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