

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

Receive Eastertide greetings from us here at the Julius and Dora Children's Centre (J&D) !!

**A letter from the children**

**16 of our eldest children** decided they wanted to write directly to you themselves, so they have put their heads together and written a shared letter, which they have asked me to send to you. I have not suggested or corrected any of the contents! Here it is below.....

*(I tried to photograph their actual hand-written letter, but the photo wasn't clear enough so I have typed out their words exactly as they wrote it. They each signed the letter personally):*

To Our Friends in England, Spring 2023

Julius and Dora Children  
P.O.Box 16, Maseno

Our dear friends from England

How are you? We hope you are fine and healthy and happy as a fish swimming in Lake Victoria. us here at Julius and Dora, we are fine and fit as a fiddle. We send you bubbles and showers of greetings like rain falling on the mountain.

The main aim of writing this letter is to give thanks to all of you. We are as lucky as a child born on a Friday to have friends with big hearts like you. You give Mummy great support in everything she does. You make us feel loved, protected and cared for. You have been so kind to us and we give thanks to the Almighty God for you.

Here at Julius and Dora, we do computer studies and learn French too. Examples: greetings, alphabets, colours and numbers. Greetings like 'Bonjour' and 'Salut' - meaning hi or hello.

We pray to God to bless you abundantly and may you never lack.

We promise not to let you down. We will work as hard as bees so that we get good grades in school. We love you very much. We had a long fantastic holiday with Aunty Eugenia at Christmas, who bought for us our first computer. Now the Easter holiday is over too and we must go back to school. We promise to work very hard and be good girls and boys.

Yours Sincerely,

Rael Riziki, Neema Milakon, Joyce Neema, Winnifrida Tamara, Elizabeth Zawadi, Maryanne Zubira, Zubeda Achieng and Baraka Obama, Job Tumaini, Steven Musheba, Collins Andala, Enos Gadi, Daniel Imani, Emmanuel Shikuku, Moses Am'matsi and Clinton Akao

As you can see, the children are very proud of the fact that Teacher Grace has been teaching them some French in the holidays! This will be their third language as they speak Swahili and English already. Also they are very excited that they have been able to start using a computer for the first time (more about that below).

We are all well and thanking God for His mercies which are new every morning. We give God thanks for you, friends of J&D for your love revealed through your financial, spiritual and moral support for us. We are sincerely grateful and continually thank God for you and pray that He will bless you abundantly.

## The holidays

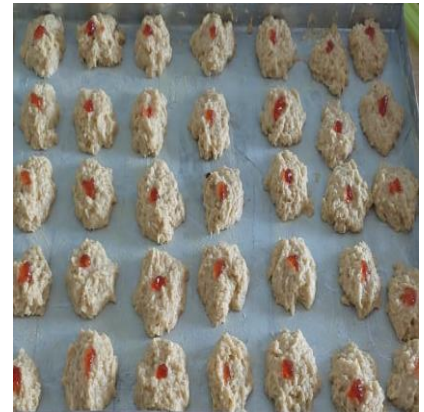
The 'Easter' holidays are just starting here - the Primary school boys arrived home today (19<sup>th</sup> April), and the three at Secondary School will arrive tomorrow. Much excitement all round!!

Since I last wrote, we had two months of Christmas holidays, and Aunty Eugeniah and Aunty Joan visited us (two of my sisters who live in England. Reverend Eugeniah is the Chair of the 'Friends of Julius and Dora Children's Centre'). It was lovely to see them here and talk with them.



We did a lot of exciting things together with the children, playing, talking, cooking and baking nice cakes and scones.

*Eugeniah (with the yellow flower), Joan and Steven baking us some delicious scones.*



(Steven is one of our eldest boys and is becoming very keen on cooking!).

Helping in the kitchen is one of the most popular of the 'household tasks' which the children all do in turns. They love being able to lick out the bowls!)

We also took all the children to visit the [Impala Animal Sanctuary](#) on the edge of the nearest town Kisumu (beside Lake Victoria) which was very interesting and enjoyable. It was a major expedition! I wrote about it in my last newsletter just before Christmas, but I am sending you a few more photos....



***Below - Aunt Joan with the children on a trip to the Impala Animal Sanctuary in Kisumu***



At the animal sanctuary we saw monkeys playing in the trees, and when we sat down to eat, they came and played with us and wanted some of our food. We also saw lions - just lying under the trees and lazing around.

We saw zebras and Baraka went to play with them and then we saw a cheetah up in a tree, and an ostrich.

We walked around the park and after that we sat down exhausted, hungry and very thirsty. We had lots of nice food like pizza, madasi, fruit, soda and a lot of other food stuffs that we had carried with us.

We feasted until we could not eat any more and simply lay down like those lazy lions we had just seen.

After resting, we were ready for a boat ride on Lake Victoria. None of the children had ever been on a boat before! Then we went back home exhausted but very happy like the fish swimming in the lake!



Aunty Joan had to leave us before Christmas to go back to England because her grandchildren in Oxford and Bristol needed her for Christmas, but Aunty Eugeniah stayed on and spent Christmas with us. We hope that they will come and visit as again.

*The children with Aunt Monica (one of our Carers) having fun dressing up and taking pictures.*



The children had fun doing many other activities during the holidays. They also did some more 'serious' things like keeping up with all the homework they had been given from school, and doing some studying with Teacher Twoma assisting them. (He comes from the local school to give our children extra tuition).

The children also took turns helping our Carers with the house-work, cooking and gardening, and helping to take care of the babies. It's important for them to learn these home / family skills.

### **Computers arriving!**

We were very excited that Aunty Eugenia had donated a laptop computer to us at J&D, and then I arranged for a computer trainer to come here to train us. He stayed here the whole day for several days so that as many of the children as possible could learn the computer.

The children are supposed to learn 'Computer Studies' at school, but hardly any schools in Kenya have computers. So often the teacher just teaches them theory and shows them photos and says "This is a picture of a mouse...this is a keyboard" ....!!

A charity called "Afrinspire" based in Cambridge, has very generously donated four refurbished laptop computers to us. Two kind supporters brought the computers with them recently when they were travelling to Kenya on holiday. (It is not possible to send computers by post or even by delivery companies to Kenya, because they are always stolen at Customs or just 'disappear' on the way).

My son Julius has now collected the computers in Nairobi and will bring them soon to J&D when he next visits us here. The children are very excited and can hardly wait for next holidays to continue with discovering how to use the computers.

We hope that learning IT skills will give our children valuable opportunities which will help them to find jobs when they leave school.

### **Completing the new J&D dining hall and kitchen**

It is very exciting that recently one of you kind supporters of 'Friends of Julius and Dora' has anonymously donated a very large and generous gift of money. It will be enough to complete the remaining work on the newly-built dining room and kitchen to make them fully useable.

First of all, let me say a huge thank you. Thank you, a thousand times!! We are very grateful. We have already gone ahead with the work, and here are some photos:

We have just finished putting floor-tiles in the kitchen, dining hall and outside:

*Kitchen floor*



*Dining room floor*



*Outside the dining room*



A local carpenter is making the furniture at his workshop in Kisumu - cupboards, tables, chairs, etc - and it will be ready by this Friday the 21<sup>st</sup>.

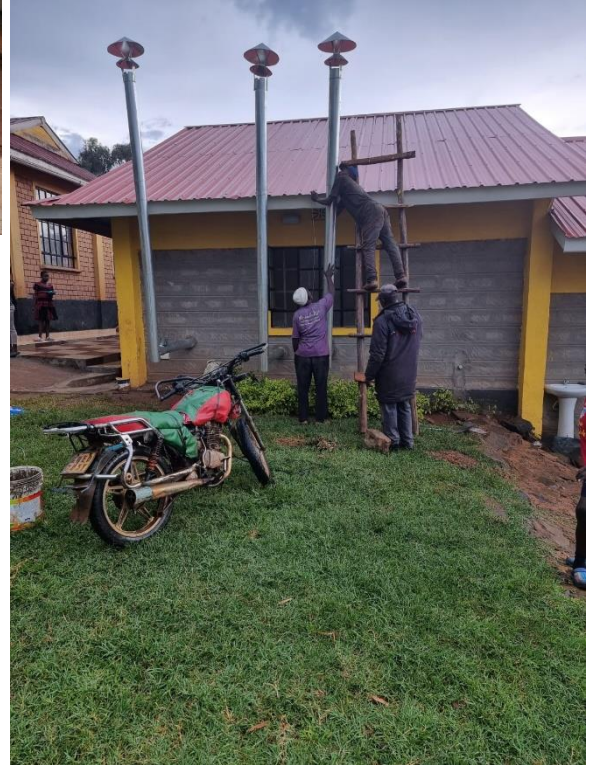
*Here are some of the wooden chairs and also the metal shelving for the larder store, being made in the workshop.*





Other workmen are installing the energy-saving stoves right now for our kitchen. Here is a picture of our new cooking stove which I am very proud of because, although expensive, it is very efficient and fuelwood saving. It uses firewood.

*On the right is a photo of the new kitchen (attached to the end of the dining room). The workmen are putting up the new chimneys to direct the smoke from our cooking stove to the outside so our kitchen will remain very clean and smokeless.*



*On the left is the new kitchen sink*

*We have had three large pans specially made, so we can cook for all of us!*



Most of the work is done now except for the dining tables which are still in the process.

We are very grateful for all these and we just thank God for His provision. One problem we encountered was that when we went to purchase the materials, prices had increased so much more in the past couple of months that I had to borrow a total of Ks. 350,000 to complete the works to the required standard and pay the artisans. All the same we just thank God. It is something that I never even dreamed could happen.

All this will make a huge difference for us. The kitchen will be much better and bigger than the small smoky tin hut we have had to use until now. The dining room is much the largest room at J&D, and will be brilliant not just for meals but for the children to do their homework at the tables, play games, entertain visitors etc.

## Visitors!

The children love having visitors to J&D, talking to them, playing with them, sharing snacks with them (!) and finding out what they do.

We encourage visitors to come so that the children meet a wider variety of people and get a broader outlook on life. Also we want people to know what we are doing at J&D, and to break down some of the widespread prejudices and superstitions about abandoned babies and children.

In the holidays we received very many visitors including some of my cousins and other relatives - about 30 of them!

We also had a visit from members of the Sunday School and the Youth Groups from our church in Maseno, about 50 of them.

***Maseno University students visited us and the children posed for a photo with them on the steps of our new 'Boys House' which was built during the Covid pandemic.***



We were also visited by a group of Christians from Kakamega Anglican church, and a group of men and women from 'Life-Straw' group who deal with promoting access to clean water.

The children were delighted (especially the boys!) when we were visited by some fans of **Manchester United football club** - yes, the same English football club as in UK.

*Here they are in the photo on the right:*

The fans brought sacks of gifts and food for the children.



**More about the individual children:**

For some time we have had 32 children at J&D, but several more have recently been sent to us by the Social Services, so now we have 37 children.

**Our youngest babies:**

Name	Date of Birth
Davis Jonathan Keya	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
David Michael Opinyi	17 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
Joseph Miracle Obanda	17 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
Dalia Blessing	20 <sup>th</sup> June 2021

Davis, David and Joseph were all abandoned babies, and have been with us at J&D since they were found as new-borns. Unless adopted (which is likely for baby David Opinyi), they will probably stay with us for a long time because they were born as a result of incest and so are viewed as cursed.

Davis Keya has a serious condition with his spinal cord which makes it necessary for him to be taken to referral hospital in Mbale once a week for physiotherapy. Doctors are hopeful that his condition will improve and he will be able to walk.

Dalia was also abandoned at birth but is now nearly two years old and was not sent to us by Social Services until very recently (in March).

**Mercy Andika** (about one and a half years old) was abandoned by her birth mother and was brought to us recently while social workers looked for any of her relatives. Fortunately, they found her father who works in Nairobi as a casual laborer - he was willing to take her and care for her so she left us to go and live with him.



### Three abused young girls have also been sent to us temporarily:

**Rita Asiko** was sexually defiled/raped by her stepfather and chased away from home. She was brought to us at J&D for protection and care while the case against her stepfather is going on in court. She was in the top class of Primary school and was almost made to drop out of school since by the time she came to us, class eight registration for the national exams in December was almost over. However, we managed to get her registered in a day school nearby on humanitarian grounds. She will therefore have to stay with us until after she sits her national exams in December.

**Marie Ayuko** was also sexually defiled by her father and the case is in court. She has never been to school and is mentally challenged although not severely. Once the case is through, she will be taken to a different home. However, the case might be dismissed because she has refused to give evidence against the father as he threatened her so much. If that happens, then she may be forced to go back to her father where she was defiled. She cannot stay here as we cannot help her in any real way. Please do pray for her. The next hearing of her case is on 18<sup>th</sup> May.

**Grace Anindo** too was sexually defiled by a close relative; Grace came to us for protection and care while the case continued in court. The case was concluded and the perpetrator jailed. Grace is going to be taken to a different home where she can continue with her schooling.

J&D was set up especially to save and help abandoned babies, so older children like Rita, Marie and Grace should not really be sent to us. However, Social Services are desperate because there is nowhere else to send these children who have been abused.

### Our children who are at school

Education is so crucial in Kenya – unemployment is extremely high and there is no chance of a job (or even an apprenticeship or a place in a polytechnic) unless one completes Secondary School and gets good results.

The academic year runs from January to December in Kenya, with the main long holidays at Christmas time. So now (mid-April) the children are just completing their first term of the 2023 year and are looking forward to spending the two-week Spring holiday at home.

#### Riziki, Baraka and Steven in Secondary School, Form Two

Our three eldest children are now in the second year of high school. Riziki Rael, Baraka Obama and Steven Musheba have settled in well in their respective schools, and are happy. They all worked hard and kept up with the rest of their class-mates in their first year in secondary school and all were promoted to form two this year.

Here in Kenya, some secondary schools expel academically weak students from school. E.g. if your child is constantly in the last ten students during school tests and exams, the parent is asked to transfer them to a different school because it is feared that they will contribute to lowering the school's average score during national examinations. And so we thank God that our three are doing relatively well and have moved up to the next form.

Children have to attain at least a Grade 'C+' in order to get a University place in that subject. (There are 9 obligatory subjects at Secondary school, and 3 optional ones).

Baraka has done very well and attained above grade B in all except 2 subjects.

Riziki has done well (above grade C+) in English, Kiswahili, History, CRE, and Business studies.

Steven has also done well (above grade C+) in English, Kiswahili, History, CRE, and Business studies.

## Moses in Secondary School, Form One

Moses finds academic work challenging. He got below 50% in his entry exams for secondary school and was feeling low motivation. However, during the Christmas holidays I went around to many schools trying to find him a place in a good school, and eventually succeeded. He is now at Hobunaka Secondary School.

I am very pleased that Moses has really improved in his behaviour. He is now very disciplined, respectful and helpful around the home. He has stopped unnecessary grumbles and will offer to carry out tasks and chores that others avoid doing. So generally, I am happy with him!

## Our children in the top form of Primary School (Class 8)

This year we have six children in class eight (the top Primary class), who will sit for their national exams at the end of 2023 and transition to secondary schools. They are: **Neema Milakon, Joyce Neema, Winnifreda Tamara, Elizabeth Zawadi, Daniel Imani and Tumaini Job.**

During the Christmas holidays I had lots and lots of discussions with these six children individually and in groups, to try to encourage and motivate them. They all promised to work hard so that they can be admitted to national secondary schools (that is, the best schools which take the top students from all across Kenya).

I thought you might like to hear how some of the conversations went. They are such lovely children and some were very funny!

### Discussion with Daniel Imani

Daniel, Mum I have something to ask you.  
Flossie, Yes, ask me anything you want to know;  
Daniel, Mum, I am not stupid, am I?  
Flossie, No Daniel, you are not stupid, you are a very bright young man!  
Daniel, I want to go to Alliance Boys High School. (*One of the very best schools in Kenya*);  
Flossie, I am sure you can go to Alliance Boys High school but you must focus on your studies and work very hard. Students do not go to Alliance Boys by dreaming that they are in Alliance, but by working hard.  
Daniel, I promise to work very hard and get over 400 marks in my KCPE exams.  
Flossie, What is there to show me that you are going to work? What are you going to do differently from what you have been doing?  
Daniel, First, from the time term one starts, I'm going to part company from my naughty friends who are all jokers and never pay attention in class;  
Flossie, Eehee!! And secondly??  
Daniel, I usually sit at the back of the class room and play with my friends while lessons are going on. From this term onwards, I will sit at the front desk and pay attention to the teacher.  
Flossie, Good! And is there a Third?  
Daniel, I'll make sure I finish my assignments and ask teachers for explanations if I don't understand.  
Flossie, I am now sure you will make it to Alliance Boys High School if you keep your promises. I will be praying for you.

So far Daniel has kept his word. He has improved greatly from getting under 250 marks (out of 500) to getting 407 marks in the last exam they did. His teachers are very pleased with him and so am I. I pray that he keeps on working hard so that he can get to his dream school.

### Discussion with Zawadi

Flossie: Tell me Zawadi, what mark are you aiming to get in your KCPE exams?  
Zawadi: 420 marks (*out of 500*);  
Flossie: What school do you want to go to?  
Zawadi: I will go by your choice;

Flossie:	And if you were to select a school yourself?
Zawadi:	I would select 'Limuru Girls' or 'Kipsigis Girls'. Mum, if I get 400 marks and above, will you give me a present?
Flossie:	Yes, I will give you a present. What present would you like?
Zawadi:	I would like to go to England for a holiday;
Flossie:	Waaah! Why do you want to go to England?
Zawadi:	To visit Aunty Eugenia and our friends who you told us live there. I also want to see the snow and the Queen too.
Flossie:	I'm afraid a trip to England will be too expensive, so you will have to choose a different present if you get over 400 marks. In any case, the queen is no longer there. She died.
Zawadi:	Aaaah Mummy, are you sure the queen died? Our teacher never told us. Alright then. Let me think of another present and then I will tell you when you come to see us in school.

<b>Discussion with Tumaini</b>	
Tumaini,	Mum, I have a secret;
Flossie,	Would you like to share it with me?
Tumaini,	Yes, but when we are alone. I'll come when everybody else is watching T.V.
Flossie,	Sawa. <i>(Alright)</i>
Tumaini,	<i>(Later)</i> . I've come now, can we talk? I want to tell you that I am not going to allow these girls like Zawadi and Neema to beat me in my KCPE exams. I am going to show them 'dust'! <i>(Leave them behind on a dusty road)</i> . But please don't tell them that I told you!
Flossie,	That will be very nice but you have to work very hard, seeing that Neema was top in her class in the end-of-term exams and Zawadi was sixth overall.
Tumaini,	I am going to work very hard but can you talk to teacher Omoto <i>(Tumaini's class teacher)</i> and ask him to give me tutorials in mathematics?
Flossie,	Yes I will, and I am sure you will manage to show the girls some 'dust' in the exam!
<p>Tumaini too seems to be keeping his promise of working hard. I was at his school recently and his teacher told me that they could not believe the change in him. He is much happier, concentrates on his studies and has a much more positive attitude towards school work than before. The teacher asked me, <i>'What did you do to him during the holidays? He has changed so much for the better'</i>.</p>	

## Our children in Junior Secondary schools

We have four children in the new education system of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). (Kenya changed its education system this year and has invented these new Junior Secondary Schools).

The four children are **Zubeda, Zubira, Emmanuel and Andala**. This is the first class ever of junior secondary. In this new system, children will only spend 6 years in Primary School, instead of 8. Then they sit a new national examination and transition to Junior Secondary school for two years. After that, more exams and (hopefully) going on to so-called 'Senior' Secondary school.

Teachers are still very confused about this new system because the Government of Kenya has not worked out all the details. It has not been thought through properly and few teachers have been trained in it. Fortunately for us, Mumias Central School where our three boys are learning is the national development and training centre for the new CBC system, so anything new starts here.

## Home schooling

**We have 12 children in home-schooling who are taught at J&D by our teacher Grace.**



On the left are the older of the twelve home-schooling children: Fidel, Fabian, Edward and Carolyn all in the back row. The front row is Rayson in the printed waistcoat, and Philip Etale.

They are wearing pinafore-tops to keep them clean, all ready for a class of doing some moulding with play-dough and clay.

In the next picture, the younger ones take a nap on a mattress so that teacher Grace can keep an eye on them all.



I hope you enjoyed the photos of all the children which I sent in the last Newsletter 24. Below are their brief home-schooling reports from our Teacher Grace:

**1. Fabian Ushindi** (born 1<sup>st</sup> December 2014)

Fabian has worked well this past year and improved a lot in most of the learning areas. He is a fast learner, has completed the kindergarten curriculum, and graduated happily to grade one of Primary. Fabian is a very hardworking and promising boy. Well done Fabian.

**2. Fidel Brian** (about 7 years old)

Fidel has worked well and settled into grade one Primary. He participates keenly and is always ready to take any challenge he comes across. He shows a lot of interest in most subjects. Good job Fidel.

**3. Edward Nelly** (about 7 years old)

Edward has made a lot of improvements in his academic work given that he had not had much schooling before coming to us. He has graduated from the kindergarten and is settling well in grade one of Primary. Keep it up Edward.

**4. Naomi Ruth** (born 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2016)

Naomi is a bit reserved and shy but looks forward to school every day. She's learning and acquiring concepts at her own pace. She has learnt how to form letters 'a' - 'e' and numbers '0 - 5', to draw pictures and mould using play-dough. She has also learnt few words in English. Keep it up Naomi.

**5. Janell Mkamiti** (*about 6 years old*)

(*Janell joined us recently but had been neglected and not taught anything*). She has settled well into our J&D home and class. She is working on her foundational skills - her finger muscles need a lot of practice so as to be able to form numbers and letters. She looks forward to class activities and participates very well. She is approaching meeting the Expectations.

**6. Carolyn Sara Aseka** (*born 19<sup>th</sup> October 2018*)

Caro has worked well throughout the term and has shown a lot of improvement over the last two years of school. She's learned her sounds 'a -d 'by heart and to z by sight, and numbers '0 - 20 '.

**7. Kensley Mushindi** (*born 26<sup>th</sup> October 2014, aged 8*)

Kensley has cerebral palsy but is a happy boy who looks forward to our home-school sessions and participates well with the other children. He has learnt most of the things taught in class and can show this through colouring, modelling and movement activities, though he cannot speak. We are looking for a good school that will take care of his special needs, but is not too expensive and also not too far away.

**8. Rayson Adams Otieno** (*born 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018*)

Ray has worked well throughout the academic year and has participated well in most areas of the curriculum. He is able to read all the sounds by sight and say the numbers '0-20' Ray has also learnt the use of few words in English and can converse too. He is able to form sounds 'a- c ' , numbers '0-3' and therefore he is ready to go to the next class for more work. Good Job Ray.

**9. Philip Etale** (*Born 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2019*)

Philip is a very happy boy who enjoys learning every day and participates well in both group and personal activities. He confidently performs challenging tasks at all times. Philip is always enthusiastic in class and enjoys specifically dance and singing sessions. He often takes leader roles in group work activities; he also understands concepts well and can answer questions spontaneously. Philip is very expressive; he is able to express both his needs in English and Swahili to his peers and adults. Philip works independently and takes care of his things, shows responsibility and follows directions well. Well done Philip.

**10. Abigail Ondiso** (*born 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020*)

Abigail has demonstrated very good progress this year, matured nicely both academically and socially. She is learning how to be a better listener and takes directions well. Abigail has good knowledge of use of colours and understands the concept of colouring within the boundaries of a drawing. She shows enthusiasm for classroom activities. Keep it up Abby.

**11. Jonathan 'Lucky' Bahati** (*born 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020*)

Jonathan is an enthusiastic learner who seems to enjoy school and has a positive attitude. He shows initiative and looks for new ways to get involved and to deal with matters independently and positively. Great Job Jonathan.

**12. Elvis Wanjala** (*born 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020*)

Elvis has worked well throughout the year and has learnt to kick and throw a ball. He can answer simple questions, sing along with the play songs, colour and mould. His cognitive skills are still developing. He is learning how to be a better listener and takes instructions. You have worked and tried hard Elvis.

## Government Inspection of J&D

The Government of Kenya has decided that there will be no more registration of new children's homes but those already registered will be renewed and allowed to continue with their operations as long as they meet government regulations. Officials from the National Children's Services Council inspected all registered children's homes. They came to J&D on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and judged us as excellent.

However, it has taken a whole year for the local County Inspection Team to be constituted and to verify us. They came recently and gave us a very favourable report - in fact they thought that we were too clean! It's true we put a lot of emphasis on cleanliness because of the babies.

They were also impressed that all our staff have good conduct certificates and health certificates, and that we have managed to obtain birth certificates for most of the children.

The inspection team wouldn't believe that we really feed our children so well. (Sadly, presumably other children's homes don't??). Our menus are varied and use the local staple foods: e.g. for the main course the children have maize and beans, or rice and ndengu beans, or chapati and beans, or maize / millet porridge and vegetables/meat/fish. They also have tea/bread/sweet potatoes, fruit in season and milk + cereal for the babies.

Anyway, generally the inspectors were quite impressed.

For improvements, they suggested that:

- a) fencing around the compound needs to be reinforced;
- b) we should have proper fire extinguishers (currently we have sand ready in buckets);
- c) we should buy a fire-proof, strong and lockable filing cabinet to keep our official documents and the children's records more secure.

## Lack of facilities in this area for needy babies and children

I attended the Advisory County Council meeting (which vets children's homes before they can be re-registered and is chaired by the County Commissioner) on 12<sup>th</sup> April. We (J&D) were highly recommended for re-registration, which is very good news!

Unfortunately for us, we are now the only children's home in Vihiga County that is registered. The other homes already operating in the area did not meet the thresh-hold for re-registration and were therefore not recommended. This could create a lot of problems for us here at J&D, with too many children being sent to us because there is nowhere else for them to go.

However, I am in discussions with the Children's Officer and the Children's County Director to come up with ways of dealing with the situation. There are so many defilement/rape cases resulting in early pregnancies and increased numbers of abandoned babies born within the county. Just one children's home, i.e. J&D, cannot possibly deal with them all. We do not have the capacity to do so. I will keep you informed of the outcome of our discussions but at least there is a ray of hope that something is being done.

**Please continue to pray for our children here.** They are wonderful, loving, courageous and have tremendous potential, but need our love and care. Thank you again so much for all your support and generosity. God bless you.

*Flossie*