

Julius & Dora Children's Centre Newsletter 4, December 2013 – March 2014



J and D Children at the Maseno residence in their new school uniforms

Flossie Adoyo writes: Greetings from us here in Maseno! We're settling happily into our new home. The last four months i.e. December 2013 – March 2014, have been very exciting for us and we have had lots of things happening which we are going to tell you about.

At the end of the school year, Riziki, Tumaini and Imani graduated from nursery school to class one and they were very proud of themselves because they got many presents. Then it was Christmas time and then New Year which we enjoyed very much. Best of all we moved to our new home in Maseno and we all joined a new school near our new home known as Wonderland Academy. A new orphan girl (Anana) has joined us, so now we are twelve children, and we have a new lady to help care for us.

MOVE TO MASENO

We moved from the rented house in Kakamega to our new home in Maseno on 7th January 2014. This was very exciting for us because we had been looking forward to moving to the new premises for a long, long time. Our new house is very nice and we want to thank God for everybody who has contributed to its construction. Even though the house is not yet completely done, it is habitable and there are just a few things remaining to be done and then it will be completed. When we moved, Rev. Asilutwa (the Vicar from Kakamega) came with us so that he could pray for us as we moved into the house. He also played with us. Below are some pictures of us at Maseno.

All the kids in one of the bedrooms at Maseno



Below - Rev Asilutwa playing with the kids at Maseno

Riziki, Lulu, Neema, Moses and Baraka on the stairs leading to the bedrooms



Below - Riziki in the sitting room. Notice the floor tiles



CONSTRUCTION OF THE HOUSE AT MASENO

All the construction work at Maseno is almost done. I would like to express a special and most sincere gratitude to three friends in particular - Amiel Osmaston, Rosie and Paul Gardner and Rosie's brother John Lenton who contributed very generously towards the final stages of the construction of the building. Their contribution has made it possible for us to complete the house sufficiently to enable the children to move in. I would like them to know that we at J & D are sincerely grateful and continually thank God for them and for you all.

Our neighbors in Maseno were convinced that the children's house would never get completed and some even betted on it! Now when I meet them they say, "*Flossie, this house of yours is a miracle. We cannot believe that it is completed*" - and I tell them they should never play around with the God whom I serve because He is a miracle-working God.

Below are some pictures of the house:



Two double- decker beds for the boys



The bathrooms (doors still to be fixed)



Sitting room

The floor- tiles in every room are different colours and look very nice. Tiles are good and cool in a hot climate and are tough and easy to keep clean. Here below is a sample:



Girls' bedroom



Boys' room



Visitors' rooms (2)



Sitting room



Bathrooms with non-slip rough surface



Kitchen with rough surface

The workmanship on the house is very good, and it has been worth all the worry and waiting to make sure that the house is properly and strongly built. I want to thank our trustees David and Betty Payne who raised concerns about the quality of the initial stages of the first building when they visited two years ago. When I then sought further expert advice I was told that the building-work that had been done so far was sub-standard and not safe or suitable for children. I almost died, but then had no alternative but to have it taken down and start all over again with a new builder. (It turned out that the first builder had been stealing some of the money by buying cheaper sub-standard materials). Without David and Betty, and their keen eye, we would probably have ended up with a sub-standard building which would have been a complete waste of money and time. I acknowledge the fact that we have spent a lot of money and time on this construction and I sincerely do apologize for this, but in the end

we have a building that is worth all the effort, the money and the time you have put in and I am grateful to all of you 'The friends of J and D' for your tireless efforts and continued support to ensure that the construction continued.

A few things still need to be done for the building to be complete. The major ones are that:

- a) We still need the electricity to be connected. (The house is properly wired, but not yet connected to the Mains supply. We have applied for it but it takes a bit of time to have Kenya Power actually come and install it).
- b) We need to put up fencing around the whole plot, for the children's safety and to stop people wandering in and using it as a short-cut. This is taking time because our neighbours had encroached on part of our land, planted maize on some of it, and changed the boundaries. We do not plan to claim the stolen land back (that would create long-lasting bad relationships with the neighbours and would take ages and ages!!). However, we want the Government Lands Department to re-establish the boundaries in the presence of our neighbours so that they know that we know they stole our land (!), and so that when we fence what they left for us, there will be no complaints. However, getting a government officer down to Maseno to do this work takes effort and time.
- c) Water - we do have piped water coming to an outside tap near the house, but currently there is no water flowing in the house (though the plumbing is in place and ready). We have one 10,000 litre tank installed (both for rain water catchment and for piped water when available), and also one 5,000 litre tank which still needs to be lifted up onto a support structure so that the water can flow down into the house. At present we are using an outside pit-latrine.
- d) Some more furniture and basic house-equipment is needed too, but we are managing.

EDUCATION

The children joined Wonderland Academy at Maseno (a primary school) at the beginning of the new school year in January. They have settled down and are doing well. Riziki and Zawadi are doing particularly well academically. Moses, Baraka and Lulu are in class two, Riziki, Tumaini and Imani who graduated from nursery school at the end of last year are now in class one. Joyce Neema, Emmanuel and Zawadi are in top class in the nursery school section and Zubeda, Zubira and Ananda are in baby class in the nursery section. Below are some pictures of them in their school uniforms

All the kids in their School uniforms without and with sweaters on



In their school sports uniform

In Kenya, there are two types of schools that are formally recognized: 'public/government' and 'private' schools. In Maseno, we have the Wonderland Academy which is a 'private' school and where the children attend school currently, and also Ebulako Primary School which is a government-owned

school. Both are quite close to where the J&D children's home is. I will use the two schools to give a comparison of Government and Private schools to give you some idea of the two types of schools:

Ebulako Primary school (a Government / public school)	Wonderland Academy (a privately-owned school)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free primary education. Parents do not pay school fees. • The government is responsible for payment of teachers' salaries and provides subsidies in terms of textbooks. • Receive support from government in terms of supervision and curriculum development. • Community involvement consists of construction of school buildings, salaries for non-teaching staff and other operational costs. • Few and overpopulated classrooms, forcing teachers to hold some classes under trees. Class rooms are poorly constructed, in most cases with mud walls and floors. Children often get jiggers in their feet. • Few teachers, with a teacher/pupil ratio of 1 teacher to at least 60 children and often up to 120 children. • Scarcity of textbooks, e.g. one text-book can be shared among 10-20 pupils • Inadequate facilities – often few or no desks, writing materials, toilet facilities or playgrounds • No meals nor water provided during the day • Many hidden costs (parents often have to buy books, desks etc, and 'bribe' the teachers to pay any attention to their child). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School fees are paid by parents • Owned by private entrepreneurs, • The owners meet all costs including all staff salaries, teaching-learning materials, construction and hiring of school premises as well as other operational costs. • The proprietors finance and manage the schools mainly through school fees and contributions from sponsors. • Well-constructed permanent classrooms • High competition for places • Better-qualified and more motivated teachers • Enough teachers, with a teacher/pupil ratio of 1 teacher to max. 30 children. • Adequate provision of facilities such as classrooms, desks, text-books, toilets and play-grounds. • 10.00am snack and lunch provided (cost included in school fees) • Water (both for washing hands and drinking) provided • All costs clearly spelt out to parents in advance.

Even though there is supposedly 'free primary education' in Kenya in the Government / Public schools, there are many hidden costs that parents have to meet. These include paying into the school's building fund, activity fund, providing lunches for the children and fees for remedial classes for weaker students. Due to the inadequate facilities and high enrollment rates, teachers are only able to go at the speed of the brighter students, so the slow ones are left behind, never to catch up with the rest unless they have remedial classes which parents have to pay for. (Remedial classes are not official but it is the accepted practice. It is an agreement between a teacher and a parent. The teacher dictates what he is to be paid per lesson per hour for teaching a weak student. The amount of money to be paid differs from teacher to teacher and can be quite a lot when one takes into account the seven examinable subjects which children learn at the primary school level. Each subject-teacher has to be paid separately. All these costs are of course not official but they are quietly accepted).

I hope this explains why the trustees have agreed that the children should go to a 'private' school – luckily the fees at Wonderland Academy are quite low (£100 per child per term), and manageable now that we are no longer paying rent for the house in Kakamega.

A huge thank you to all of you for your support and encouragement and prayers

And thanks to those of you who organized some presents for the children for Christmas, and to the friends who brought the presents from England to ensure that the children had a memorable

Christmas. Thank you so much and may God richly bless you.

Flossie Adoyo