

TANZANIAN CHILDREN'S FUND

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Spring 2012

Mission Statement

The Tanzanian Children's Fund provides support for the Rift Valley Children's Village, an orphanage in the Karatu region of Tanzania, and other community based programs that improve the lives of the marginalized children of Tanzania.

The Rift Valley Children's Village

The Children's Village provides a home, family and community for orphaned and vulnerable children. We prepare them to become informed, resourceful and responsible citizens in their community and Tanzania.

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Lucia, Rahim and Elibaraka

The Tanzanian Children's Fund is a registered 501(c)(3) not for profit.

"He is a really good teacher, Mama!" By India Howell, Director

We tumbled into the New Year full speed ahead with 98 kids who had to be equipped, supplied and shipped off to secondary school within the first two weeks of January. It really is quite a sight to see the truck rolling in for days on end loaded with cases and cases of toilet paper, soap, toothpaste and everything else you can imagine – including mattresses! Yup, we even have to supply those for most of the schools.

Michael Sarja ranked number one in Karatu District on the Standard 7 National Exam last year. Due to his stellar performance, he was offered a spot at THE premier secondary school in Northern Tanzania, Il Boru Secondary School. He was very excited about this great honor, but once there he developed serious cold feet. After about a week at school he realized that all of his buddies from RVCV were going to be together at Edmund Rice while he was flying solo. He called me twice the day I was driving

the kids to Edmund Rice – poor kid was so homesick! Thankfully by the time I saw Michael during Parents Day in late February he was doing great!! He has made friends and LOVES the school because they have so much time to study. I know – hard to believe I have a child who loves to study!



Michael Sarja

Our Student Teacher interviews took place in mid-February. The field of applicants was fabulous and included many girls! We selected our five (3 young men and 2 young women) for this year. What we are especially excited about is that three are Gyetighi graduates and the other two are from Oldeani and Meali, neighboring primary schools. It has always been our goal to have all student teachers selected from our immediate catchment area and we are finally there! They started their train-

ing the following week and have already made an impression. After their first day my twins, Eriki and Geriki, came home gushing about their new teacher and how beautiful and smart she is. At dinner the same night, Ester was so excited to tell me that her new student teacher helped her understand a math formula for the first time. Her words were music to my ears, "He is a really good teacher, Mama!"

On the community front, we

Continued on page 2

Drilling Begins!

To ensure long term water security for the Rift Valley Children's Village, an important goal for 2012 is to complete the drilling of a bore hole (well). Thanks to generous donors, we are able to undertake this project. Following is India's progress report from February.

With the long rains on the hori-

zon, our managing director, Peter Leon, felt that we should make haste on drilling the bore hole. The giant truck and rig arrived and the drilling began! And then...it stopped. The drill bit developed a crack, so a spare had to be shuttled in from Arusha. Classic! The next morning, the drillers hit water at 114 meters. While the draw

is not huge (5,000 liters per hour), it is enough to meet our needs and the needs of Gyetighi Primary School. The drillers will continue to work until they reach approximately 170 meters to be sure there is not a stronger source before we "call it a day." This is all good news as we will not need to have such a powerful pump and

Continued on page 2

“He’s a really good teacher, Mama!” cont.

have made great strides forward with our initiative to address the problem of child abuse in our area. During a school committee meeting last week, the members were so charged up they immediately accepted the program targeting this issue that our nurse Sheyanga suggested!

With leadership from the school committee, each sub-village has selected one or two women to act as leaders against child abuse. Their homes will be the “safe haven” for kids. These women will also be trained on how to support and counsel the child until authorities can be contacted and action taken against the perpetrator(s). This is very exciting! Our community leaders are empowered and ready to act independently to bring about positive change in the area. The biggest challenge will be to help the enthusiastic supporters of this initiative manage their expectations. Changing attitudes and behaviors that have been a part of the culture for generations will take years. However, this important first step is

something they can take enormous pride in!

Construction on the Gyetighi Teachers’ House, Young Men’s House and new Rec Room is flying along. By my reckoning, we should have the plaster on the walls at the exact moment that the long rains begin – meaning it will take weeks or months for the it to dry! Such is life here in Africa. The goal is to have the young men’s house open when the secondary school boys come home for their long June vacation. Say a prayer that the rains hold off for a bit!

Aside from all of this, the days look much as you might imagine: Mad dash in the morning to get through breakfast and chores before school, Nick (Mr. Beecher to the kids) lecturing everyone in the office before school about not eating their pens, FAME clinic going on with Kira (our Village dog) coming up to kiss all the patients, Grace headed to school for a parent/teacher

meeting about our rather naughty Lucia, me up in the present room sorting through donations for this weekend’s birthday celebration, Peter working diligently with the contractor on supply lists, and Habiba in the kitchen making lunch for the volunteers with LOTS of oil to clog our arteries! Just another day in heaven!!

Contact India at: india@habari.co.tz



India Howell with the 2012 Standard 7 students on the first day of school!
(India Lemomo, Ester, Marietha, Christina, Isaka, JoJo and Nicola)

Student Spotlight: Elibariki Thomas

Whenever you gather a group of young people together, there are always a few shining stars that stand out from the crowd. Elibariki Thomas is one of our stars. He does not seek the spotlight or try to control the crowd, yet you can’t help but notice his quiet confidence, beautiful smile, and determination to forge a future life quite different than what his family has known for generations. This steadfast determination has not only helped him succeed at school, but to learn to play the guitar!



When I asked him if he thought his life would be different than the one his parents had led, he answered with a resounding yes!

“Due to my parents lack of education, our life was very hard. I know that when I have a family one day life will not be as difficult because I will have the education I need to succeed!”

Thanks to the Tanzanian Children’s Fund and his sponsor, Laura Armitage, Elibariki is well on his way to success. Scoring Division 2 on the Form 4 National Exam places him firmly on the path to reaching his ultimate goal of becoming a doctor.

Drilling Begins! cont.

generator given this new depth.

The drill site has been quite the source of curiosity for everyone at the Village. The few Mamas brave enough to go see what is happening dash away after a few minutes to escape the noise and fumes. The men, on the other hand, are drawn like bees to honey and become instantly mesmerized – they cannot be dragged away! When the machine goes off and they all head up the hill (covered in dirt and soot), they are smiling

like kids at Christmas.

Thank you all for making this project possible and for making ALL the men on my staff smile!

Cheers,
India



The trucks carrying in the drill!



The drill bit at the site of the bore hole

A Flash in the Pan? By Peggy Bacon, Chair

Why is it that many people feel comfortable and compelled giving to museums, hospitals, libraries, colleges, the symphony and parks? (I do). Is it that century old buildings exude staying power, history and confidence? Is it that these venerable institutions improve our neighborhoods? Is it that underwriting cancer research, cleaning up a park or supporting the oboist have visible and measurable results? Why don't we feel the same way about "fixing poverty?" Is it not measurable? Is it that a shelter in St. Louis or an orphanage in Africa can't make a dent in such an enormous problem? Is a gift that eases the burden of poverty just a flash in the pan?

Approaching our 10th anniversary, the Tanzanian Children's Fund with its partner, the Rift Valley Children's Village, is making a difference in an important neighborhood in our world. TCF supporters have confidence that their money goes where we say it's going: the distance from donor to child is very short! This confidence translates into staying power and visible results.

As Nick Beecher describes in his article, five years ago, our local primary school was among the worst in

Tanzania. In December, we heard the good news that by passing the national exam, all



Peggy with Mole and Paulo

Standard VII's are now eligible to apply for secondary school. India, Peter Leon, RVCV's managing director, Nick and others have worked hard for these honors; India always said that taking baby steps to earn the trust of village leaders and school officials would pay off. She was right. These students and families will help Tanzania shake its membership in the "bottom billion" club. Definitely measurable results.

On the health front: after the annual health screening, our visiting team of Canadian doctors announced that "the overall health of the people in your area is so far and away better than when we first came in 2006 that we would like to start on a new area next year." When asked if this sort of improvement was common, the doctors said "not in our experience have we ever seen such sustained improvement." The Tanzanian Children's Fund has passed the "acid test" of an organization that works in the developing world. Between the ongoing clinics with FAME (fame.org) and Sheyanga Beecher, our resident nurse, serious cases are being seen before they become life threatening; education about nutrition and hygiene have made it normal for children and families in our area to be healthy. Just like our own children. More visible results.

The TCF microfinance program has been breaking new ground for three years now. Our latest initiative: after a beekeeping workshop, six local clients have signed up to form a beekeeping cooperative to produce honey for local safari lodges.



Volunteer Andrew Petersen demonstrates safety precautions of beekeeping

The work proceeds in spite of issues we rarely encounter in the developed world. Like water pipes trampled by trespassing elephants. Or when 5 year old Josephat almost died from asthma, just like his mother. Or when a truck with building supplies turned over on the road. Or when Asau, in Form I now, was in the hospital to remove the funzas from his feet. Or when teachers spent more time drinking tea than teaching. There will always be problems to solve. But with our history, confidence and staying power we will continue to improve this crucial neighborhood.

Please join us in celebrating and honoring a venerable neighborhood institution, the Tanzanian Children's Fund. Bravo India, Peter and all our supporters. No flash in the pan; we are here to stay.

Contact Peggy at:
peggybacon60@gmail.com

A Day in the Lift of a Volunteer By Louisa Creighton-Smith, Volunteer

Louisa is a volunteer from Yarmouth, Maine who is spending two months at RVCV working as the preschool teacher.

We are making major headway in preschool, and thankfully my headaches are dwindling. On Monday I could barely hear my own voice over the blocks being thrown around, so I decided it was time to implement a job chart. The jobs are simple and include making sure the shoes are lined up, weather person, calendar person and song leader. I gave them a stick, said this is

MAGIC and no one else can talk when you are talking. Voila! It worked today, fingers crossed for tomorrow.

I am beginning to pick up on more Swahili and that is also easing the strain on my voice after every morning. So far I have mastered important commands like sit, come, now, no, and off which is making quite a difference. For example the most common phrase is "aaa atcha, or njo sawa!" translation = ah, STOP and COME NOW.

This morning I think I zapped the entire Internet available by loading a quick YouTube video of the letter "O" for the kids. They



Louisa and Neema

swarmed the iPad and were practically drooling over the video. Thanks to Steve Jobs, my Tanzanian preschool class can now rap a song about the letter "O".

Family News: Welcome Megan, Chris and Ashby!

In the past year we have welcomed three new staff members to the RVCV family. In October, Megan Van Woezik joined us as our new Volunteer Coordinator, followed by Chris Isele as our Microfinance Director in November. In February, a former volunteer, Ashby Brown, joined us as our Communications and Sponsorship Coordinator. We are so lucky to have these fantastic new additions on our team!!

Megan Van Woezik: Volunteer Coordinator

My name is Megan and I am from Douglas, Ontario, Canada. I like iced lattes from Africafe in Arusha, writing stories about my travel adventures and searching for elephants in the valleys around RVCV. My previous experience working as Project Leader for the Katimavik youth volunteer service program on Prince Edward Island helped to prepare me for work with volunteers in other countries. My overseas work includes a position as a Progressive Education Facilitator at the Darunsikkalai School for Innovative Learning in Bangkok, Thailand, and an internship in Teaching and Community Development with Tomorrow's Youth Organization in Nablus, Palestine.



Megan with Dickson and Nuru

These positions have affirmed my love for working with children and with volunteers who are trying to make a difference in communities at home and abroad. My favorite thing about living here are the goodnight hugs from the kids! The people at Rift Valley Children's Village have become my second family and I am so lucky to have the opportunity to be a part of it.



Ashby and Natalie

Ashby Brown: Sponsorship and Communications Coordinator

My name is Ashby Brown and I am the Sponsorship and Communication Coordinator at RVCV! I grew up in Westport, Connecticut and went to college at the University of the Pacific in California. I first came to the Children's Village in 2010 as a volunteer and loved it so much that when the opportunity came to return, I jumped! I have been at RVCV for about three months now and have loved every second of it. The energy of the Village is contagious!

Chris Isele: Microfinance Director

My name is Christopher Isele and I am the new Microfinance Director with RVCV. I grew up in New Jersey and received my BS from West Virginia University and my

MBA from Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School in Leuven, Belgium. My professional experience includes working for the Department of Environmental Protection, the School of Life in Honduras, and working to localize supply chains for gold mines in Ghana.

My favorite part of the life at RVCV is playing soccer with the boys on Sunday and the reward that I feel after receiving positive feedback from clients of the micro-finance program.



Chris with Ema

Other RVCV Senior Staff Members:



Grace with Lucy, Ester and India (Gracie in the back!)

Lots of love for Jonathan!



Sheyanga working at a Gyetighi health clinic



Volunteers Kristen and Carolyn work with the little ones in Toddler Time!

Sponsorship at RVCV

To sponsor a child through the Tanzanian Children's Fund is to give a child the opportunity to go to school, receive a healthy diet, have access to medical care, a home and in short, have another chance in life.

As a sponsor, we will send you photos, artwork and letters from your child and you will have the opportunity to also send letters, birthday and Christmas presents and hopefully one day visit! Our hope is that you and your sponsored child will develop a lasting friendship.

Sponsorship Levels:

\$150 per year: to provide all costs for primary education

\$500 per year: to cover all costs for a healthy and balanced diet

\$1,000 per year: to provide a child with a full year of school, a healthy diet, clothing, medical care and a home with us

\$2,000 per year: to provide all costs associated with boarding secondary school for one of our older children

To learn more about our sponsorship program, sign up to become a sponsor, or correspond regarding your sponsored child, please contact Ashby Brown at:

sponsor@tanzanianchildrensfund.org



Report Card: Gyetighi Primary School By Nick Beecher, Education Coordinator

For the first time in the school's history, one hundred percent of Gyetighi Primary School Standard Seven students passed the National Exam in 2011. The exam results were announced when school was closed during the December holiday. Extremely proud of the students' success, I found it very difficult to wait patiently until the first Parents' Day in January to reveal the results to the community.



Students eat free lunch in the St. George's Café, built with funds raised by former volunteer Linnie Gummo.

One afternoon under the hot sun, teachers, members of the school committee, village leaders, parents, guardians, and school supporters, all gathered in the school courtyard to welcome in the 2012 school year. As I looked around, I was impressed with our largest parent turnout yet and honored to stand among the best teachers in the area, including a very dedicated Head Master. People were attentive and waiting to hear how Gyetighi Primary School was changing the community they live in.



RVCV kindergarten students

I began my speech to the community by posting the following numbers on the wall behind me:

2010: 8 - 99 - 1,870

2011: 3 - 35 - 235

I explained the first batch of numbers: In 2010, Gyetighi Primary School was the 8th ranked school in Karatu ward, the 99th ranked school in the Arusha region, and the 1,870th school in the country. The villagers cheered, and hollered. I smiled as it was hard to convince the crowd that there was better news coming. I then explained the second batch of numbers: In 2011, Gyetighi Primary School was the 3rd ranked school in the Karatu ward, the 35th ranked school in the Arusha region, and the 235th school in the country.

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Different from the first response, this time there was silence. Parents looked at each other, confused, and doubtful. Then someone gasped, one person leaned over and explained to their neighbor, and slowly as people began to understand the significance of the results, people began clapping. The news brings hope to the villagers to start thinking beyond the next dry season. Their hope lies in their children and for some at the meeting, the hope became palpable.

In the past year, we've built new classrooms and teachers' houses, hired new teachers, began new curriculums, bought new books and desks, built a dining hall, and increased opportunities for teacher professional development. The goal is to provide a quality primary education for all children in the area. As more and more students pass the Standard 7 National Exam, this is becoming a reality. Before, parents had to worry about whether their child's teacher would show up in the classroom. Now, parents must start thinking about how to pay for secondary school, an option that was not viable several years ago. For there is no doubt, Gyetighi Primary School students are well on their way to becoming prepared for secondary school and ultimately a successful life beyond.

Higher Education by the Numbers:

- 98 sponsored secondary school students
- 8 sponsored students have completed secondary school and now attend university on government scholarship
- 16 have completed their secondary education and now have full time jobs
- 4 have completed their secondary education and now attend advanced vocational training.
- 2 have completed their secondary education and are working towards their primary school teaching certificates



RVCV secondary school graduates!

Meet Boni!

Boniface and his older brother Yohani lost their mother in July of 2008. The two boys were living with their aunt and her four children in the nearby village of Ascona. We decided to welcome the boys to the Rift Valley Children's Village in June of 2009 because their aunt could no longer provide for so many children on her own.

When Boni arrived at the Children's Village, he was malnourished and could not stand or walk on his own. A year later he was running everywhere!

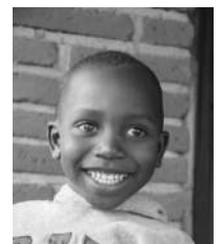
Boni is currently in preschool at RVCV and spends all of his time with his best friend Dickson—the two boys are inseparable!



Boni (front left) with Mama India and his preschool class

To become a sponsor for Boni, please contact Ashby!

Boni loves hugs and is a favorite of the Mamas in Rubondo House because of his big smile. His favorite thing to do is play with the big yellow dump trucks and color in the library.





TANZANIAN CHILDREN'S FUND

Contact Maddy Gordon, Manager of U.S. Operations, in our office at 617-913-3763 or by email at info@tanzanianchildrensfund.org.

Lifting Lives and Building Futures



Tarangire House Family



Josephat, Paulo and Boaz



Lucia



Neema



Coletha



Volunteer Jill Kellogg teaches gym at Gyetighi



Baby Kizzie



RVCV Standard 2 Class

Asante Sana to our recent volunteers!

Our volunteers are vital in the success of our mission at the Rift Valley Children's Village. They spend their days playing soccer, going on nature walks, building block castles, coloring, giving endless hugs and forming lift-long friendships. But most of all, they make our children feel special and part of a loving family. Just as our children become part of the RVCV family as soon as they arrive at the Children's Village, so do our volunteers. Karibu (welcome) to all of our new and returning volunteers. We truly appreciate all that you do!

Asante sana (thank you) Ashley Main, ME; Courtney Bryan, SC; Jim and Clarke Ryan, NY; Rachel Johnson, WA; Susannah Johnson, VT; Maria Anselmi, WY; Linnie Gummo, RI; Alice and Jane-Eliza Chisholm, GA; Constance and Drew Silverman, NJ; Bettina and Olivia Giordano, NJ; Yvonne and Andrew Feinstein, NY; Jane Hubley, ME; Alex and Hannah von Hoffman, TN; Kristian Blum, NY; Michelle Russell, NY; Kim and Nicole Lomba, South Africa; Bill Denning, PA; Cindy, Shelley and Lauren Lapinski, PA; Margo Bombardiere, NY; Dave Kurtman, CA; Lisa Desrochers, MA; Chloe Piehl; Molly McPhee, NH; Tammy Burden, NE; Mackenzie Davis, MA; Jake and Sarah Marston, VT; Brook Everts, MA; Meghan Bryan, VT; Mary-Curtis Gramley, OR; Carol Holm, OR; Sam Moni, NY; Kristy LeMond, WA; Tom Scarborough, CT; Samantha Halebian, NY; Dottie Fromal, PA; Jill Kellogg, PA; Bridget McNamara, PA; Jeff Robich, PA; Courtney McMahon, NY; Carolyn Hunter, NY; Kristin Hinrichs, NY; Jim and Barbara Schubauer, NY; Sue Scott, Canada; Eleanor Doar, IL; Brett Howley, MA; Louisa Creighton-Smith, ME; Muffy Fox, CT; Taylor Biancone, NY; Aalia Ratani, Canada; Shanif Punja, Canada.

*We also want to thank those of you who hosted events and gatherings in 2011 that allowed us to share our story with friends and family and reconnect with those who share our love for the Rift Valley Children's Village. **Thank you** to Meredith and Sharon Bowen, Sallie Bear, and Sue Hollingsworth, OH; Rob Rosser, Bermuda; Cynthia Ballantyne, Donna Storer, and Cynthia Gallagher, MA; Kim and Debbie Chatfield, ME; Torrington Rotary, CT; Caroline and Scott Muller, Ashby Brown, Alison Woolworth, and Nina Timpson Hilbert, NY; Jody Drake, DC; Gabriel and Stephanie Acosta-Mikulasek, MD; Carrie Polk, MO.*

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