

Newsletter

Harambee
For Kenya



No.13 Oct & Dec '09

There is so much to write about! We had a group of 8 go out this time and we were not totally sure what we should be doing. Well there is nothing new there then! We knew that we would be painting walls and sorting out clothes and bedding and hopefully having time to teach some of the young people. We found other exciting things happening too! Just look at the picture below.



Elijah's accommodation and the apartment, for Musungu visitors, was nearly finished.

To think that it was only 2 ½ months before that the Lewisham Scouts had been sitting and chatting on that same plot.

Elijah and his wife Beatrice, are really happy with it and moved in while we were there.

The two room apartment for visitors is beautiful and just as we had imagined. We have brought a gas stove, fridge and furniture so that our first guest, who will be visiting in January, will be comfortable.



The older boys were also set a challenge by Jackie Cooper to dig the garden so that vegetable seeds could be sown. They immediately set to the task and by the time we left there were seed beds in place with seeds already planted. We are now looking forward to seeing photos of the crops as they grow and are harvested.

This trip was quite important as we had planned to see Osoro, the eldest lad, leave the nest and start a new life in his own home with a job. We saw this day with great excitement as he was the first lad to move on and into an adult world. This would be a big step which needed careful planning.



We have been blessed with a donation to buy a motorbike for Osoro to use for a bike taxi business. It took a number of months to get his driving licence through but finally it arrived so we were able to have a presentation ceremony. The local Police Officers attended and actually gave Osoro his licence while we handed over the keys. The bike comes complete with helmet so that the rider is totally equipped from the start. We also purchased insurance so that he is covered to carry passengers. A contract was drawn up and duly signed. So all being well, Osoro will have paid for the bike within 2 years.

We also rented accommodation for him for two months which gives him a chance to save up for the following months rent of 1000KS (about £9). We gave him the bed he had been sleeping on and with all his belongings packed on a pickup, he moved out of the safe house to start a new independent life. He is the first of our lads to move out into adulthood. It was a very proud moment for everyone. We have been informed that he is earning between 800 and 1000Kenyan Shillings (£6.75 to £9.00) per day which is a very reasonable wage. So if he handles it properly, he should do well. Two of the trustees in Kenya will keep an eye on him for a couple of months and advise him on how to budget his money.

Other successes.

Victor has gone to Tabake, where the soapstone is dug from the ground. He has been working with Enosh and is learning how to work with soapstone. He seems to be very happy and is learning the skills of "finishing" the stone. He is really enjoying himself and is rising to the challenge. This is just the start of it. We have a lot of placements to find.



Denilson has gone to work with Peter who specialises in soapstone carving and painting soapstone. His artwork is phenomenal and when you watch him carve, he is very confident. It is hard to believe that at the time of taking the pictures, he had only been doing it for just under 4 weeks.



A message from Sarah, one of our band of helpers.

In 2008, I had the opportunity of a lifetime. The only places I had been abroad, was a day trip to France in school and a weekend away in Amsterdam. Kenya always fascinated me but never thought I would be able to go. In that October I did. I went with the impression I would only be going the once so make the most of it. How wrong was I?!...As soon as I stepped off the plane and we were headed to our destination in Kisii, I can truly say my entire life completely changed. I didn't know how or when but I knew that this was not going to be the last time. I had been given a second home. I was right. I went out in October this year and it has filled me with even more love and experiences I can only have dreamt of. The change in a year has been remarkable! The building that we started a year ago has come on leaps and bounds. The boys had grown and changed unbelievably.

Osoro was the first boy to leave the house. A momentous, but emotional day! He is leading his life and earning money as a motorcycle taxi. I was his first ever fare. The fact I had never ridden on the back of a motorbike before, actually terrified me but I thought I will put my trust in him and I am so glad I did. One of the top moments of my life! However forgetting to pay his fare of 20KSh was the highlight...fortunately we tracked down Osoro during the last leg of our trip and I paid my dues!

Victor, who I sponsored last year, has now left the house. He is training in soapstone and living with his tutor. That was an emotional day for me! To see how inspired he was with his talent was humbling. A boy who had been living on the streets for 7 years, sniffing glue, stealing anything you can name, now making a true life for himself who can one day support his own family literally brought tears to my eyes.

I work with adults who have various grades of disabilities...One night in Kisii, I saw a man whose legs were so crippled he had to walk on his hands and knees through the dark streets, children so high on glue that they would look at you not knowing who or what you were, children rummaging through the late night rubbish that had been emptied, so hungry that they would eat anything. These were just some of the high and low moments that I had seen in 2 weeks in Kisii. You hear and read about situations like this in the media. Nothing can prepare you for the emotions that you feel when you come face to face with the reality.

In 2 years I have become a committee member and hope to continue to help with the work of this amazing and successful charity. Not only that, but I have gained new friends, a second home and lots of young brothers who I love.

Thank you Sarah.

If any of you feel you would like to experience the "adventure" and "challenge" that Sarah has experienced, please contact us on info@harambeeforkenya.org

We have just received this message from Andrew in Kenya.....

I was at Safe House today. I was very impressed with the calmness of the boys. The reception I got from the boys was so good and there was every indication that everybody was very happy. Though some were at the river bathing. The kuku(chicken) are doing well. Jacky's garden is doing fine though quite a number of seeds did not germinate because of the hostile weather, but the English potatoes are doing well. We shall replace those that did not germinate. Tell Roger we have already planted passion fruits along the fence. I will give the exact number later(about 50).We are yet to plant pawpaw's, but soon. I must say Elijah is now doing very well. The House is kept tidy. Every place is kept clean. Nobody walks on the grass in front of the house .So the grass is doing very well. The boys have planted a lot of kales in the garden. I am sure during the dry season when we shall have difficulties in getting vegetables, the kales will help. We thank God for the way the boys have improved in their behaviour, it is amazing.

Our Thanks go to the following for their support.

Union Church Ladies Fellowship.

Rowan Class, Broadoak CP School Daniel Clarke

Jo Poulton, Peter Gilks Sarah Kendrick

Liz Walters Frankie Cruciel Matt Plested

Judy Chittenden Doug & Rachel Prentice.

Uckfield Methodist Womens Fellowship

Mereworth and Kings Hill Scout Group web-sites4.eu

Nathan Validin Tristan French SGB Computers

Welcome Baptist Church

And all our regular contributors

100 Club

This year's subscription will soon be coming to an end. If you want to rejoin it for another year or you are new to it and would like to join, contact Jackie at

schools@harambeeforkenya.org



Christmas 100 Club Draw



£100 Daniel Clarke

£50 Mick Wilding

£25 Greg Dann

This was drawn by Heathfield Scouts.



Meet Carlos (left). He is about 15yrs old. He is a delightful lad who has an older sister and two younger siblings, a brother & sister. He says that his father died in a road accident and his mother has an alcohol problem. She used to beat him and so he ran away to the streets where he used to eat dustbin food and slept under bushes. He turned to sniffing glue to help take the pain away.

He is now very settled in the safe house, is going to school and is doing very well. He is a bright boy and should go far. His ambition is to become an airline pilot.

Meet Doctor (right) – an unusual name! He is approximately 15yrs old. He used to be hit round the head by his mother which caused damage to his ears. So now he has hearing problems. He has been to ENT and it now appears that he needs hearing aids. Because he cannot hear properly he will not go to school.(not unusual in Kenya) He ended up on the street and collected charcoal and scrap from the dumps, which he sold to get money for food. He also used to eat from the rubbish bins. He used to sleep in the drainage ditches and phone boxes. He used to sniff glue and now suffers from mental outbursts. He would like to train to be a mechanic.



Trustees; Roger Dann (Chairman), Lesley Dann, Patricia Musgrave, Michael Wilding, Jackie Cooper, Ben Vince.

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www.harambeeforkenya.org

Charity Reg. No. 1121597

TRIPS COMING UP

16th to 30th October 2010.

Roger and Lesley will be going back again on these dates. If you would like to go with them, then let us know as soon as possible as we will be booking flights soon after Christmas

email lesley@harambeeforkenya.org for more information.

100 Club.

October Draw

£15 Mary Wilding

£10 Julie Urry

£5 Evelyn Dann

100 Club November Draw

£15 Daniel Clarke

£10 Abby Lafferty

£5 Natalie Collings

A message from the Chairman.....

"I would rather live for 5 good years than 70 yrs as I do now"

This was written by a child in Kenya who lived in a slum, in poverty, without enough to eat. These words inspired us to start Harambee For Kenya. Thankfully we have been able to change many lives this last year and give hope for the future.

Every amount of money raised is valuable to us no matter how small and we have many people to be grateful to for their help and the work that has been achieved this year. But this year the project leapt forward, thanks to Lewisham Manor District Scouts who visited the project in August. They raised a colossal amount of money before they went to Kenya and spent it on the project. They were able to complete many things in the house, the chicken project, fencing, a water filtration system which is soon to be added and on top of that they sponsored the new Scout Group based at the house, 1st Nyakoe, in which all our children are members, paying for their registration and new uniforms throughout. We hope to work with them for many years.

One of the great plus points for the year has been the positive response we have had from the various Kenyan authorities including the education and children's departments. There have also been meetings with the local Chiefs (2 of them) as it is important to gain their support, which I can confirm, we have. Everyone has said it is an amazing and different project to anything they have seen before, which is encouraging.

The aim of the charity has always been for the Kenyans to take responsibility and control of their own problems, with our help. After a year of hard work, it is fantastic news to be able to tell you all that the NGO has now been passed. So Harambee For Kenya is now a charity in its own right, in Kenya. We have six Trustees, four are Kenyan plus Lesley and myself. The Kenyan trustees are Thomas Ogembo and Andrew Obiero who both come from Kisii District and oversee the day to day running of the house; and John Buria and Jimmy Gathua who assist where they can. All trustees keep in touch very regularly and the Kenyan guys are really getting to grips with keeping their finger on the pulse so that minor problems with the boys do not escalate to major ones. Thanks to a generous sponsor they all have laptops and mobile internet connection so that they can keep in touch daily if necessary. Communication has always created more problems in Kenya, so hopefully this will help immensely.

Two other major developments have been the employment of a caretaker, Elijah, whom we have known for about three years. He has now moved into the new caretaker's house on site, with his family. This brings a great stability for the boys and Beatrice, Elijah's wife, is a wonderful mama to them and has said she loves it there. The building has three bedrooms and a lounge and adjoining it is "Rafiki House". (Rafiki means friend). This is a one bed apartment which can be used by visitors.

The second development is that we now have Preston who is a social worker working for the project. This was insisted upon by the authorities as the boys issues can be complex and the authorities can help us with them. He works one day a week. Preston was a street boy and drug addict so he knows a lot of what the boys have been through. He has a good rapport with the boys and is very pleased to be part of the project.

As Chairman, I would like to thank everyone who has been part of this for the last year. To those who help financially, those who help with sales and fundraising events and to those who pray for us. The last year has been a good year for us, but there are many challenges still to face. We are working with 45 boys, a drop in the ocean compared to the estimated 350,000 street children in Kenya. But every child matters and many small drops make an ocean. So let's hope that through our continuing efforts and the efforts of other charities, we can help to change the situation in which the children find themselves.

Roger Dann