



TANZANIAN CHILDREN'S FUND

2017 Spring Newsletter

Lifting Lives Building Futures Lasting Change



India is coming to the US!

India will be visiting the following cities this May.

If you're interested in attending an event or connecting with her, please email Amber for details:
amber@tanzanianchildrensfund.org

May 7-10 San Francisco, CA

May 11-12 Los Angeles, CA

May 14 Stonington, CT

May 15-19 Boston, MA

May 22-26 New York, NY



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The Ripple Effect

By India Howell, Founder and Executive Director

When we held our first parent-teacher conference at Gyetighi Primary School ten years ago, I was shocked to see only a handful of people show up. It was hard for me to imagine parents not being interested in the opportunity to support their children and see firsthand what kind of education they were receiving. Clearly, I was new in town.

I slowly grew to realize that it wasn't that the parents didn't care about their children; they just didn't know how to turn that care into action. I decided to lead by example and demonstrate different ways parents could advocate for their children's rights. I became known for pulling "Mama Indias" when confronting treatment that was unacceptable. If a teacher repeatedly failed to show up for class, they would quickly learn that absenteeism was no longer tolerated. If a child was sick and neglected, I made sure they got proper care. If a young girl was being abused, we did whatever was needed to ensure her safety. I fought tooth and nail and shocked many with my determination. My relentlessness got the attention of countless district officials as I continued to push for the rights of the children in our community, schools, and health clinic.

It turns out that the parents in our community were also paying attention, and a shift in parent engagement was taking place. Attendance at parent-teacher conferences skyrocketed, and I now watch with a smile as parents pull their own "Mama Indias" when standing up for what they believe is right for their child.

Continued on next page...

Brighter Futures—One Starfish at a Time

By Peter Leon Mmassy, Tanzanian Managing Director



Peter, Paskalina and Janu

Have you heard the parable of the man and the starfish?

One day a man was walking on the beach and came across hundreds of starfish that had been stranded on shore. They were drying out and slowly perishing, so one by one, the man began picking them up and throwing them back into the sea.

A young boy saw him doing this and asked the man "What are you doing? You'll never be able to throw all of the starfish back in!" "Maybe not," said the man, "but at least I can save this one," and gently tossed the starfish into the waves.

This story has always held a lot of meaning for me, because, the truth is, once upon a time I was a starfish. While I was lucky to be born into a loving family, "easy" is the last word I would use to describe my childhood. I grew up in a mud hut in a small town called Mtu Wambu, where my father was a farmer and a butcher. He worked day and night, but we still lived in extreme poverty and struggled to get by on less than 70 cents a day. We were poor, but happy. All that changed when I was ten years old.

Continued on next page...

Ripple Effect (continued)



India with Doctor, Riziki and Lucy

We always hoped that our work would have a ripple effect beyond our Children's Village. We have seen this vision come true through our work at Gyetighi Primary and Oldeani Secondary Schools, our Rural Community Health Clinic, and our Microfinance program. But I never could have imagined witnessing such a powerful change taking place amongst local parents, who are now leading their own fights to protect children's rights.

The theme of this newsletter is the incremental impact of our programs which, even when serving one person, ultimately affect many. This element of sustainability not only gives me hope for future generations of children, but it also stands as one of our proudest achievements.

India

Starfish (continued)

When I was ten, my mother got sick with cancer, and my responsibilities shifted from being a student to being the primary caretaker for my two younger sisters. My only opportunity for learning became rereading the textbooks I had collected in primary school.

Two years after I had to leave school, I was lucky to meet a man who saw potential in me. He offered me a scholarship to attend secondary school, and with that gesture of kindness, I became one of the starfish that was thrown back into the water and given a second chance.

I was a starfish again when I met a traveler on safari who offered to help cover my tuition expenses, allowing me to fulfill my lifelong dream of attending university. My final "starfish moment" came in 2002, when India asked me to help her start the Tanzanian Children's Fund, enabling me to pursue my life's work of making childhood easier and brighter for hundreds of children in Tanzania.

While you may only be able to save one starfish in your life, the one you save could go on to help hundreds of others. I know that one day, I hope to see our children at the Rift Valley Children's Village saving their own starfish, and watch as the impact of our work continues to ripple out into the world.



India & Peter with our two newest "starfish," Flavi & Nuru

Massy

Become a Sponsor. Shape a Future.



Faraja and Ester

Not everyone has the courage to be like Peter and India and take on the responsibility of parenting 97 children. But we *can* all help shape our children's futures and ensure their success by becoming sponsors.

Sponsors are friends, mentors and role models to our children. They help them feel loved and allow them to dream big. Most importantly, in a country where higher education is the exception instead of the norm, sponsors are what stand between a life working in the coffee fields and the opportunity to continue school and achieve one's full potential. One helping hand can make all of the difference in a life, and ultimately have a huge ripple effect.

To date, TCF's sponsors have given the gift of higher education to over 70 young adults, making the impossible, possible.

If you're interested in becoming a sponsor, contact our Sponsorship & Communications Coordinator, Seana, at sponsor@tanzanianchildrensfund.org

Helping Moms Stay Healthy

When a mother walks into the Rural Community Health Clinic seeking medical care for her child, Nurse Gretchen doesn't just see an opportunity to treat the child, she also sees the opportunity to improve the health of his caretaker.

In addition to being treated for any current health issues, every mother or father accompanying a child to our clinic receives a dose of essential multivitamins and a deworming treatment to build their immunity and rid them of any parasitic infections.

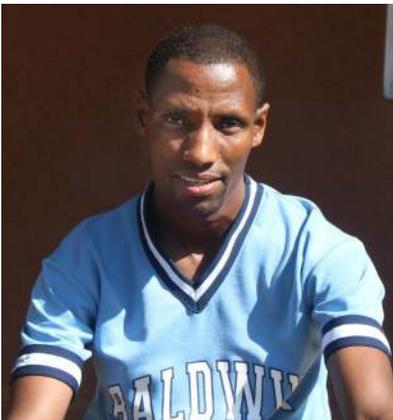
“I know that our community’s children will have brighter futures if their caretakers stay healthy and are physically able to continue providing for them.”

Caring for and educating parents on how they can give their families a healthier life at home has an impact that extends well beyond the exam room walls. By creating healthy parents, Nurse Gretchen is also creating healthy children, bright students, and stronger communities.



Nurse Gretchen never misses an opportunity to provide care to both patients and parents

Paying It Forward at Oldeani Secondary School



Vincent Thlemu is a perfect example of TCF's work coming full circle. During his first year of secondary school, Vincent's legal guardian passed away, leaving him unable to afford to go to school. Not knowing what else to do, he went to see a woman who he had heard was helping hard-working students continue their education. After telling "Mama India" his story, Vincent came to work at RVCV as a student teacher at Gyetighi Primary School (GPS). Vincent worked hard as a student teacher at GPS and spent hours practicing his English conversation skills. By second semester, his English had improved dramatically and he had a sponsor who was helping him go back to secondary school.

Because of his time as a student teacher at Gyetighi Primary School, Vincent has remained loyal to GPS and frequently returned on school breaks to help in whatever way he could. When talking with us, Vincent explained that it was a privilege to be able to give back so that more students like him would have a chance to receive a high-quality education.

After completing his teaching degree, Vincent's dedication to his community led him straight back to GPS to teach English and Science to Standard 7 students. Teaching at this level is a tremendous responsibility, as Standard 7 students are preparing for the rigorous National Exam, which determines whether or not they can continue on to secondary school. Vincent was up for the challenge, and was proud **when his class not only reached a 100% pass rate, but dramatically improved their scores.** Last year, 37 of his English students received an A grade and 17 of his science students received top marks!

Vincent is quick to point out that GPS is a unique school where the teachers function as a team and are devoted to improving the education of their students through sharing ideas and learning from each others. Vincent is now taking what he learned at Gyetighi and applying it at Oldeani Secondary School (OSS). Instilling the same sense of teamwork at OSS is challenging, but Vincent is optimistic. He believes that providing additional teacher training and educating parents on the importance of being involved in their children's education will go a long way toward ensuring that everyone is working together to improve student outcomes at Oldeani.



Vincent teaching geography at OSS

Independence Through Technology



Jenna works with GPS' Headmaster, Mr. Daffi

Investing in teacher training is one of the many ways we are working to improve the quality of education at our schools. In order to build our teachers' computer literacy, Jenna Thompson, RVCV's English as a Second Language teacher, has designed and launched computer classes for a group of teachers at Gyetighi Primary School. Teachers are learning basic computer vocabulary, how to use a trackpad on a laptop, typing skills, and how to navigate Microsoft Word and Excel.

With their new computer skills, teachers will be able to create their own attendance sheets, exams, and schedules, freeing up time to develop innovative lesson plans and access online education tools like TabLab.

We need more laptops in order to expand our program! If you have a gently used laptop you're willing to donate, please contact Jenna at education@tanzanianchildrensfund.org for more information.

TCF's Growing Family of Volunteers

Each year, the Rift Valley Children's Village relies on over 60 volunteers to help keep activities running and make sure that every one of our kids receives the love and personal attention they deserve. Volunteers develop lasting relationships with the children they help care for and many continue to come back year after year.

RVCV volunteers are also our best ambassadors, as they are quick to share their natural enthusiasm for the work being done at the Children's Village. Word of mouth has led to an ever-growing family of volunteers as friends, families and neighbors become eager to see for themselves what the fuss is all about.



Dale with Kizzie, Flavi and Elvis

"When my son Kyle first told me that he had submitted an application to volunteer in Tanzania for five months, I honestly was not thrilled. But when he started sharing stories about the children and what his days were like, the joy and excitement in his voice made me understand what attracted him to volunteering at RVCV. By the time he was back in the US, I had already made my arrangements for my first volunteer trip. I loved it so much that I just completed an additional three-month stay!"

- Dale Mallet

Interested in becoming a volunteer? Contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Rose, at volunteer@tanzanianchildrensfund.org.

Investing in Mery's Future

Meet Mery, one of our most enterprising microfinance clients. Mery joined our program in 2012 and used her first loan of \$120 to build a small shop in Oldeani.

Before opening her business, Mery lived in a small hut with her three children and struggled to get by. Because she didn't have her own source of income, Mery often had to wait until her husband returned from a week of working to feed her family. Five years later, Mery's shop is one of the most successful businesses in Oldeani. But it didn't come without a lot of hard work and support along the way. Mery has been an active participant in our business training courses and has benefited from access to increasingly larger loans. Last year, she also sought to expand her skill set and diversify her income by joining our handicrafts program.

Mery's increased income has allowed her to independently feed her family, build a safer home, and send her first daughter to college, providing her family with a future they never imagined possible.



Mery Emanuel, entrepreneur

TCF’s Malengo Mamas & Babas Program

Have you heard of TCF’s Malengo Mamas and Babas? These unsung heroes are perfect examples of how “the ripple effect” is taking place in our community. The men and women in this group volunteer their time to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in their villages. *Malengo* means “we have a plan” in Swahili and is used as a phrase of empowerment. Over the past five years, TCF has supported the group’s goals by providing them with training in child welfare, mental health, and children’s rights.

“Most importantly, the Mamas and Babas are a constant, trusted and respected voice in their villages, who speak out for children’s rights and fight for their safety and care.”



Mamas & Babas Meeting

Over the past 6 months alone, we have seen the number of participants in this program almost double. But it’s the group’s *impact* that is growing even faster. Leading the Malengo Mama’s and Baba’s fight to change the community’s perception of children’s rights, is RVCV’s Counselor and Child Protection Officer, Betty Mwaikuka. Betty, whose job is to ensure that all 800 students at Gyetighi Primary and Oldeani Secondary Schools feel safe and secure both at home and at school, works with Malengo group members to provide immediate support to students who have been neglected or abused.

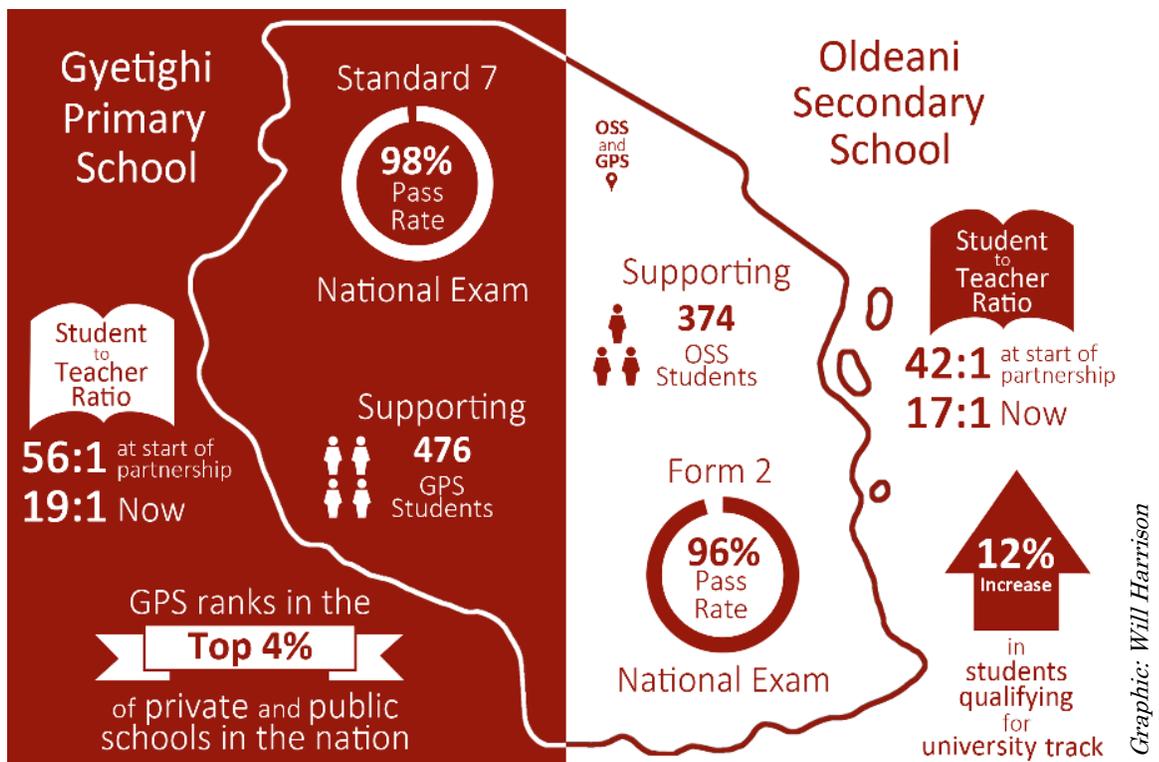
Under Betty’s guidance, the Mamas and the Babas also serve as advocates for local students by actively monitoring children’s health conditions, watching for signs of physical and sexual abuse, and reporting any signs of wrongdoing to the counselors at RVCV and the office of Child Welfare and Rights in Karatu. They educate community members on strategies for ending cycles of abuse and provide parents with information on how to best care for their children, including lessons on improving their children’s hygiene, first aid for wounds and injuries, and disease prevention.



Mama Lightness, Betty & Dada Maggie

With Betty providing counseling at school and the Mamas and Babas continuing that work in their villages, we are helping provide all of the children in our community with a solid and safe foundation on which to lead happy, healthy lives.

TCF Education Numbers at a Glance



Graphic: Will Harrison

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TANZANIAN CHILDREN'S FUND

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Calling all volunteers! We need volunteers in Tanzania for the months of November and December 2017. If you can help during this time, contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Rose, at volunteer@tanzanianchildrensfund.org.

New and Improved Volunteer Alumni Program We're revamping our Volunteer Alumni Program, with frequent updates to our Volunteer Facebook page, bi-monthly email updates just for volunteers, and organized meet-ups. If you're interested in getting involved, write to Ali at ali@tanzanianchildrensfund.org.

Asante sana to all of our volunteers in Tanzania April 2016 - April 2017. We couldn't do it without you!

Volunteers: Lindsey Ambrose, Cindy Banta, Jim Barry, Sophie Bellenis, Anna Biddle, Ashby Brown, Debbie Burnard, Ali Carey, Isabel Casselman, Gillian Chestnut, Kathleen Chestnut, Julia Chi, Peg Commons, Carrie Davis, Susan Dawson, Eleanor Doar, Helen Driesen, Jennie Driesen, Emily Gallagher, Mary Gallagher, Brooke Goode, Sarah Gould, Pennie Gould, Julie Harper, Will Harrison, Janet Hatton, Mickie Hoffman, Anne Howell, Janine Ilsley, Alice Keeton, Miles Keeton, Judi Langholz, Mianjia Li, Gary Lippman, Dale Mallet, Laura Marlow, Tara McMahon, Bridget McNamara, Natacha Michel, Tyler Murphy, Emily Murray, Erika Myrthil, Olivia Neroni, Jan Noble, John Platt, Tina Raymond, Emilia Rinaldini, Rob Rosser, Melinda Rue, Angela Ryan, Greta Sanborn, Sophie Schmid, Kelly Schonour, Linda Shafer, Jeff Simon, Carla Sinatra, Kathy Spagnola, Grace Stevenson, Jodie Stevenson, Vera Szombathelyi, Munira Tayabali, Kimberly Truell, Susan Weaver, Michael Weaver, Shawn West, Rachel White, Elissa Zirinsky, Mikey VonSiclen

Visitors: Carter Bacon, Peggy Bacon, Ben Bartolini, Nick Beecher, Sheyanga Beecher, Sarah Blank, Beatrice and Gabe Bonnano, Elizabeth Boyce, Michael Bufler, Dr. Gary Clusserath, Todd Cronan, Jody Drake, Jean, Jasmine and Josie-Rose DuPlessis, Libby Gephart, Pooh Gephart, Goodell family, Rochelle Gosling, Gunning Family, Will Hanson, Johanna Huppman, Becky Jewett, Win Jewett, Richard Knocker, David Kogelman, Beth LaSala, Chris Lee, Cara Lisica, John Lisica, Shazmane Mandjee, James Mellon, Maggie Messman, Annie Morris, Martha Peach, Katie Remy, Mark Richardson, Julie Rinaldini, Sue Ringler, Michelle Russell, Miki Russell, Helmut Schreyer, Irene Schreyer-Glanznig, Elle Schurtz, Carla Sinatra, Stephen Swymer, Len Szymborski, Lisa Teague, Noreen Thompsen, Thomas Thompsen, Pete Trebour, Donald Vandermark, Gijs Von Thiel, Rachel Walton, Elissa Zirinsky

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