

Newsletter

Harambee For Kenya



No.12 August'09

So what sort of a summer have you had? The weather in the southeast has been pretty good; the temperature has been pretty good, even on the cloudier days; The evenings have been long and most of us have been able to spend time with our friends and families. But what of the children in Kenya?

Well our boys shared some of their time with their adopted family...the Lewisham District contingent, who visited them to help do more work on the project and spend time with the boys. They had a wonderful time sharing.

They have also been busy working hard! Lewisham Scouts can confirm that. They were camping at the house in July, I was fortunate enough to have been with them for some of the time, and our tents were on the grass outside the house. Every morning the boys were up at 5 a.m. sweeping and cleaning the house and the path outside and chopping wood for the fire! Yes - EVERY MORNING regardless of what time they went to bed!!! Who needs an alarm clock?

Joking aside, it was a wonderful experience to be able to be near our boys from dawn to dusk, working and playing with them. We certainly enjoyed our time with them and they, I know, loved having people around them, working and playing with them.



Above, the garden was turned into a campsite. Right; the boys enjoy playing about with the Lewisham Network and Explorer Scouts.

The Lewisham contingent did amazing things. Firstly they managed to raise over £10,000 which was an achievement in itself. This has helped the project immensely. The money has been used to do many things on the main building and.....I'll leave Garry to tell you what!

What an experience for all of us in Lewisham Manor District Scouts. 24 of us camped at the safe house from 26th July to the 4th August to help with several projects underway at the house and to complete the chicken house so the kids could have eggs to eat and sell.

For the 15 teenagers it was an experience of a lifetime that left many of them wondering what a mixed-up world we live in. No doubt their own stories will follow in the future, but I can honestly say we all came away with a feeling that we had achieved a great deal in the short time we were with the kids. It was not just about building things, for us it was much more important to believe that we had given the kids something greater than "fixtures and fittings".

A few small acts of random kindness at a time will definitely change the world and for the street kids just one at a time is all it takes to make them smile. For us raising the £10,000 or so was hard enough and it took many months to achieve that target, but it does seem to be a relatively easy task compared with the things these children have experienced and have to contend with.

So what did we achieve? We have been able to help Harambee to pay for a new chicken House, electricity supply and fittings, a new kitchen area, a new toilet block for visitors, a completely new perimeter fence, a fridge and enough money to pay for a water pump for the well, a filtration system and storage tank.

In addition to this, part of the trip was to assist with the formation of a new Scout Group. All 14 Scout Groups in Lewisham Manor District supported us in raising enough money to pay for the new Group's registration, 42 uniforms and the costs for the opening of the Group while we were there. The Group is called the 1st Nyakoe. To see all the kids in Scout uniform was amazing and the union flag flying alongside the Kenyan flag throughout our visit there was a true mark of international friendship.

There will be many more stories to come, not least yours truly almost getting arrested (that's for another day), but for now we would like to thank Lesley, Roger and all of the other trustees, both here and in Kenya for their support to us. It is never easy undertaking an event such as this, especially with young people involved, so I do not underestimate the kindness given to supporting us.

What a fantastic bunch of people they are. It was my pleasure to have been a part of their group for the week I was there. They worked hard and gave time to be with the boys, "bundling" as young people do! This did the boys a lot of good and the smiles!!! Well you don't see them so big in this country and we have everything by comparison.

One other fantastic piece of news.....read on...



Lewisham Scouts join in the fun.

The new Scouts are very proud in their uniforms. They looked so smart.



Harambee for Kenya is now an NGO in Kenya. So in other words it is an independent charity in Kenya. This should give us opportunity to get more funding from different areas including embassies in Kenya. This has taken almost a year to complete which has driven us mad on a number of occasions. The cogs turn slowly in Kenya but part of the problem was our fault!!!! We wanted to use the same name as here and that caused issues because of the word Harambee. It was adopted (from two Asian words) and they treat it as special and do not usually allow it to be used. Well we were able to prove that the UK charity uses the name and asked if we could use the same name in Kenya and after officials discussing it and legal beagles stamping it the government authorities said "YES". In our opinion it is a miracle that they said yes...certainly our Kenyan friends are amazed and pleased. So it's onwards and upwards now.

We desperately need help to raise the money to build a house for Elijah who looks after the kids. At the moment he is staying at Harambee House but away from his family and we need to get them back together, so this is an important next step. We need to raise £6000. CAN YOU HELP! Please contact us and let us know how you can help. We have started it and need to be able to finish it so that Elijah's family can move in and they can be together. Thank you.



Elijah's new home has been started. From this.....to this in one week! Fantastic! There will be electricity in the building too, so this should help to make life a little easier. There will also be an apartment attached to the bungalow which will be available for visitors to use when they go out to help on the project. So if you are interested in going, let us know.

Sarah Loughnane went to Kenya in July with Lewisham Manor District Scouts to help with the project. This is what she wrote:

I had an absolutely amazing time in Kenya. It was brilliant and horrible all at the same time but it made me think so much about how much I have. I was so inspired by how positive all the boys were. They made songs and did role plays that reflected on their time on the streets and how they had been saved. They all had so much faith in God and it was so amazing because they had been given the worst start in life and they managed to be so happy.

When I got back to England, and was driving through the towns to get back home, it made me feel so mean because of everything we have. Our houses are so perfectly made, we have shops, not shacks, and the majority of people have at least enough money for clothes, shoes and three meals a day. The people in Kisii had almost nothing and struggled for even just one meal a day but they were such lovely people. We even got a bolt for a door for free from someone even though he probably didn't have much money. He said because we had been to his shop before and we bought so much, then it was free. This shows how generous they are and how appreciative they were of us being there to help.

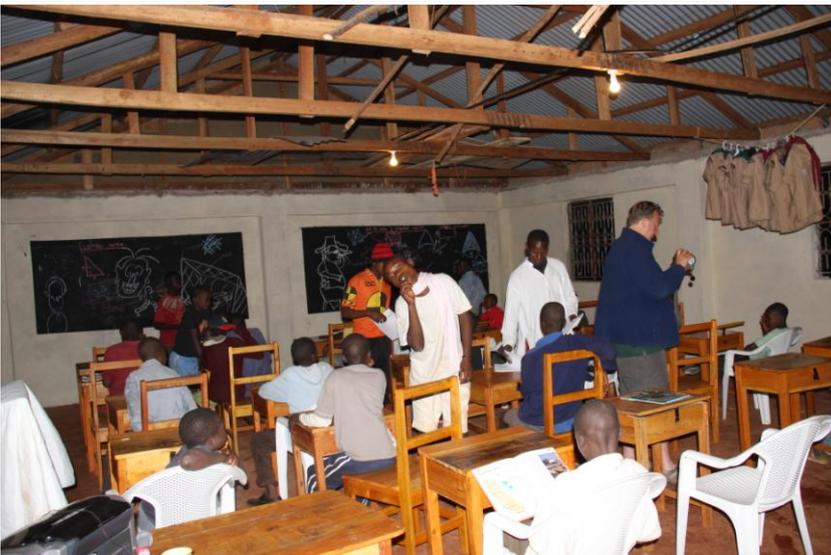
It was a very emotional time but it made me realise that my life is so easy. It's made me appreciate people so much more and I would definitely go back there because I had such a lovely time.

Our Thanks go to the following for their support.

Lewisham District Network, Explorer Scouts & Leaders.
GLSE District Scouts. Steve Curry.
Distinctive Kitchens John & Hazel Savill
Westminster Music Ltd Jonathan Tanner
Dave & Shirley Prout.

I'm sure you will be pleased to hear that Osoro has passed his motorbike test and is waiting to receive his licence. We have also been blessed with a donation to purchase a motorbike. Osoro will be able to rent it from the charity and earn money. He is our first young man to have been trained for a specific job and will be leaving the house in the near future in order that he can set up home and keep himself.

We have two boys who are looking to be trained in carpentry; one as a tailor and two have been identified as being natural working with soapstone. We are hoping that Enosh and Peter who both have businesses in soapstone, will be looking to see if they can train the boys in the trade.



The classroom is now finished so the kids can do homework there now.

TRIPS COMING UP

2nd April to 17th April 2010.

This is over the Easter school holiday.

Contact us if you are interested in coming along. We have booked our flights already but can easily get more seats.

email lesley@harambeeforkenya.org for more information.



Lesley had to meet the local chiefs when she was out in Kenya in July. They wanted to check what we were doing and why we chose Nyakoe. We discussed our aim and how we believed that the children deserve a chance and they were very pleased and offered to help -a). in discipline as this is a role chiefs have and in the community anyway & b). in assisting to get the children reunited with families where appropriate.



We have bought a TV so they can watch it on the long evenings and not err towards the town