

From Flossie Adoyo, Director and 'Mum' of the J&D Children's Centre:

Greetings from all of us at J&D Children's Centre. We are grateful to God for you, and for all the support you have given to us through the years. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless you. The most exciting development here is that the new Boys' House is now half-built!! (see pages 4 and 5) – but let me tell you first about the children themselves:

Now the children are back at school – but they still talk about the exciting celebrations we had in the holidays and even at Christmas, so here are some photos of us all!



We had a wonderful Christmas with many visitors coming to see us. This lovely double-layer cake was made and brought for us by one of our friends. The children had never seen such a beautiful cake before - it was almost too good to eat (but we did!).

Here (*right*) is Wesley looking at the cake with his eyes wide open, amazed at how beautiful it is.



Christmas day was wonderful. With money generously given by you, our supporters, I managed to buy a new garment of

clothes for each of the children. We all put on our nice new clothes, went to church and came back home. We had special Christmas food: chapatis, rice, chicken, meat, ndengu (dried beans), lots of fruits, and then we played the whole afternoon.

Here are seven of the older girls happy in their new Christmas dresses. Standing from left to right are:

Zawadi in white, Riziki in blue, Joyce Neema in pink, Mariana Zubira in a dotted dress, and Zubeda in pale blue. Kneeling are Lulu Tamara, and then in a black blouse is the new girl Khamasi who was sent to us from another orphanage.





Above are some of the children (mostly the older boys) playing with balloons on Christmas day.



Here are the younger boys.

From the left: Fabian, Nathan, Edward, Fidel and Wesley, with their nice new Christmas tee-shirts and jeans.

Confirmation in the Anglican church

Three of the older girls (Riziki, Neema and Tamara), and five of the boys (Steven, Daniel Imani, Tumaini, Baraka and Moses Am'matsi) had asked to be confirmed as a sign of their personal faith in Jesus. (All the children go regularly to Sunday school and services at our local church, and many of them are growing into faith).

The eight children who were going to be confirmed attended confirmation classes every day for about a month in November-December, to make sure they understood the faith-promises they were going to make.



The other children who were not being confirmed, enjoyed singing in a special choir and practising the songs that would be sung at the confirmation and Christmas day services.

Then just before Christmas, on 23rd of December, those eight children were confirmed in the Anglican Church, by Bishop Asilutwa who is a keen supporter of the J&D Children's Centre. (Here we live in his Diocese of Maseno North).

To the left are the girls about to leave the house for the confirmation service. According to Kenyan custom, the girls had to wear white and the boys wore white and black. I bought each one of them a Bible and the Anglican Church prayer book.

After the confirmation service the children danced for about 1 km all the way to the house escorted by the young people from our local church, who then danced outside our J&D house for about 30 minutes before going into the house for prayers.





Nathan Amani with Fabian Mshindi, playing in our garden.

The extra / new children

We now have 32 children and we thank God that they are all doing well and are in good health.

The Government has continued to send some extra children to us who have been made homeless because the Government has assessed their orphanages as 'Failing' and has closed them.

The children who joined us during the past few months include Ashton Otima's twin brother **Jeremiah** who had been taken to a different children's home that was later closed down. We have also received three siblings i.e. **Baraka Obama** (we now have two boys named Baraka Obama!), **Matalisi Khamasi** (a girl) and their brother **Shem** – all three were in a children's home that was also closed by the Government.

One of the other children that was brought to us, named **Gabriel**, had been badly burnt by boiling water on his feet (by his uncles who pretended they were getting rid of infected jiggers in his feet). The boy's mother died some years back and his father abandoned him due to his HIV positive status (never mind that the father is also HIV positive). So the boy went to live with his maternal grandfather, but his uncles did not want him living with them so they deliberately burnt him in order to get rid of him. As a result of the severe burns Gabriel could hardly walk, so he was taken away by the Children's Dept officials and brought to us.

We desperately need extra accommodation!

The existing house at J&D was originally built for 14 children at most, together with three house-mothers and a small bedroom for me. However due to the high demand and requests for the J&D Centre to take in more children, we now have 32 children. As you can imagine, we have serious over-crowding and challenges with accommodation. The smaller children have been sharing beds and some children have had to sleep under the beds.

What we've done to cope temporarily with the extra numbers of children:

- To create sleeping-space at J&D for the children, I had to vacate my room at the J&D home for Andala, Wesley and Gabriel, which means that now I cannot stay there overnight.
- I have renovated a tin hut in the garden (previously the goat shed!) and turned it into a dormitory for six of the boys. The six are: Steven, Am'matsi, Ashton and his brother Jeremiah and the new Baraka Obama and his brother Shem.
- Over the Christmas holidays I had to temporarily move five of the youngest children to my own house an hour's drive away in Kakamega - Fabian, Naomi, Ray, Kinsley and baby Philip – but they are now back in Maseno.
- Recently our numbers did even go up to 34 children, but now it has gone back down to 32 because we have managed to re-unite two of the boys from other orphanages, with their extended families. We hope that we can re-integrate more of the children who have been forced on us during this past year. I have had to engage a social worker on contract basis and

flexible hours to counsel the children; then to locate their relatives; to try to get them to accept the child back; and then re-unite them with the child. We will have to do follow-up of these children to ensure that they are alright. If we rely on the local Government officials to do the re-integration, or even to help in the process, we will never get any child re-integrated. The process is slow and a bit expensive because of transport costs but it is worthy trying.

The Boys' House*

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank to all of you Friends of J&D Children's Centre who have been working so hard to help design and raise money for the J&D Boys House. The exciting news is that it is now half-built – the foundations, walls and roof are completed.

So now we just (!!) need to **raise about £20,000** more to finish the building (the doors, windows, plumbing, wiring, floor tiles, plastering, painting, basic furniture etc). I get so excited and stay awake at night just thinking that the children could soon be able to move in there.



Left: The foundations being finished in mid-March 2020.

We have a very good local Christian Builder / Engineer called George Busolo who is in charge of the project. He and his workers are so committed that they have even been living at the J&D Children's Centre for weeks so that they can continue to build, because of the COVID 19 regulations about not travelling.

Right: The first corrugated-iron roof panels being attached, on 3rd April 2020.

All the roof-panels are now in place (as of 10th April). It will have 3 dormitories, a carer's room, a sitting room, toilets and washrooms (no kitchen as that is in the original house).

* We are calling it the "Boys' House" because it will be mainly for the older boys. In our culture

teenage boys must not sleep in the same house as girls or their sisters. Also most of the extra children who have been sent to us from orphanages which have been closed by the Government,



are boys. This is because orphan girls are more likely to be 'adopted' by families, as girls are useful for doing household work, and when they marry their fiancé will have to pay a dowry to the adoptive 'parents'. By contrast, boys are not considered to be useful, and families will not want to pay dowries for them later....so they do not get adopted.

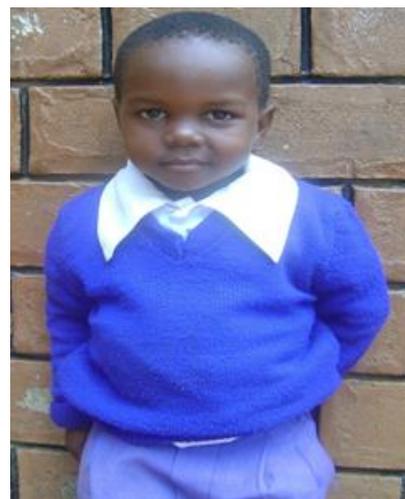
School and education

The children seem to have settled in well in their new school - Ebulako Primary School. Most of them did well in their end-of-year exams and they have all now moved up a class (the Kenyan school year starts each January).

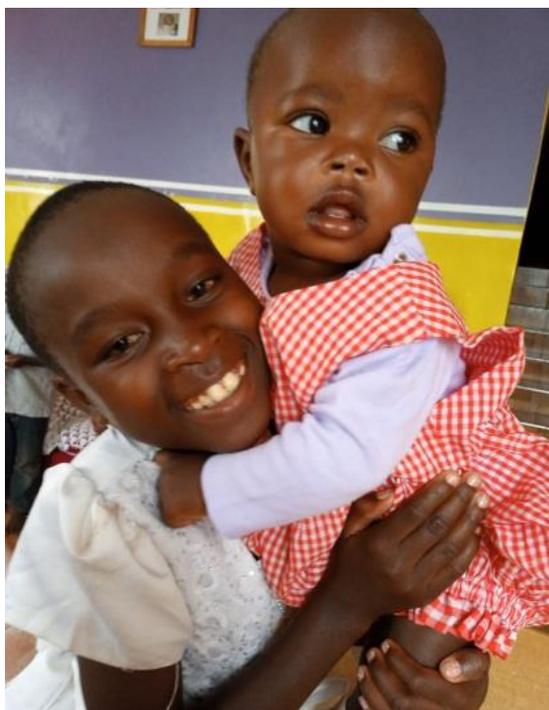
We now have 28 children in primary school (plus the 4 babies who are still too young to go to school).



3 of the oldest children are due to move up to secondary school at the end of next year. There is no free secondary school education in Kenya and fees are very expensive. So our children will have to study hard hoping that they will manage to get a scholarship to one of the high-standard 'National Schools' or 'Provincial Schools'. The local secondary schools are not good and do not offer scholarships.



Nathan Amani and Fidel in their school uniforms



Zawadi with baby Carol

During school holidays the older children are very good at looking after and playing with the younger children and babies.



Above right: Me (Flossie) mending some of the children's clothes



During the holidays we've been having "girls only" talks in my bedroom some evenings, which the girls really enjoyed. The discussions helped them to open up and ask/discuss about things that were bothering them or issues that they did not understand. These were mostly issues to do with expected changes as they get to the adolescence stage and how to handle the changes at puberty.

We are now liaising with a charity which makes re-useable menstrual pads for girls, so that they can keep going to school even when they start their periods.

The boys were very curious to know what we discussed and so I had to have separate discussions with them. I discovered that

the level of ignorance and misconceptions for both the girls and boys was very high. I had assumed that they are taught these things in school but the teachers on their part assume that they will be taught by their parents. The discussions will continue but as the boys turn into teenagers, I will need a young mature man to periodically hold discussions with them and mentor them. I will continue to mentor the girls so that they can build self-confidence, high self-esteem, self-respect and understand the value of hard work; and also to understand where they are coming from and their vision and aspirations for the future.



Above left is Kinsley playing (he has cerebral palsy but after much physiotherapy has recently learned to walk).



Above right are some of the children planting Sukuma wiki (kale) in our vegetable garden. It is a staple Kenya vegetable. We make sure all the children learn good agricultural techniques.

Dear Friends of J&D - I want to take this opportunity to once again say a big, big thank you for your support. Thank you, thank you a thousand times and may God bless you richly.

Flossie