

REACHING OUT

Journal of the Outreach Committee, Summer 2017 Edition
Chair *Lynda Turner*, Editor *Duncan Mathieson*

KENYA REPORT – 2017

Mary Beckett and Lynda Turner recently returned from a four week trip to Kenya. While in Kakamega, Kenya they continued with the projects that have been supported by Salt Spring for the last eight years:

GOATS were once again delivered to HIV+ mothers in Shianda District making over 360 pregnant nannies delivered to date. With births the total Salt Spring herd is now over 1500 which provides milk, meat and fertilizers for the mothers and their families. The economic impact of the goats is readily apparent. The families are now more economically secure.

A Mythical Halloween Party held last October and supported by the Outreach Committee of the Local Anglican Parish provided money for 146 UNIFORMS for children in three schools; Shianda, Musaa, and Maraka. These uniforms replaced their old ragged uniforms thus allowing the children to continue in school.

The November Bridge Tournament sponsored by the Friends of Kenya, provided 204 HYGIENE KITS at two schools, Maraka and Handidi. Money also came from SOLID to help these girls attend school every day of the month.

The sale of special Christmas cards plus money from SOLID, provided basic school TEXTBOOKS at two schools, Shianda and Maraka. While texts were provided in every subject, most were science and math texts. The schools did not have any of these books before the delivery. Now the large classes have enough books so that students can share.

With money provided by Audrey W., sleepers provided by Lisa S., and toques & dollies knitted by Louise A. and Mollie C., 50 LAYETTES were provided to new mothers at Kakamega General, and the Shianda Clinic. The strike by local government doctors had ended so the maternity wards had just been reopened so the layettes were able to be delivered.





Money from Ken R. provided a 10,000 litre TANK and gutters for a rain collection system for Musaa Elementary School and its 1100 students. The principal was so happy that he installed the system himself in two days.

FOOD was bought for Grace Orphanage in Kakamega. March to July is the famine time in the region. Crops are planted so local farmers have nothing to share with the Orphanage. The donated maize and beans, the basic local diet, are enough to get the children through this difficult time. Additional foods, rice, cocoa, sausages etc. were also provided.

Chickens and a goat were bought for Daisy Special School in Kakamega. The chickens donated last year produced enough revenue for the School to buy its first billie and nanny goats. In addition Mary Beckett spent a number of afternoons assisting Daisy students with their reading. It needs to be noted that the student who achieved the highest marks in all of Kenya in the November 2016, Grade 8 examinations was a deaf young man from Daisy Special School – the school that Salt Spring provided extensive assistance to in March, 2016.

Solar lights were provided at four schools to the top boy and girl in Grade 8. Another light was provided to the student who had improved the most during the term. This was done to encourage the students to do their best in the national exams to be held in November. With no electricity in their homes, these students can now study after dark.

The people of Shianda and Kakamega were overjoyed to receive this assistance from their friends in Canada. They kept saying “asante sana” - thank you very much. **Thank you Salt Spring!**

Lynda Turner

Kenya 2017

It can be difficult to turn an experience into a report. That is not the case when I look back at my 2017 trip to Kenya with Lynda Turner. She is a seasoned Kenyan traveler and her understanding and love of the country and its people was always evident. I was the neophyte who likely wouldn't have survived the adventure without her knowledge and patience.

To say that everything was new and different is an understatement. From the very chaotic vehicular traffic (an unlikely mix of cars, three-wheeled vans, mini-busses, motorcycles, bicycles, and hand carts), to the state of the roads (unlined pavement, huge speed bumps that no one slows for and so many uneven surfaces you get used to hearing the scraping on the car's undercarriage), to the high volume and variety of pedestrians. (over)



Many were walking a very long way, some carrying a load on their head, the majority smartly dressed, the women in dresses and heels. There is an eclectic assortment of vendors and businesses, (piles of fresh fruit and vegetables, mountains of clothing and shoes, wooden bed frames, overstuffed furniture, caskets and countless tethered goats and cattle) it definitely did not look like home but it was mesmerizing.

Let's be candid, that description is one anyone visiting a country like Kenya could provide. What really made this trip unique was experiencing the country at a grass roots level. It was living in a Kenyan guesthouse rather than a western hotel. It was learning that virtually all transactions are conducted in cash so withdrawing and carrying around \$35,000 Kenyan shillings (about \$450 Cdn) is a normal thing to do. It was being introduced to "Kenyan time" which means the Kenyans are not late for anything until at least 15 minutes after the appointed time. It was learning to be mindful of the local customs such as shaking hands with everyone you meet. It was getting used to the fact that a casual greeting, especially from children, was not "hello" but rather "how are you" with no expectation of a reply.

The school projects were one key activity. Teachers and administrative staff are very hospitable and go out of their way to make you feel welcome. The children are curious about you and why you are there. You soon realize a white person is a novelty not often seen in the schools of Kakamega. One school received a water collection system to provide drinkable water for the students. In other schools it was new school uniforms for some of the neediest children. The uniform fabric was purchased in Kenya, the sewing done by Kenyan women. For another school we purchased textbooks to be shared by children who would not otherwise have access to books. There were textbooks and chalk for teachers who didn't have any. We awarded solar lights to top students to recognize their achievements like top marks and most improved. In one school it was 1,000 pencils, one for every student, and a ballpoint pen for each teacher. In total we delivered 205 hygiene kits for pre-teen girls. The stark reality is that, without access to these supplies, many of the girls simply stop attending school which is the first step to teen pregnancy, early marriage, and HIV all of which increase their vulnerability to domination and abuse. There were real soccer balls and pumps for children who normally play with stuffed plastic bags.

The delivery of layettes to the new mothers in two different maternity wards, one in a hospital the other in a medical clinic, was very memorable. These wards do not correspond to our image of a maternity hospital. There are no dividers or privacy curtains between the beds. On each bed the mother, in her street clothes, and the new baby are lying together. I was struck by the fact that we did not hear any of the babies crying. The mothers are required to bring swaddling to wrap the baby after it is born, and that was all some had for their new babies. The youngest baby I saw was only 30 minutes old. In the hospital there was a neonatal intensive care space for babies with health issues. The nurses working in that area had no gowns, or gloves or masks. Outside the door of the unit were several pairs of shoes because the nurses removed their street shoes when they entered to care for these children.

One very happy memory was the day we delivered goats to a group of ladies in Shianda. They greeted us with wonderful signing. They thanked us by presenting each of us with a painted gourd that they use for dipped water from the river. There was more singing and dancing and laughter. We were expected to actively participate. I can only say that Lynda and I dance and sing like Canadians, NOT Kenyans! This was also the day I was given a Kenyan name *Shirumdu* which they told me is the word for a kitchen garden that always has something nourishing to offer.

There were so many other adventures; the shopping trips in Kakamega and Kisumu; the kids at the Daisy School, where Ken built Nancy's Chicken House in 2016; the bilingual (English and Swahili) Anglican church service; the tour of KMET (the Kisumu Medical and Education Trust) which provides technical training, counseling, health services and outreach for high risk young woman, many of whom are single parents; and, the visit to Mission 180 a children's' home run by my former employee. And of course there was the trip to Rhondo where I went on a 12 kilometer walk in the rain forest and the safari at Sweetwaters Tented Camp where I was lucky enough to see the big five – African elephant, Cape buffalo, rhinoceros, African lion and leopard – all in one day.

The poverty and problems in Kenya are significant and real. It was very moving to see firsthand the impact of what we were doing and how those contributions generously given half a world away really make a difference. Each gift not only had a significant impact on the recipient but also a positive ripple effect for their families and their community.

And yes, if Lynda will have me, I am going back next year.

Mary

SOMOS Derek's Interview

1. Present number of mamas and kids?

Five mamas, 15 kids. Space for two more families once we have funding confirmed and identified the next candidates.

2. Status on the new house and expected completion?

New house (#3) is complete. Tita has moved in. The other side will remain open for the time being and be used for volunteers until another mama is ready to transition out.

House #4 construction to begin this summer. Will give us space for two more families.

3. How many mamas and kids will you have with the new house?

By the end of 2017 we will have room for ten families. That means ten mamas and up to 30 kids.

4. Is the culture centre the same building as the pre-school?

The culture dome is a separate building. Downstairs is for music/dance/movies, etc. Upstairs is for art. Right now we are using upstairs for a classroom. Because of the learning challenges of our children, we have registered the kids with a school in Guatemala City. We had one girl fail grade 2 for the THIRD time in October! (she came here in March). We have hired a teacher and she is teaching the curriculum provided by this school. This year is considered a pilot project.

5. Are you now completely off the grid?

We have the solar electric all set up. We are connected to the grid and sell into the system and then buy back. This means our monthly costs are dropping radically. After months of waiting for the electric company to change our set up, we are now in our second month with that new system! Yay!

6. Agro plan for this year. How much Quinoa did you harvest last year?

We harvested 450 pounds of quinoa last year. We now have an agronomist working to really develop our agro-plan for this year with the goal of reducing our monthly food costs, as well as providing more capacity to the mamas around organic gardening, food preservation and new recipes using our crops.

7. What is happening with the other first mamas now their two years are up?

Isabela has been with us 18 months. She is studying baking in a local women's NGO. She will be training with Nico around hospitality when we have groups. She will also be doing all in-house baking for groups this year (bread, banana bread, granola and cookies). In the past we purchased at the mennonites bakery. She continues to make felties as well.

We don't say it is a two year program anymore. We need to base it on their capacity, learning, skill sets, etc. We have also determined that the women can never expect to earn a living wage back in the communities, so we

are exploring ways to supplement their income or to provide them with income here. For example, this year we will not hire outside help when there are groups. This will be part of Tita's paid employment and Isabela's (over) capacity building. Isabela came to us illiterate. She is learning to read and this has been a slow process for her. She now can read a grocery list, follow simple recipes and do basic math.

8. Any other pertinent information?

We are constantly re-evaluating and adjusting our programming to make this work. We are pioneers in this model of project and are finding it isn't straightforward and there isn't a cookie-cutter design to make it happen. It takes a lot of flexibility.

What we have discovered is that the mamas are overwhelmed with parenting as single parents. Providing education and programming for the kids is key. This will enable the family to move out of poverty for the next generation. It is absolutely essential.

This past year we began after school programming so that the kids are engaged all day. This year (school year begins in January) and we are getting more formal with this. We have soccer two afternoons a week and will have music two afternoons a week. We open the playground and have activities for the local children one afternoon a week.

All of this frees up the mamas to build their capacity. Some examples of classes/courses they have had are:

- parenting (ongoing)
- managing personal finances (monthly)
- communication
- child-proofing a home/child safety
- child development
- first aid
- nutrition/learning new recipes, etc. (ongoing)

Thanks so much for always helping us find more support! It means SO much to me.

For monthly donors, we'd like to provide a form for everyone to fill out. This will help us to manage it better in the future. Does that work for you? Also-if people can set up as monthly giving on a credit card OR write a cheque once a year, this would be so much better for us.

ALSO-we are moving from "Adopt a Family" to "Sponsor a House"

I sent your letter to the group. Three people have said they will be contributing. Hopefully the committee will approve another \$1000 for this year.

Derek Emmerson

YOU EAT - THE CHILDREN EAT

A Fund Raiser for schoolchildren in Kenya



MID-SUMMER MEAL = FOOD FOR KIDS

WHERE: All Saints' Anglican Hall - Park & Lower Ganges Roads

WHEN: 5:30pm, Sunday 23rd July

WHY: To raise money to provide lunches for schoolchildren living in the slums during the Famine Season in Kenya

COST: \$20 per ticket. For this you get a delicious meal; a chance at door prizes plus great items in the Silent Auction

TICKETS FROM: Church Office (Park Drive & Lower Ganges Rd)
Lynda Turner 200-931-1214

No tickets will be sold at the door