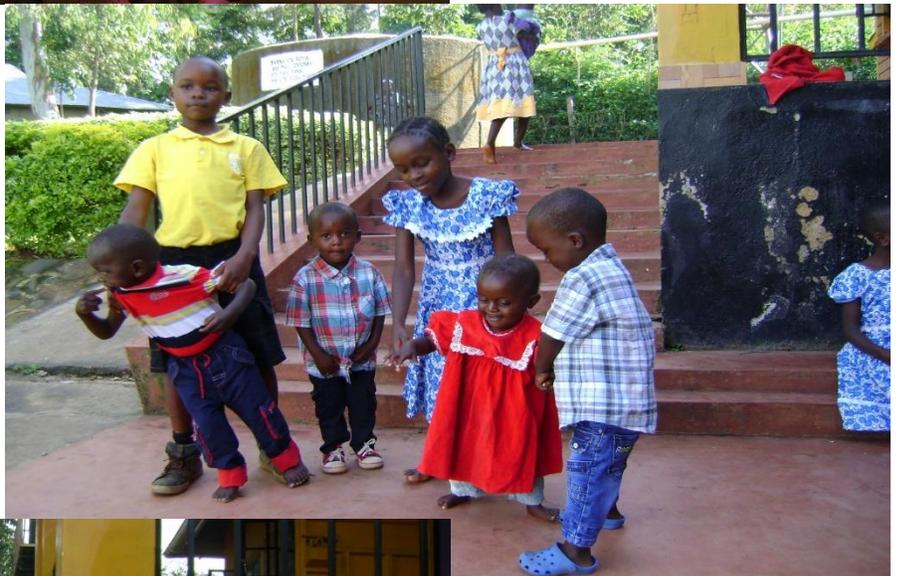




### A message from the children:

We once again bring our greetings to you and thank you for your continued support. This quarter has been rather quiet with few visitors until at the very end when we had many visitors all in one day which was very exciting for us children.

However, we did not get any University of Maseno students visiting us. They usually visit and play with us and tell us stories, but now the University has been closed for a long time because their teachers went on strike so the students had to go to their homes. We miss them when they do not visit because we are very much used to them.



We thank God because He has kept us in good health (see, in these pictures, how big we are growing!). We are happy and working hard in school. We are very grateful for the books and clothes you sent for us. May God Bless you very much. We also want to say a big thank

you to all of you for all your care and support and all the energy and time you put in to make sure that we are well looked after. Your work is not in vain - God will surely bless you.

[News from Floice/Flossie Adoyo](#) ('Mum' to the children):

The children are growing into such a wonderful family together and are very happy. Also they are doing well at school, which pleases them because they know it will help them in the future to find employment. They have finished their second term (the academic year goes from January to November in Kenya). They have been enjoying practising reading at home to help them understand and speak the English and Kiswahili languages better.



**Photo:** The girls in their school uniform: Maryanne Zubira in class 2; Neema Joyce in class 3; Zubeda Achien'g class 2; Tamara Winnie class 5; Riziki Rael class 5; Zawadi Elizabeth class 4.

Thanks to the books sent by Rosie and Christine from England, the children really are improving in their school work as seen from the letter from Baraka (in the box below). He wrote to me because I was away from Maseno on an assignment for ETC. (ETC is a company I work for as an occasional Associate Consultant, so that I can support myself and do not take any money for running the J&D Children's Centre).

I've included **Baraka's letter** with his words and spelling exactly as it was written (*the blue italics are my comments added in*):

*Dear Queen Mummy Floice*

*How are you. Hope you are fine where you are. We are fine here in Maseno.*

*I am happy that you will be glad. This is because we did our mid-term exams and I was able to be position six out of seventeen pupils in the class.*

Next, we have done our end term exams and the results are already out but we have not been told our marks or position.

In the mid-term exams, I was able to have three hundred and thirty-two marks. I was very happy because I had improved. My marks, which I got (direct translation from Kiswahili) made me to be the most improved in my class.

Last is that we had to close the school (for holidays) on Thursday and we were to pay three hundred shillings for holiday assignments.

Lastly, I would like to say thank you very much for the story books and text books you bought for me (I buy them Kiswahili story books and also some English ones with local content and those recommended by the school and text books, to add to the story-books that have been generously given from UK). May God Bless you mummy and add you more maney to buy for us other text books.

Your loving son

Barack Obama

I was very touched by this letter, especially the part that says 'your loving son Barack Obama'.

Not to be left behind, the other children each then wrote me a letter giving a long list of books to be bought! What amused me most is the way the letters are addressed, to 'President mummy', 'Governor mummy', 'Senator', 'Queen' and so on. The children feel that it is disrespectful to call me just a simple 'Mummy' as that is not good enough, so they give me all sorts of big titles.

Below is **Andala's short letter** (he's only in class 2) addressed to 'Mummy the presedent' (*President*):

Exuceme (*excuse me*) Mummy, please buy for me and Maryanne story books and texbooks.

- Spoi and the Ogre
- Sorry mother
- Lost money
- Lost short
- Wet allover
- The big, big town
- Buitifull and the bist (*Beauty and the Beast*)
- Therats areback (*The Rats are Back*)
- Maskini bibi yangu
- Asante yapunda ni mateke

By Andala and Maryanne. Thank you mummy

The children do especially love their story-books! They are always keen to have more and are extremely proud of the books. Any time they are at home playing outside and they see a visitor coming, they quickly run to the house, get the books out and sit at table pretending they've been reading them. All this is just meant to show off their books to the visitor and say, "Hey, look at our books, they are special and so are we!" The European paper used for printing these books is much more superior to what we use here in Kenya and the pictures are fantastic. Thank you so much for the gift of the books. Apart from them being a source of great pride for the children, they really are helping them to understand better what they read.

**Photo:** *Zawadi and Zubeda acting out a story they have read entitled 'Mrs Kamau goes to the market', about all the work a woman has to do at home i.e. sweep the house, look after the baby, wash utensils and go to the market. The children really enjoy acting out the stories from the books, and it is one of the best ways to help them understand and retain what they read.*

But it's not just the girls who do the work here - the boys say they too work very hard at home, as seen in the picture below, where they are helping with the cleaning of pans.



**Photo:** *The boys and girls washing pans. Each wants to show me that their pan is the cleanest! We are trying to bring them up to understand that there is no work meant specifically for girls or boys.*



**Photo:** Moses and Shikuku practising their reading skills at home after school

## Health

We thank God because we have not had any new major issues with health recently. The children are doing well health-wise and growing big as seen in the pictures below:



**Photo above:** Neema

**Photo right:** Neema and Riziki in their new skirts sent to us sometime back by Christine.

It is wonderful to see how they are growing, from having been such tiny abandoned babies. "Surely the Lord is Gracious to us - See how far He has brought us".



**Photo left:** Tamara, Moses and Tumaini also wearing clothes sent to us by Christine.

**Some health issues to pray about please:**

**Kinsley and Naomi** both continue with their physiotherapy. You remember that Kinsley has mild cerebral palsy and we have to take him for physiotherapy

once a week. Naomi is not able to walk so she too goes for physiotherapy once a week.

Anyway, while we have been hoping and praying that Kinsley and Naomi can both get cured completely, experts from Nairobi recently assessed them and they told us that we should not stake our hopes on a cure for Kinsley because that is not possible. They advised that we concentrate on teaching him how to manage and live with the condition. They also advised that we take him for speech therapy once a week since he cannot utter a single word at three and half years of age. This means we have to take him to hospital two days in a week because the physiotherapy and the speech clinics are held on separate days and by different experts.



*This photo is Kinsley practising his walking. His body is weak so he cannot walk very well - he hates putting on shorts and will take them off at the earliest opportunity he can get!*

The same issue about the hospital applies to Naomi as she too has to have speech therapy. She is almost two years old now (born on 27-08-2016) and cannot say anything, not even 'mama'.



Kinsley has a poor appetite so his body is very weak, while Naomi has a huge appetite and if allowed, will eat endlessly - but this does not translate into strong bones or even added weight.

*This photo is Naomi in her new baby walker that I hope can encourage her to learn how to walk in a fun way.*

*I bought the baby walker with money given to me by Rosie. Standing next to Naomi is Fabian Ushindi.*

These hospital visits are a big challenge for us because of the transport cost and time taken. One trip to the County Hospital at Mbale is Kshs.500/ return by public transport, so two trips for two children per week is Kshs. 2,000/ which comes to Kshs. 8,000/ per month (about £62 sterling). Apart from the financial cost, there is the cost of time taken. Since there are many challenged children to be seen by these experts, it takes a whole day just to go to hospital, wait in the queues, and travel back. By the time the care-giver gets back home, she is too tired to do any work, so that is four whole days in a week spent on taking the two children to hospital!

However, I am not complaining, but just stating a fact. So when you pray, please pray about this challenge because I firmly believe that God has a very special reason for giving us these two children and so He will provide for their needs and give guidance on their upbringing.

### [A dormitory-building for the boys?](#)

With the children growing so fast, Luhya customs dictate that boys should have their own separate house from the girls and all females. In fact our culture requires that this be done immediately they are circumcised, but our boys were too young at the time they were circumcised to even think of separating them. Anyway, I am now thinking of putting up a separate dormitory-building for the boys should funds be available.

At the moment I am thinking of how I can raise the funds needed locally. I think we will need about Kshs.1.5million at most (about £11,670 sterling). The dormitory will need proper wardrobes, bathroom, and a small extra room for a male care-taker in the building. Steven is a

very kind man who is already with us and works as a groundsman and security. He could move in with the boys because they are still young and will still need care (even though they are viewed as young adults according to Luhya tradition, due to the fact that they are circumcised). The young men's dorm is known as 'esimba' in the ki-Luhya language.

### The AFC Visit

On 30<sup>th</sup> of June we had a most interesting visit from a group of Luhya young men and women who live and work in Nairobi and who are all supporters of AFC (**Abaluhya Football Club**). They call themselves AFC Youth Bunyore Branch

*(Bunyore is a sub-tribe of the larger Luhya tribe. There are about 34 different Luhya sub-tribes i.e. in Maseno we are Bunyore of the Luhya tribe).*

The AFC's objective is to give something back to society especially from their own home areas. *(According to Luyias, and I think all Africans, your 'home' is the place where you were born and your 'house' is anywhere else where you may choose to live and work e.g. my home is Maseno, my ancestral home; but my house is in Kakamega. My sister Eugenia's home is Maseno but her house is in Manchester).*

Anyway, these young people came bearing lots of presents for the children. Before they arrived, the children, plus all their friends had to do some practice on how to welcome the visitors.

Here are some pictures.

Riziki, Baraka, Zawadi, Moses (and Winnie Tamara who is not in the picture) belong to a Brigade. It is like Scouts but it is Anglican church-based. Maybe you have it too in England?



In this picture, Moses and Baraka are wearing the Brigade uniform, which they are very proud of. Riziki's and Zawadi's are not yet ready except for the caps.

People usually put on a parade for dignitaries e.g. the Bishop when he is visiting a Parish. Our J&D children wanted to put on a parade for our visitors, but they were too few. So they invited their school-friends to join them and the friends came gladly and practised the whole day while waiting for the visitors. The AFC visitors had said they would arrive at ten o'clock in the morning but ended up arriving at four o'clock in the afternoon!

**Photo:** *The children practising their positions and marching steps in readiness for the parade to be inspected by the guest of honour.*



The kids were overjoyed because they are very proud to be in the Brigade. After the inspection of the parade, the rest of the visitors arrived and with them came the whole village - or so it seemed - you have never seen anything like it!

The AFC visitors arrived in a whole big bus, all the way from Nairobi, which parked some distance away from the children's home. Then they walked the short distance carrying all the gifts. *(This was strategic because they want to popularise the AFC Football club in their home area to get more football supporters).*

The AFC visitors all came accompanied by esikuti dancers- a very popular Luhyia dance. When the esikuti drums are played, one cannot resist joining in the dance - hence the whole village coming out to join in.



**Photo:** *The guest of honour inspecting the parade*

**Esikuti** is a dance accompanied by beating of drums and other local musical instruments. Dancing is performed by everybody - men, women and the children during all sorts of occasions be it wedding, funeral, circumcision, baby christening, harvest, Christmas etc. When the missionaries first came to Luhyia-land, people danced eskuti for them everywhere they went and the missionaries kept on saying 'It's good, it's good!'

Now, Luhyias mix up their letter 'D' with the letter 'T', and also confuse 'R' with 'L,' and 'G' with 'K'. So instead of saying Dora Adoyo, they say Tola Atoyo and instead of saying 'good', they say 'kuti'. So as the missionaries were saying 'It's good, it's good', the Luhyias heard 'esi-kuti, esi-kuti'. They said, "This dance must be known as esi-kuti in English, and so we shall also call it esikuti". So from that time onwards the dance-name changed from 'omutibo' to Esikuti.

The photos below are of the visitors making their grand entry into our J&D home carrying presents accompanied by men, women and children from the village dancing.



The dancing went on for ages. There was a carnival mood, and because they had brought for us so much soda and biscuits, at the end of it I invited everybody to have a soda and some biscuits.

Now, that is a real treat in the village even for adults and everybody was quite pleased with me. However, our children were not so pleased because I gave out the soda and biscuits while they felt that I should have kept it all for them..... but there was no way I was going to give all that soda and biscuits to the children!



Photos: *Everybody joining in the esikuti Dance*

In the photos that follow (next page), we have Zawadi dancing with the esikuti troop and their string puppet nicknamed Awinja; and some of the visitors, our children and some of the presents they brought for the children. The gifts included a lot of soda, biscuits, rice, milk, cooking oil, ndengu beans, clothes, bathroom

slippers, sugar, maize, mosquito nets, plastic mugs and basins.

But what excited the children most was that there was an 18-inch flat screen T.V included! The men in the team of visitors put up the T.V although it could not show any programs and needs a de-coder which they promised to send from Nairobi. The children were still so excited they could not sleep and when they eventually went to bed at 11.00pm, they kept on waking up to come and check if the T.V was really still there. I realise that I will have to down- load some educational programs for them and maybe some cartoons for entertainment, and make sure that they do not spend their time watching programs that do not add value to their lives.

Below is one of the dancers dancing with the green string-puppet and left, some of the gifts that included two bags of Pampers which will be very very useful as we have five babies who still use nappies.



### [The J & D Home: developments](#)

**The water pump:** I did buy the water pump with money given to me by generous friends. However, we still do not have water flowing in the pipes in the house because some plumbing fixtures need to be replaced. I plan to do this in this quarter.

**The book-shelf:** Rosie also gave me some money which I used to buy a bookshelf so that all the story books bought by her and Christine and the textbooks are kept safely.

**What the children need – P.E. Kits:** Last year, the school changed their P.E. kits from Tee-shirts and shorts to track suits. Most of the children in the school now have track suits so our children feel a bit left out. Each track suit costs Kshs. 1,800/ and rubber shoes or otherwise known as games shoes cost about Kshs.600/. If we are to buy these, then we will need Kshs 2,400/ x12 children = Kshs. 28,800/. It is rather a lot of money but I am thinking that we could buy few pairs at a time.

## The J & D Documentary

The long talked-about video-documentary about our J & D Children will, hopefully, see the light of day very soon. I have previewed the draft and made my comments. The final version should be out shortly and I will share it with you as soon as it is ready.

## Neema Women's Group

The Neema Group keeps on growing and reinventing itself! (This is the Women's support/development group which I set up locally, and the women are now very supportive of the J&D children). We are now a very committed group, focused on improving our food production for both home consumption and the market. The chairperson of the group managed to find somebody who can come and train the members in sustainable food production (our extension service is demand-driven). So on 14<sup>th</sup> of this month, agricultural extension staff are coming to talk to us about indigenous vegetable growing as an income-generating activity.

We want to grow indigenous vegetables because they are well liked and there is a ready market for them. Also because here in Bunyore (owing to the land-inheritance system) we have very small nutrient-depleted plots of land which cannot allow for the production of other crops on a large scale.

The extension staff will also talk to us about poultry keeping. Members of the group who are committed can really benefit from these training sessions and I hope that with time, we, as a group can move to the next level.

## Finances

Thanks to you, we are just about managing to cover our basic costs of caring for the children, food, health and school fees. However, it is a real challenge as inflation in Kenya is terribly high and costs keep rising very fast. So we cannot save for future emergencies, health-crises and challenges.

We are so grateful for the regular support which many of you give, that we can depend on. Also it is wonderful that many of you in UK and also many of our friends and supporters in Kenya have been so generous in buying for us special extra gifts of clothes, equipment, books, food and other things which make such a tremendous difference.

I know that this is sacrificial giving on your part, and I want to say a **BIG THANK YOU !!**

Please do not get tired because your work and love are not in vain.

May God Bless you abundantly,

*Floice Adoyo*