

Julius and Dora Children's Centre, Maseno, Kenya

Newsletter 23
Spring-Summer 2022 (sent in July)

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



J & D children, Pre-Primary classes 1 and 2, and baby class, in their uniform (with Flossie Adoyo, and our gardener Stephen)

Greetings from us here at the J&D home. We are all well and thanking God because this far He has brought us. We also give God thanks for you, and say a big, big thank you for all your love for us demonstrated through your unfailing financial, spiritual, moral and material support throughout the past year and all the years that have gone by. We sincerely pray that God will bless you abundantly.

Our children are doing fine and we are grateful to God for his protection and provision. None of the children have been sick in the past few months and we are grateful for this.

New children:

Recently we have taken in two new babies - **Mellissa and Denis**. They were abandoned by their mothers at birth. Mellissa is now four months old and Denis is three months old, and both are doing well.

We also received a girl called **Neema Milkon**. She is about thirteen years old and she is from the Masaai tribe (not from this area). Her mother died when she was very young, and Neema lived with her father, who is a farm hand. Her father wanted to perform FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) on her and then have her married off immediately. (This is the Masaai culture although it is outlawed by the government, it is still rampant and is done secretly). Neema got wind of her father's plans and told her teacher about it, who sheltered her in her house for some time.

However, her father discovered where she was and went to get her back. She ran away to the police station, who passed her on to Children's Services, and they brought her to J&D as they had nowhere to put her. Neema was very fearful that her father could still find her here and drag her back home, so I enrolled her at St Mary's Shibuye Boarding School where our older girls are learning. She is happy there and feels more secure. She is in class seven, is very bright and motivated and doing well.

Adoption

It is almost impossible to find couples who will adopt one of our children because they are afraid of the 'Curse' that is supposed to be attached to babies who are abandoned. However, to our joy, Angela Osita is being fostered by a young couple from Kisumu who have already started the lengthy process of adoption.

Angela Osita



Finding relatives for some of the older children

In the past few months, we have managed to reunite four children with their families/relatives. These were some of the older children who were 'dumped' on us about 3 years ago by the government when they closed many inadequate orphanages around the country. Government policy is that children with known relatives should not stay in a children's home but should live with their relatives. So, after much searching, the relatives (grandparents) of the three siblings Matalis, Baraka Obama 2 and their brother Shem Olando were found and the children were placed with them. They were sad to leave J&D because they have been happy here and did not know what to expect with their grandparents.



Baraka Obama 2



Matalis Khamasi



Shem Olando

The other child who was reunited with his relatives is Gabriel Makaga (see below) who had also been with us for a period of three years too. We pray everything will go well for them all.



Gabrial Makaga (left) also went back to relatives. Samuel and his brother Emmanuel (middle and right) are expected to go back next month hopefully.

We still have five more children who according to these government rules should be sent to live with their relatives, if the relatives can be found. These include Samuel Olewa and his brother Emmanuel Makokha in the picture above (their mother killed their father who was violent, and so she was put in prison for one year because it was not pre-meditated murder but manslaughter. The court ordered that the two boys stay here for one year while their mother serves her one-year jail sentence, which ends very soon).

The other three children who are supposed to be moving on are Clinton Akao, Enos Gadi and his brother Fidel Brian. The children's officers tell me that they are still searching for any relatives.

I managed to arrange a meeting with bosses from the National Children's Services from Nairobi together with the County Director of Children's services in this County. They visited J&D and I explained to them the difficulties of coping with the older children who are sometimes 'dumped' on us by the local officials when they do not know what to do with a child. Sadly these older children have often been abused and have behavioural problems. The officials accepted that J&D is supposed to be for abandoned babies, not for older children who should be in care or fostered. They have promised to try to keep to our charity's purpose, and not impose older children on us. It is tragic to see so many older children in need, but we cannot take them all in, or our existing J&D children will suffer, and we will be diverted from our vocation.



Relaxing and helping around the home

The girls relaxing and posing together

We teach the children domestic, gardening and DIY skills, as well as cleaning and generally being useful around the home.

They mostly enjoy this and compete to do it well! The boys and girls are all involved in doing all the tasks – we try not to let them develop ideas about what is ‘suitable work for girls’ or ‘only work for boys’.



Above: Some of the boys planting vegetables, (kale – ‘sukuma wiki’): Imani cleaning windows and Moses painting the door of the Boys House.



Above left: Riziki and Lulu (in skirt) picking some of our traditional vegetables for our supper.



Right: Teacher Grace gives lessons on sandwich-making with Zubeda and Zawadi, while Zubira watches and takes care of baby Cynthia

The children and their Education

Thank you especially for the generous support you give for the children’s education. It is through this unflinching support that we have been able to provide good boarding schools for the older children, and excellent home-schooling for the younger ones. We are sincerely thankful for this. Being accountable to you for all you have given, I will now give you more information about the children and their education, which is essential to give them an independent future.

Children at Secondary school

In the last newsletter I wrote that 3 of our oldest children (aged 12-13) were due to take their vital National examinations in March 2022 for entry to Secondary School. (Many children in Kenya never go to Secondary School because they do not pass the exams with high enough marks, or their parents cannot afford to pay school fees – there is no free secondary schooling in Kenya).

It is very encouraging that **Baraka, Steven and Riziki** all worked hard and passed well enough to be allocated places at good secondary schools. They were very excited and happy!

We had problems though because this year the Kenyan Ministry of Education has come up with a new policy known as “delocalization” of students. This means that students are being allocated to schools which are far away from their home County, so that they can experience other tribes and areas. Baraka was allocated to a school at the Kenyan Coast (550 miles away, a journey of over 12 hours!). Steven and Riziki were also allocated to schools far away.

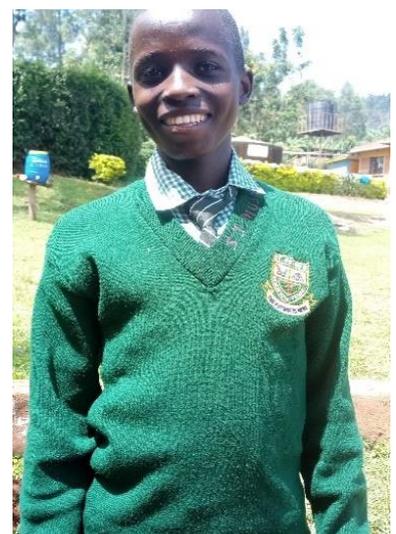
The government’s idea is noble and it might work very well when you have just one child joining secondary school, but when you have three!!!!.....(and next year we will hopefully have several more children at secondary school – Moses, Zubeda, Zubira, Shikuku and Collins Andala will all sit for their National examinations at the end of 2022). It would be distressing for the children to be so far away, and expensive in travel costs. Also it is not practicable for me because as a ‘parent’ I am expected to attend each of our children’s school meetings at least once a term. The meetings include “academic day” forums, parent-teacher’s meetings, form one induction forums for parents, and then there is three days half-term holiday.



Baraka Obama



Riziki Rael



Steven Musheba

We only had a few days in April to find alternative schools for Baraka, Steven and Riziki before term began, so I rushed around, spoke to many head-teachers, and managed to use my ‘networks’ – (in Kenya, one must always have some serious networks!). Praise God that we found them places at three very good schools that are not far away. Baraka is now at Mbita Boys High School - one of the top ‘National schools’ in the country, on Lake Victoria. Riziki is at Keveye Girls High School in Kakamega County, and Steven is at Mbale Boys High School in Vihiga County - both are ‘Extra County schools’, which are almost as good as ‘National schools’. All three children love their new schools and are enjoying themselves. Now in mid-July they have just started their second terms there.

(By the way, I did try hard to get scholarships to help with the school fees for Baraka, Steven and Riziki, and spent weeks earlier in the year getting letters of recommendation, applying and filling in long forms for the banks and other sponsoring organisations. However, it was all to no avail. Many parents use bribery, and anyway there are only a handful of scholarships on offer but over a million applicants!).

Our 15 Primary school children:

Name	Current class/Grade	School	Remarks
Moses Am'matsi	Eight	Neema Grace School	Average. Good in art but not very serious with other subjects.
Tamara Lulu Winfrida	Seven (Repeated a year and changed schools)	St Mary's Shibuye Girls Boarding School.	Has improved a lot and enjoys her new school. Was at St Anne's with Riziki but after Riziki left, felt too lonely and home-sick to stay, so asked to join the other girls at Shibuye.
Zawadi Elizabeth	Seven	St Mary's Shibuye Girls Boarding School.	Doing well but needs to work hard in Maths and is receiving remedial lessons in this.
Neema Joyce	Seven	St Mary's Shibuye Girls Boarding School.	Trying her best though still below average
Neema Milakon	Seven	St Mary's Shibuye Girls Boarding School.	Excellent (<i>she is the Maasai girl I mentioned above</i>)
Imani Daniel	Seven	St Peter's Boys Boarding School.	Is willing and works hard
Tumaini Job	Seven	Central Mumias Boarding School.	Lively and bright but has a "don't care" attitude to academic work
Zubeda Achien'g	Six	St Mary's Shibuye Girls Boarding School.	Works hard
Zubira Marianna	Six	St Mary's Shibuye Girls Boarding School.	Trying her best but is a bit 'scatty'!
Shikuku Emmanuel	Six	Central Mumias Boarding School.	Works hard but still has a "lost look" – from what he suffered before coming to J&D.
Collins Andala	Six	Central Mumias Boarding School.	Is doing very well in class but can be very stubborn.
Samuel Olewa	Four	Ebulako primary day-School	Working hard. Always does his homework without supervision
Clinton Akao	Four	Ebulako Primary day-School	Doing very well in class
Enos Gadi	Three	Ebulako Primary day-School	Working hard but needs supervision
Emmanuel Makokha	One	Ebulako Primary School	Trying to work hard but doesn't yet really understand why he must go to school!

Our education system in Kenya

The school terms: In order to catch up with the schooling that was missed during the Covid lockdowns, in 2022 all Kenyan school-children are having 4 terms squeezed in instead of 3. Each term is about 10 weeks, with only 2 weeks of holiday in between. They have completed two terms already.

The current term is 11th July to 16th September, and the final term will be from 26th September to 25th November.

Challenges for parents (and us!): Our Kenyan education system puts so many demands on the parents that most cannot afford to meet the demands. There are always lists of things that need to be bought. When a parent is unable to buy the items, their child is sent away from school.

Each school and class have a different list, but parents have to provide all text-books, exercise books, pens, and sometimes even desks and chairs.

For each child at boarding school the list also includes:

Metallic box, suitcase, school bag; all bedding, cutlery and crockery; all uniform and clothing; 3 pairs of shoes, Toilet paper, soap, Mosquito net, Tooth paste and tooth-brush, Scratcher/comb, Plastic basin and bucket for carrying water and washing etc.

Now, you can imagine, how can a parent who has no source of income manage to buy all these for their child? Especially if one has two or more children!!

So, friends of J&D, these are some of the very good reasons that make us never to tire thanking God for each one of you, because without your support, none of the children would be where they are today. May God Bless you abundantly.

Our early Primary children, 'Home schooling' at J&D

Our excellent Primary teacher, Grace, is doing very well with the younger children. They are happy and learning much more than previously when we sent them to the local Primary day-school. We have three children in PP2 (**Fabian, Fidel and Edward**) and four in PP1 class (**Rayson, Philip, Carolyn, Naomi**).

The children enjoy their lessons, and always look forward to school days. They are outgoing and participate well in all school activities. Each child has more or less covered the curriculum areas at their level. They have learnt their numbers at least 0-20, all the alphabet sounds, and can sing and dance. They can draw, hold a paint brush and paint simple pictures. The children's social skills have developed and they are able to speak to adults as well as their peers (except for Rayson who is still quite shy and will not speak to adults whom he does not know very well). They are all learning the foundation skills of environment, hygiene and sanitation and can follow instructions. Most of all they very much enjoy snack and nap times!

Some of the older ones like Fabian, Fidel and Edward are also able to solve simple mathematical problems like addition and subtraction. They can write and read story books, and draw good pictures. They have learned to dress and undress themselves comfortably. They are now learning the foundation skills of Swahili, Christian Religious Education (CRE) and social studies (e.g. drawing themselves as an example of God's creation) and learning the weather facts.

Pre-school 'Baby Class'.

Grace's teaching of the 5 youngest pre-school children is also going on very well. **Jonathan, Lucky, Elvis and Abigail** are now able to sit in class, observe and follow instructions. They are learning

how to use the toilet, wash hands and feed themselves. They love singing and are learning colouring.

Kensley (our 8-year-old child who has mild cerebral palsy) is also in the 'Baby class'. He is a happy boy who looks forward to classes and has made tremendous improvement in physical activities. He follows along all activities done in class and has now learnt how to colour and scribble well. Although he cannot speak, he hears and understands things.

Our J&D staff members

I realized that I have never told you much about our wonderful staff team here at J&D. Without their love and hard work we couldn't be able to care for all our babies and children. Here is a bit about them and their backgrounds.

We have five members of staff employed here. One is our Primary teacher Grace. Three are female house-mothers (Monica, Melissa and Syprose) who take care of the children and the day-to-day activities at J&D. We have one male staff member, Stephen, who looks after the garden and compound.

Grace Musumba is our very able nursery school teacher, who did her teacher-training in England. She is a young mother of four lovely boys. The eldest boy is at the same school as three of our boys, at Mumias Central Boarding School. Apart from being our kindergarten school teacher, she also deputizes for me in overseeing the other staff. She is good at her work and she also enjoys being with the children very much. She does not live on site at J&D but commutes to and from her home – she is usually here as early as 7.30am and leaves at about 6.00pm every day except for Sundays.

Monicah Nabuse Nuyale looks after the children and ensures that they are clean, well-fed and that their various needs are met. She particularly focuses on the babies and toddlers and therefore works 24/7. She is about 45 years old and has been separated from her husband for the last ten years. Monicah has one married daughter and two boys who are in secondary school. She pays their school fees from her earnings at J&D. She is dedicated to her work, is very good with the children and does not mind the long working hours especially with the babies.

Melissa Olisa Abulwa is in charge of hygiene at our J&D home. She washes all the clothes (no washing machine!), mops floors and makes sure the home environment is clean. Melissa is about 40 years old and has two sons at primary school. She has rented a small house for her sons and she meets all their needs including paying school fees. She has been separated from her husband for the last fourteen years. They separated when her younger child was only two months old. Melissa enjoys her work and is quick to take instruction and correction.

Syprose Adhiambo Owino is in charge of food. She does all the cooking and washing up, helped by our older children when on school holidays. She is about 55 years old. Syprose is a widow – she lost her husband about a year ago and suddenly became her household's only bread-winner. She therefore had to look for a job to enable her to take care of her four children. She is happy being here at J&D although she is a bit slow in her work, but is kind and cheerful.

Steven Shikondi is our longest-serving staff member. He started working here in 2012 before we even moved the children to Maseno. He is in charge of the grounds - this includes gardening, keeping the environment clean, making sure our fence/hedge is well trimmed and our vegetable

plot is well-tended and productive. He is quiet and kind, plays with the children and acts as a useful security-guard, keeping trespassers away. He has six children of his own and sadly his wife died in 2019. He has not yet re-married because women do not like to take care of so many children who are not their own. He also tells me his children are still too young and he would like them to grow older before he can think of remarrying. His home is about 50kms from Maseno and he visits his children often. When he is at J&D, his parents take care of his children.

All the four staff members live on site at J&D but take a long weekend off once a month to check and care for their own families.

(Note on divorcees: You may be interested to know that here in the Luhyia tribal area, divorce is really frowned upon but separation is tolerated because with separation there is hope of reconciliation. Once dowry has been paid, a woman will stay officially married to her husband for as long as she lives. If she gets married to another man after separating from her first husband, her second 'marriage' will not be counted as real because dowry will not be paid for her – dowry is never paid twice for the same woman. Therefore, when she dies, she will still be buried by her first husband in his ancestral homestead. This is especially so if they had children together. While there are many separated women living alone, there are no separated men living alone because the culture allows the men to remarry because polygamy is culturally and legally allowed).

Construction of the J&D dining hall, kitchen and store

I expect you remember that during the Covid pandemic we managed to build separate accommodation for our older boys, which is working wonderfully.

However, we did not have a proper kitchen, or any dining-room facilities, so the children usually ate outside. The ladies of the local branch of 'Soroptimists International', decided to take on building us a dining-room, kitchen and store and their year's project. We are very grateful to them.

The construction is going on very well and is in fact nearing completion. The building has been roofed, and the walls have been plastered. All that is remaining is to put in the ceiling, fix the glass in the windows and paint the walls.



The J&D dining room, kitchen and store under construction

The dining-room building and its tables will also be very useful for the children when they are doing their home-work from school.

In addition Grace is planning to expand her teaching of the little ones, by opening a small 'Nursery school' in the building. It would be good for our children to get to know some other local children and would expand their horizons. Also it would deepen good relationships between J&D and the community, and would bring in some income from the fees paid by parents.

I will end by thanking you again so much for all your love and generosity, which has made all this possible. I hope you feel encouraged that the children are happy and are learning and growing well.

From your sister in faith

Flossie Adoyo