

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

Greetings from all of us here at Julius and Dora Children's Centre, and saying thank you so much for your unfailing support. We are truly indebted and sincerely appreciate the support you give for our sustenance and development. We pray that God will bless you.



Tree-planting

These pictures are from earlier in the Summer when we all planted grevillea trees in our garden compound at Maseno to celebrate World Environment Day. Everybody participated in the tree planting exercise including teacher Twoma, teacher Grace and myself.

Below: Angela and Daniel

Teacher Twoma

Rayson and Steven





Above: Zubira with Kipchoge

Imani Daniel

Zubeda

Below: This large photo below is of all of us having a snack of soda and bread under the palm tree in our garden. The snack was brought to us by the sisters of the local Vihiga branch of the Soroptimists International when they came for a visit recently. They have decided to give their 2021 charity donations to us at J&D in order to **build a dining hall** for the children. They plan to start construction soon.

This will be very helpful, because as you can see, at the moment we have to eat sitting on mats on the ground. Mostly that is OK but if it rains then we are all very squeezed sitting on the floor and armchairs in the house sitting-room. A dining room will also be useful to give the children more space to sit at tables to do their study and home-work.



Adoption

Some good news is that we have managed to find a lovely Christian couple who wish to adopt two of our boys. The parents



are both clergy in the Anglican Church from the local Maseno North Diocese. They do not have children of their own and have already started fostering Nathan Amani and Edward Neli (see the pictures below). They are going through the legal adoption process, but it takes a long time to complete. Nathan and Edward are very happy.



Nathan Amani

Edward Neli

Health

For most of the past year we have all been very healthy, staff and children, and we thank God for protecting us in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic. It has been worrying because very few people in Kenya have been able to have vaccinations, and there are none for children. Also there is no access to Covid tests.

Tragically, one of our youngest babies, Emma, died in October. She had only been with us about two months. She was fine, and then a couple of hours later we found her dead in her bed. We don't know if it was a 'cot death' or she had some undiagnosed heart problem or what. We reported it to the health dept and the local police, but they have not taken any action. We held a sad funeral for her. I suppose that given how sick and neglected some of the babies and children are when they come to us, it is a blessing that no other children have ever died at J&D.....but we are still grieving for Emma.

In October-November, some of the children were unwell with colds and some temperatures, but I'm very glad to say that they have now recovered. Please keep praying for God's protection and for the health of all the children and of us adults who care for them and teach them.

The children's education

This newsletter focuses specially on the education of the children as it is the main area in which we have made significant changes in the children's lives this past year.

Altogether, we have 33 children at the moment - 3 babies and 30 children in school at different levels. We have:

- 13 of the oldest children in boarding primary schools;
- 8 younger ones in the local state primary day school; and
- 9 of the youngest children are doing home schooling at J&D.

Pre-Primary: home schooling at J&D



I am very pleased with the home-schooling program. The 9 children aged 2 – 6 who have been learning at our home with Teacher Grace Musumba, have made tremendous progress and nearly all now know their alphabet, numbering, sounds, capital and small letters and can draw, colour and paint. Some of the older ones like Fabian can read simple words such as cat, cow, cup, and write short sentences.

They can sing, pray, dance and follow instructions. They understand simple English words and instructions and they can use phrases such as ‘thank you,’ ‘please’ ‘excuse me’ and ‘I am sorry.’



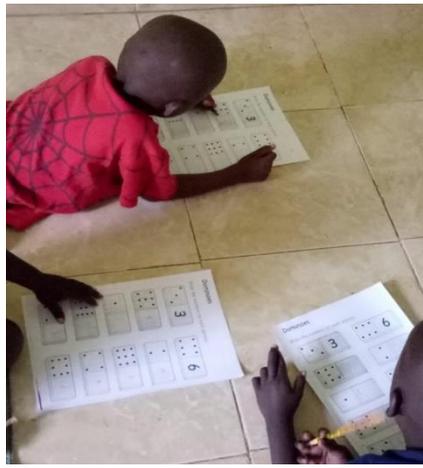
Right – the children singing a clapping song



Left: Play time.

Right: The children enjoy their lessons very much and will run to class shouting ‘Teacher Grace, Teacher Grace’ at the top of their voices once they see their teacher arriving!





Left to right: Kipchoge and Naomi drawing and colouring; Nathan and others learning their numbers; Fidel Brian, age 6, celebrating an achievement!



Left: Philip Etale Kipchoge, aged 2 (the youngest doing home schooling)

Left: Carolyn, Naomi and Angela taking a milk break sitting in the garden.

We are enormously grateful to Teacher Grace Musumba for her dedication to the children and feel very blessed to have someone who is so well trained, imaginative, and loves the children. These 9 children receiving home-schooling with Teacher Grace, have learned and

grown tremendously this past year, now that we have taken them away from the local state nursery school where they were in huge classes and learning nothing at all.

The 13 oldest children in boarding primary schools

Moving from the youngest children to the oldest ones:

I mentioned in the last Newsletter that I was disappointed with the levels of learning of all our older children who had been attending the local state Primary school before the pandemic. Some of the classes have up to 190 children in them, and it is very difficult for the teachers to give them any individual attention. Only very bright children and those who can already read and write, can keep up. The infrastructure of government Primary schools like this one in Maseno is so poor that up to five pupils share one desk, the toilets are few and dilapidated, girls have no privacy and there is no water for washing hands.

After long discussions with teachers, careful consideration and prayer, we decided we must try to send the children to good boarding primary schools. In Kenya, most of the good Primary schools and nearly all Secondary schools, are boarding schools and charge fees. Secondary education is not free, and schools are too few, so it is very competitive to get a place at a Secondary school. So if our children are to have any chance of getting a Secondary education at all, they need to go to good Primary schools which will enable them to pass the entrance exams into Secondary school.

Our 3 eldest children are 13 years old and will be taking the entrance exams in March 2022, so we had to act quickly to enable them to prepare for these exams. I am very glad to say that in April this year (2021) we managed to get places for our 13 eldest children in good medium-cost Primary boarding schools. The average total cost per child in these schools is around **£ 900 per year (for 2022).**



This is very good value compared with the cost of education in UK (!), but it is a big challenge for us at J&D to raise enough money for these fees. We are seeking people who will commit to supporting the children's education, and / or will choose to sponsor particular children.

Please read the separate leaflet that we have made about this.

Some of the older children when they came home for half-term at Maseno:

Standing are Riziki, Neema, Tamara and Zawadi, and in front are Tumaini, Moses and Daniel.

Friends of J&D, this is one of the best actions we could have taken for the future of our children. They are overjoyed at being in these boarding schools and just within a few months they have improved considerably in their academics and outlook.

These schools are well managed and their performance in national exams is very high.

Classes have a maximum of 45 pupils and teachers are highly motivated i.e. the management usually tops up their salaries and so they take interest in each one of their pupils. If a child is lagging behind in class, the teacher will want to find out the reasons and take remedial action. More important is the fact that pupils are taught to think for themselves and not just to memorize things. Since it is boarding, teachers have more time to spend with and know their pupils.

The diet is also very good and nutritious and they are well looked after by support staff in the schools.

I thank God that we were able to find places for our children in good schools, as many people are trying to fill too few places. In this, I must also thank teacher Twoma and teacher Everlyn from the Maseno state primary day-school who gave home-tuition to all our J&D children during the pandemic lockdown in 2020-21 (as the school was closed). These teachers then came with me to

the Boarding Primary schools when the children were doing their interviews in March-April 2021, to ensure that our children were considered favourably. Not all those who pass their interviews get admitted into these particular boarding schools as competition is very high. The two teachers also came with me during the admission process at the start of the first term to ensure that the children settled in well.

The admission process in schools is very, very tedious and can take a whole day.

It is like - *“Go here, go there, have you been to administration, have you paid school fees, have you paid boarding fees, have you spoken to all the class teachers, have you cleared with sister so and so, have you brought your papers, has the child been checked by the matron, this and that item is missing and the child must have it before he is admitted...”* and it goes on and on until the day is gone.

Teachers Twoma and Everlyn were wonderfully helpful as I couldn't be everywhere at once. Other parents don't have so many new children to register for admission at the same time, as we did from J&D (13 of them in 4 different schools)!! I was very grateful for their interest in the children and for their thoughtfulness because for sure, alone I could not have managed.



Above are Zawadi and Neema, proudly wearing their boarding-school uniforms.

- Baraka, Steven, Moses and Daniel are at St Peters Boys Boarding Primary School which is owned by the Catholic church.
- Riziki and Tamara are at St Anne's Girls Boarding Primary School in Mumias, which is a sister school to St Peters boys.
- Tumaini, Emmanuel and Andala are at Mumias Primary Boarding school sponsored by the Anglican Church.
- Zawadi, Neema, Zubeda and Maryanna are at St Mary's Girls Boarding Primary school in Shibuye which is also owned and managed by the Catholic Church.



*Left to right – the 3 oldest children who will be taking their Secondary school entrance exams next March:
Baraka Obama, Riziki Rael and Steven Musheba.*

Our 8 'middle' children in the local Primary day school

These 8 children are some of the ones who were sent to us in recent years from 'failed' orphanages or seriously abusive home situations. Most were traumatized and had received little care or education. They did not come to us as babies.

Although the local government Primary day-school is not very good, as I explained before, we cannot afford to send all these children to fee-paying boarding schools. Anyway they were rather insecure and needed a steady 'home' at J&D, not to be sent away to boarding school. So we are complementing their school education by Teacher Grace giving them extra tuition at home in the afternoons after regular school classes. They are learning and settling down and becoming happier.

Here are some of our day-school children:



Left to right: Samuel Olewa, Gabriel Makanga and Matalis Khamasi



Left: Emmanuel Makokha

Emmanuel is the oldest of these day-school children. He is about ten years old and had never been to school before he recently came here to J&D's. He is trying to learn his numbers, alphabet and sounds. He is keen on his studies and shows a lot of interest in his lessons. He and his brother were sent here in June this year by a court order which indicated that they will be here for a maximum stay of one year while their mother serves a one-year jail term for manslaughter of her husband. It is tragic that the Kenyan government seems to have no strategy or facilities for children like these.

I want to say a big, big thank you to you all, friends of J&D, for making it possible for us to care for all our 33 children and to help them grow and develop. I know that things are currently tough for many of you too, but you sacrifice and give your finances and time to ensure that these children get quality education and that we can meet their other needs.

I promise to do all that is in my power to ensure that each of our children can realize their potential and be the best that they can be.

Thank you so much for your all your support. May God Bless you abundantly.

Flossie Adoyo