



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

Greetings from all of us here at J & D. We thank God for bringing us safely into this year 2024, and we sincerely thank Him for you Friends of J & D, for your love, support and care over the years - without which we would be nonexistent. Thank you so much. We continue to pray that God will bless you with health and a long and peaceful life.

**It's the Easter Holidays!**

The children who are at boarding school have come home for their short 3-week post-Easter holidays in April (it is later than in UK). It is lovely that we are all together. The children are excited to see each-other, and there is a lot of noise, fun and activity going on!

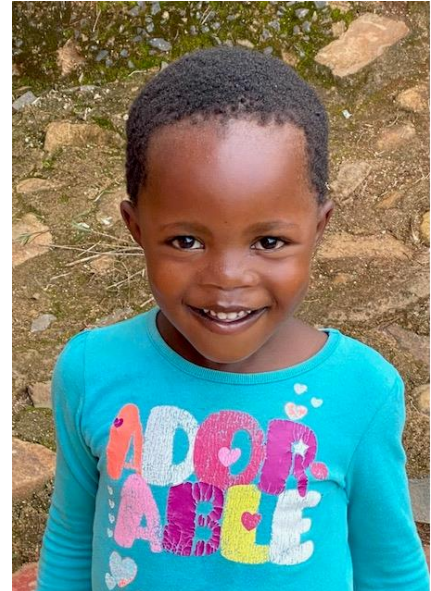


*Here is a picture taken in our garden just before sunset of most of our J&D children (though the very small babies were asleep at the time).*

We have 38 children living at J&D now (a new baby Noah arrived in February), and I will tell you more about how your support is enabling them to live full and active lives!



Here (right) is an 'adorable' picture of **Carolyn** (aged five) with her infectious smile! It's her favourite shirt.



In January six of the children moved up from Primary to Secondary, and four others also started at new boarding schools, so it is very encouraging to hear now how well they are getting on. (More about their Education further on in my letter).

Each holiday, I make sure I set aside a long time to have a good discussion with every child separately. We talk about any issues that are bothering them, look for solutions, and I praise and encourage them, challenge any bad behaviour and pray for them. One of the girls has issues with being bullied, but otherwise they are mostly settled and happy.



**Daniel Imani** (photo on left) is really glowing, which is lovely to see. He is glad to have escaped some boys at his old school who were a bad influence on him, and he loves his new school. Daniel now has several good new friends, has become a leader in the Christian Union, and is doing very well academically. This holidays he has started organising the daily evening prayers which we have for all the children at J&D. He chooses the passages of scripture and creates a rota for readers and prayer-leaders.

**Moses' accident:** Two days ago (19<sup>th</sup> April) as I was writing this newsletter, we had an emergency. Moses Am'matsi was the first-ever baby we rescued, in October 2007, so he is now 16 years old. Early in the morning he took our Watchman's bicycle without permission and cycled into Maseno town. He crashed into a moving car and has badly broken one of his legs. He is in the local hospital, and they say that he needs to have the bones pinned etc. However, all the State doctors in Kenya are on long-term strike because the Government isn't paying them the agreed salary, so we will have to find a private doctor (cost c. £1,500). One of our J&D Trustees has made an emergency donation, and we hope to arrange an operation quickly.

## Water supply

As you can imagine, with 37 children and so much washing to be done daily by hand, we have to use a lot of water. (Here is a day's worth of washing drying!)

Recently around Easter two 'Friends of J&D', **Bridget and Mike**, visited Kenya and came to see us at the Children's Centre. It was lovely to see them. Also they have very generously given us a donation to buy another rainwater-collection tank.





Between Christmas and early January, for 2 weeks the whole town of Maseno had no water supply. Even the University and the hospital had no water. We were blessed in that our large concrete water tank which was built by other supporters a few years ago, had enough water in it to last us most of that time, but at the end we still had to buy some very expensive drinking water from the mobile tanker-lorries. Hopefully with an extra rainwater tank we will now be able to cope whenever the municipal supply goes off (which happens often!).

Before I tell you more about how the children are, I must mention one very important need:

### **IMPORTANT - Appointing a J&D Manager**

While our Trustees Amiel Osmaston and Eugenia Adoyo were here in January (*see more about their visit below*), we had some serious discussions about the future of J&D and its management.

For example, I said "I am now 74. When my Maker decides that it's time for me to go and meet Him, what would happen to J&D?" Of course we have considered this before, but as I have been ill recently it seems important to implement some decisions soon. (I have been diagnosed with diabetes and have very limited mobility because of increasingly severe pain caused by spinal injuries from a car accident many years ago).

The Friends of J&D Trustees, including Amiel and Eugenia, believe that we need a Manager for J&D to be my Assistant and to learn from me the role of being in charge of running the home. The salary would need to cover accommodation for the Manager in Maseno, as we do not have any spare room at J&D.

It would put my mind at rest to know that the long-term future of J&D is secure. The J&D Trust owns our own land and buildings, but in addition to that security we need experienced dependable staff who we know will be around for many years. Our youngest children are under one year old, so we must make sure we can be here to look after them for at least 20 more years!

Over the past couple of years, Teacher Grace has been helping me a tremendous amount, working much more than the hours she is supposed to do as our Nursery School Teacher. If we had a Manager then Grace could concentrate on teaching the younger children and also have more time for her own young family. I would work with the Manager and hand over to him / her gradually. I thought this was a good idea and we clarified a Role-description and some Terms of Service.

**So we are hoping and praying that we will be able to raise enough extra money to pay a regular salary to employ a J&D Manager. This is a real challenge!!**

**Please if any of you "Friends of J&D" and readers of this Newsletter could give some money regularly towards a salary for the Manager, that would be wonderful.** (Though I hesitate to ask because you all give so generously already to the work of J&D – bless you!).

**Also if anyone knows a charity we could apply to, or any other way of raising the salary for a Manager, please contact Eugenia Adoyo [maseno@icloud.com](mailto:maseno@icloud.com) or Amiel Osmaston [amiel.osmaston4215@outlook.com](mailto:amiel.osmaston4215@outlook.com) or our Treasurer Jim Dobson [jimf Dobson@gmail.com](mailto:jimf Dobson@gmail.com)**



## Christmas Holidays

Looking further back, so as to catch you up with the news since I last wrote in December:

All the children were together for two months at home at J&D over the long Christmas holidays which they really enjoyed, before the new school year began in early January.

**Diocesan Music Festival:** During the holidays, four of the older children (Riziki, Zawadi, Neema and Steven) and one of our Carers (Auntie Grace - not the same person as Teacher Grace) all joined our Maseno Parish Church choir to practise for the Christmas carols and the Diocesan Music Festival. In the festival, our Choir won the first prizes for the "Christian folk song" and "Own composition" categories against twelve different choirs from our Anglican Diocese of Maseno North. They are very proud of themselves!!



**Youth Christian Conference:** Seven of the older children attended a one-week Youth Conference locally, organised by the Anglican Church: Riziki, Zawadi, Neema Milakon, Neema Joyce, Moses, Steven and Daniel. There was a fee to pay and our Bishop, Rt Revd Asilutwa (who is very supportive of J&D), graciously offered to sponsor three of our children to the conference. They enjoyed the conference where many topics were discussed such as the stages of adolescence, boy-girl relationships based on Christian principles, growing in Christ etc. The children look forward to attending the next conference which will be held at the end of this year.



During the holidays the children enjoyed playing, doing sports, making up games, chatting and relaxing, as well as helping with house chores and taking care of the babies.





*Above: Marianne looking after baby Miracle*



*Left: Zubeda mending the armchair-cloths for the sitting room of the Boys' House*



*Above: Steven and Riziki on one of the computers*

Those with homework made sure they completed it, and in the afternoons the older boys and girls practised their computer skills on the four lap-tops and one desktop which have been generously donated to us. Apart from developing their IT skills, being occupied helped to keep them out of mischief!



*Left: **Kesley** (who has cerebral palsy), had a very complex but successful operation on his spine before Christmas (paid for by a charity). He now has a temporary splint on his leg while he learns to walk properly and is enjoying gardening and dancing!*



## New Year's Day shock!

The year 2024 began on a high note, though New Year's Day was rather a shock! We were all having a bit of a lie-in, when a phone call came at 7.30am from the County Government offices (we are in Vihiga County), saying that the Governor, Dr Otichilo had decided to visit us and would be arriving in one hour's time with all his officials!!! So we all leapt out of bed and scurried around tidying everywhere, the Aunties preparing refreshments for our visitors, and the children practicing a welcome song to sing to them.

We were thrilled to receive such high-ranking officials from the county government since this was the first time any County Government official, let alone The Governor himself, had visited J&D. As you can imagine, it helps if influential local officials know what we are doing at J&D and have met us including all the children.



*J & D children with our County Governor Dr Otichilo (the man in a patterned blue shirt, holding a baby in red jacket) and other officials from Vihiga County.*

The Governor came bearing gifts of various items that included sacks of sugar, baking flour, ugali (maize) flour, cooking oil, rice, Irish potatoes, soda, biscuits, sweets etc. His entourage included a photographer and journalist (for the political 'optics'!), so we appeared in the regional News later.

We were even more delighted when we requested assistance in paying our children's secondary school fees, and the Governor promised to give one of our girls (Neema Milakon) a scholarship from his own Scholarship kitty.

## Amiel and Eugenia's visit, and partying!

In as much as we were thrilled by the Governor's visit and gifts, we were more excited with the visit of two of our J&D Trustees, Amiel Osmaston and Eugenia Adoyo (my sister). They came from England and stayed with us for 3 weeks from late December 2023 to mid-January 2024.

*Left to right: Flossie, Eugenia and Amiel.*





While they were here, Amiel threw a party for everyone to celebrate her birthday. The children were very excited and had the party of their life-time! We played sports and games, sang and danced, and ate a lot of delicious food including a whole roast goat and heaps of birthday cake for everybody. The children had a great time decorating the dining hall in readiness for the party.



*Above: Moses with other children blowing up the balloons while Zawadi and Amiel put them up all around our new dining room, which is a lovely large space, just right for a party!*



*Left: The finishing line of the 'Egg (tennis ball) and spoon race'.*

There were **games and sports** (until a thunderstorm broke on us!), complete with gifts for the winners of the games and the best dancers.





**Dancing:** We hired a music system and 'DJ', and did line-dancing, congas and African-style synchronised movement).

The girls enjoyed themselves thoroughly and won most of the awards for dancing as the older boys (except Steven) were too shy to dance in public.

After all the running around taking part in games, competitions, singing and dancing, there was plenty of delicious food to fill the hungry stomachs, crowned by birthday cake cutting and eating.

*Right: Neema Milakon supervising the younger children having their meal at the tables in our dining room.*



*Left: The birthday girl (Amiel) giving a short speech (with the Aunties and babies sitting in the background)*

*Right: cutting the cake assisted by Abbie.*







*And the best part, the children enjoy eating the birthday cake*



*Left: Auntie Eugenia leads the younger children in doing some exercises after all that food.*





## Solar Energy Panels

Owing to the generosity of a UK Christian charity called “**The Seedfield Trust**”, who gave us £6,000, in February we were able to install 3 sets of Solar Panels, one pair on the roof of each of our 3 main buildings.



Security lights have also been installed outside, on poles so that nobody can climb and steal them! I want to say a very big “Thank you” to the Seedfield trustees and to God for our solar energy system.

Now when it rains we are not so worried that the power will go off. We have had so much unusual rain for the

past few months (caused by climate change and El Nino), that recently the electricity went off all around us for several days. Previously when this happened we had to try to cook, serve meals and work by torchlight. This time, J&D was the only place locally that had any light and we could cook, and the children could do their homework and use the computers.



## Gardening



Now we have our own cow for fresh milk, and also several free-range chickens.

Here some of the children are pulling the leaf-coverings off the maize cobs we have grown to feed the greenery to the cow.

In the background you can see our banana trees and other vegetable crops.



## The children's Education.

Six of our children finished Primary school last November, and started Secondary in January (the seventh child, Brenda, and her younger brother Kevin, have now left us having been found a home with relatives). Four other children also moved to new boarding schools (two at Secondary and two at Primary). I managed to get places for all ten of them in good schools, which is not easy! We had a very stressful time over New Year buying all the equipment that the schools required them to take.

### Equipping the children with their school requirements



Taking the children to their various boarding schools and getting them admitted into the school is very hectic. First of all, each school produces a long list of items that each parent must buy for their child.

*Here we are in the Boys' House sitting room with all the purchases spread out, spending hours trying to allocate the right items to each child, and pack them!*

When a child starts at a new boarding school, they have to take **EVERYTHING**, not just their uniform. Each child is given a list about 3 pages of A4 long: they must provide their own mattress, sheets, blankets, bucket, plastic basin for washing, cutlery, crockery, soap, toilet rolls, mosquito net, pens, shoe polish etc.

They also have to take all their own text-books for each subject, plus a dictionary, mathematical table, Swahili dictionary, hymn book (Golden bells), Bible

(Revised Standard Version), two reams of photocopy paper, 25 blank exercise books.....

### Each school has got its own detailed specifications too.

One school will specify for example a blue mattress, green bed sheets, a pink bucket, yellow crockery etc, and another school will specify totally different items and colours. This means one can't bulk-buy things and makes it a nightmare to find all the right items.

*This photo was taken on arrival at one of the schools, with two teachers checking off on the list every item that the student has brought, and making sure it is absolutely correct and complete.*

If your child is missing even one item on the list on the day of admission, she will be sent home until you have bought the missing item. For example, at Kipsigis Girls (where Neema has gone), every parent was missing the "maasai style bedcover, maroon with white stripes". We were all running around like headless chickens in Kericho shops asking each other, "Have you bought the maroon bedcover with white stripes? Where can I find one?" Nobody knew where to find it, only to later discover that the school had bought up all of them and stockpiled them so that they could inflate the price and parents would be so desperate after running around the shops and wasting so much time that they would have no choice but to pay the school any amount of money for the required bed cover!!





This is really frustrating, but it is a way that the schools raise money for paying the teachers at the start of term, because the Kenyan government's Education Dept is so inefficient that they often don't pay the schools any money until nearly the end of the term.

All the children had to be taken to school for the start of term between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of January and we had five different schools to go to within that time, all in different directions and several hours' travel.

We have no vehicle of our own. So Teacher Grace used her husband's car and took Daniel and Tumaini, and I used a 'taxi' and took the girls. I also had to take Fabian and Fidel to Mumias Primary Boarding school.

*Right: Here is our kind regular taxi-driver Mohammed ('Moha'), shaving Fidel's hair ready for school. He helps us a great deal in many ways.*



## The girls at new secondary schools

Ten of our children are now in Secondary Schools (all except Moses are in boarding schools).

### 1. Edward Limo School in Eldoret

Zawadi, Joyce and Winnie finished Primary and were all allocated by the government to different schools which were not very good. So instead I decided to send them all – and Riziki – to a new excellent private school which is no more expensive than the government secondary schools (Edward Limo school in Eldoret). I have known the founder/owner of the school for many years, which is helpful in arranging things!

Last term I visited the 4 girls at this new school during the school's thanks-giving day, and was pleased with everything I saw. The teachers were very able, friendly and accessible, and the girls there all seemed happy and relaxed.



**Riziki** (aged 15), Left, and in her new school uniform on the right).

Riziki went straight into the Third form, is very happy at Edward Limo School and seems to be popular with the other girls.

(Although Riziki is the same age as Winnie and Joyce, she has been put two forms above them because she is very bright). The teachers are kind and understanding, and Riziki's bed-wetting problem is much better.







*On the right: Zawadi, Joyce, and Winnie, in their new “Edward Limo school” uniforms*

**Zawadi**, being a go-getter, was made a prefect on the second day at school so at the school’s thanksgiving day she was walking around in the hall serving parents with drinking water and feeling very proud of herself!



When I asked the four girls what they like about their new school, they said “Everything”. I asked them “What is everything?” They said they like their teachers and their methods of teaching (Zawadi even kept a piece of chapati to take to her teacher!!!), They also like the fact that they have games - many schools do not have a sports ground and so in many schools sports is only done in theory. They also enjoy their meals and they like the fact that their teachers listen to them and are patient with the students.

*Me (Flossie) and Riziki at Edward Limo School on opening day*

The Edward Limo School is good at encouraging children of very mixed abilities to shine. 93 out of the 94 candidates who sat for the KCSE exam last autumn managed to pass well enough to be admitted into university.



*Left: **Joyce**, who is at Edward Limo school, is on the left.*

***Neema Milakon**, who is now at Kipsigis Girls School, is on the right of the picture.*

See more about Neema over the page.



## 2. Kipsigis Girls Secondary School.

**Neema Milakon** who got a scholarship for school fees from our Governor, was admitted to Kipsigis Girls High School which is a top-notch National School. (It takes the 'academic cream' of students from across the whole country). The scholarship should pay her school fees at least up to the end of her secondary school education. We thank God for this. Neema is very bright and came top in the end-of-Primary exams at her school.

*Right: Neema (wearing her special tee-shirt!) at the big jamboree where the Governor presented her with her scholarship.*

(Neema is the Maasai girl who ran away to us from her step-parents because they wanted to perform Female genital mutilation on her and marry her off to obtain a good bride price).

In conversations with Neema this Easter holidays she says that she loves the school, enjoys the higher academic standards and the ways the teachers attempt to stretch students to their best ability. Neema has been made the Leader of the "Maths Society".



## The boys at Secondary School

**Daniel Imani (born 4.7.2008)** who I mentioned on page 2, is bright and well-motivated. We managed to get him a place at Nyang'ori Boys High School which is an 'Extra County School' (nearly as good as a National School). It is stretching him and he really enjoys his new school. He is a very positive, thoughtful and helpful boy, with a charming smile!

**Tumaini Job (born 20.5.2008)** also managed to get a place at a good school - Esalwa Boys High School - which is another Extra County school. He says he has settled in well and is happy there.



**Steven Musheba (17)** in the left photo, and

**Baraka Obama (nearly 16)** in the right-hand photo,

They have not moved, and are both in Form Three in different Secondary schools. They are happy, cheerful, good at taking responsibility, involved in a wide range of activities and are both focused on their studies.



Obama's school is far away and you have to take a ferry across part of Lake Victoria to get there. I visited the school recently and was impressed by the discipline at the school and the initiative students take to welcome their visitors and show them around the school. Obama continues to do well in his Studies and likes his School.

**Moses** (age 16) – the one who has broken his leg - is in form two at a local Secondary day-school in Maseno because he didn't want to go to boarding school. However, he seems to be going through a 'teenage rebellion' and keeps on skipping school. He puts on his uniform and goes out each morning, but spends most days roaming around, sometimes getting into trouble, and then comes back home in the evening pretending that he has been at school all day. When I phone his teachers,



they say they have not seen him for several days. Discussions with him and counselling do not seem to help. Moses is not bright academically but is good with his hands and has learned to mend shoes well. It is hard to know how to help him. I am having discussions with the Area Chief and the Children's Officer who might come up with some solution. Please pray for him.

## The children at Primary schools



**Zubeda Achieng** (born 4.11.09), **Zubira Maryanne** (born 24.6.10) and **Emmanuel Shikuku** ('Manu', born 9.8.09) in these photos are all in Primary Grade eight (the final class of Primary) in different schools. Zubeda is happy and doing well, though Zubira and Emmanuel are struggling a bit as their learning capacity is kind of on the lower side. Zubeda and Maryanne are both happy, co-operative, active and engaged, but Manu can sometimes get frustrated. **Precious Karren** and **Collins Andala** are also in Grade eight.

**Enos Gadi** (probably born 2013) is in Primary Grade five, well settled, contented, working hard and doing well at school.

**Edward Nelly** (probably born 2016 or 2017) is in Grade two at Ebulako Primary day school nearby. He came to us at about four years old, so it is assumed that he must have parents or relatives somewhere. The Children's Office is trying to locate any of his relatives so that he can go and live with them. He is doing well and already growing academically.

**Fidel Brian** (probably born 2016 or '17) *on the left in this photo*, and **Fabian Ushindi** (born 1.12.2014), *on the right*, joined Mumias Primary Boarding school at the beginning of this year in Grade Two and are both doing well. They are so happy to be in boarding school because it makes them feel special and grown up.

Fidel is a bright child, has a lot of potential and is progressing excellently. He has settled in well in his new school and has made many friends.

Fabian has also settled in well. He is enthusiastic, interested and works hard, though he needs to improve at staying focused.

So altogether we have nine children at Primary Schools.





## Our Home-schooling Nursery + Early Primary Programme

The home-schooling programme at J&D is going very well with Teacher Grace. (See her photo below). We have 10 children learning with her.



We have been thinking for some time of opening our Nursery school to a few other local children, with their parents paying fees. The State Nursery and Primary schools in Kenya are so terrible that there is real demand for a good Nursery school like J&D. This will raise money for J&D, subsidise our own children's education, and enable our children to mix more with other local children. We have now started to do this, and our first 'external' child is Kendrick Malimu.

The comments about the Children's progress below are written by Teacher Grace:

1. **Kendrick Malimu:** Kendrick is a new boy who lives nearby and has joined our home-schooling programme recently. He is interested, plays well and shares things with his class-mates. It is a pleasure to have him in class.
2. **Elvis Wanjala (born 15.5.2020)** Elvis looks forward to school. He is a quiet boy but always participates in class. He is getting a good foundation of basic learning skills and is improving well.

3. **Abigail Ondiso (born 13.1.2020):** Abigail is a lovely girl who enjoys school-work and works well with other children. Now aged 4, she knows her alphabet, is able to identify most sounds and numbers and can write some of them too.

4. **Jonathan Bahati (born 15.5.2020):** Jonathan is an above-average child who shows a lot of interest in learning. He loves spending time with his friends and looks forward to opportunities to socialize. I am impressed with his ability to make connections in his learning.

5. **Philip Etale 'Kipchoge' (born 2.1.2019):** Philip is motivated and hardworking. He has a natural curiosity and thinks creatively. He has grown tremendously this term, especially in his language abilities.

6. **Carolyn Sara Aseka (born 19.10.2018):** I have enjoyed watching Carolyn grow as a learner. She is a loving, happy and enthusiastic girl. Carolyn learns slowly but has shown a lot of improvement during the past term. She does need the help of the teacher, but tries hard and enjoys participating in our classroom discussions.







**7. Rayson Adams Otieno (born 23.4.2018):**

It is a pleasure to have Rayson in my class. He enjoys working and playing with his classmates. Ray continues to improve in literacy activities especially reading aloud. He takes great pride in his work and is good at helping others in a group activity. He has grasped most areas of the set curriculum.

**8. Janel Mukamiti (probably born 2016 or '17):**

Janel had never been to school before she came here to J&D a year ago at about 7 years old, so considering her disadvantages, she has shown tremendous growth in all areas. She looks forward to school days. She has really shown a lot of improvement in her work. She has learned most of her numbers and letters, participates well in group activities and enjoys working with others and helping them too. She perseveres when something is

challenging and has legible hand-writing.

**9. Naomi Ruth (born 3.9.2016):** Naomi is a happy girl who gets along well with the others. She has shown a lot of interest in learning how to read and can read three-letter words. She is able to count her numbers well to 100 and write "0 to 20".

**10. Maria Michelle:** (Maria came to us a year ago and is about 12 or 13 years old. She was severely abused by her father, is mentally disabled and still cannot read or write). In spite of all this, Maria is a joyful girl who looks forward to school, though she finds it hard to focus on any task. She has a big heart and is always concerned about others. We are working on helping her to stay organised in her classwork and to obtain a foundation of basic academic skills.

## The toddlers and babies

We have three toddlers (Maximilla, Brooklyn and Davies)

We currently also have six small babies who are under one-and-a-half years old. The newest baby Noah Ikhavi is 3 months old.

Two of the youngest babies who were with us temporarily, whom I mentioned in my last letter, have now been taken away by the Children's Officer and found homes.

The very premature baby who was dumped on us and we didn't know whether he would survive: wonderfully he is alive and well, and putting on weight!

*Right: Auntie Grace with one of our new babies (wearing one of the jerseys that was knitted by supporters and friends in Cumbria).*







*Left: Auntie Monica taking baby Blessing Musimbi for a check-up at the hospital.*

*Below: Three of our 'Aunties', as the children call the five Carers who look after the children and do the cooking and washing. Here they are looking after four of the babies during Amiel's birthday party (though they all joined in the dancing later, still holding the babies!).*



I hope you have enjoyed the photos of the children. I don't know if you have managed to read all this newsletter (!!), but there seems to be so much news to share with you. Many things have happened – changes and progress - and there is much to thank God for, over the past few months.

Thank you so much, all you wonderful "Friends of Julius and Dora Children's Centre". You are so good and generous, and none of these lovely children would be alive without your care and support. Please continue to pray for us here. God bless you richly.

*Flossie*