

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

Dear Friends and supporters –  
We thank God who has enabled us to reach this far with J&D, and for our friends in England. Thank you so much for all your support and prayers through the years.

Since I last wrote to you the older boarding-school children have been at home here at J&D for several weeks over our long Christmas holidays, and next week they'll be back again for Spring half-term! It is lovely to see them.



*This photo was taken in January when my sister Revd Eugenia Adoyo was visiting us from England for 5 weeks. (She is the Chair of the UK charity "Friends of Julius and Dora Children's Centre", and she is the one with the yellow flower in her hair in this picture). I'm seated in blue (Flossie) and L-R Riziki, Winnie, Marianne and Zawadi.*

We have had many exciting and positive developments and changes recently – including that we have found and appointed an excellent Manager (thank you so much for your prayers and generosity about this need).

**Our new Manager**

We have been hoping and praying all last year to be able to appoint a Manager to help me in running J&D. Some of you generous supporters offered extra money to be paid regularly for at least 3 years, so that enabled us to go ahead and try to find the right person. THANK YOU! We are so glad that **Kennedy Mbeya** has accepted the post of Manager at J&D, and he started work here on 6<sup>th</sup> January.

Kennedy is a very nice trustworthy local man who I have known well for many years. He was the headmaster of a local school and decided to retire a bit early at the end of 2024. He didn't know we were looking for a Manager, but he came to visit me in December just to be friendly. He was impressed by all that is happening at J&D, and said that now he is retired, is there anything he

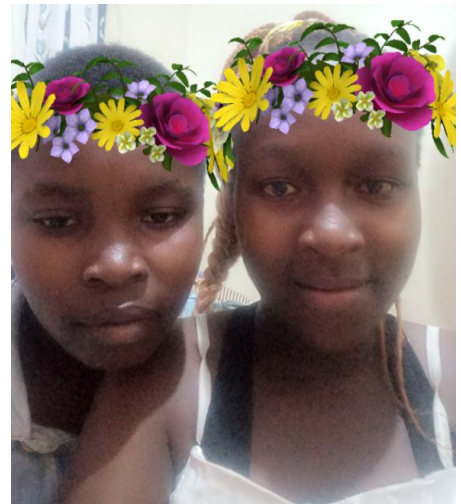


could do to help? I was very excited and felt this could be an answer to prayer! I checked with the other Kenyan trustees, and we agreed to approach him about the Manager post.

Kennedy has already been wonderful at sorting out all the education and schooling arrangements for the children, which is a huge job. Having been a headmaster, he understands what needs to be done, and is not afraid to challenge and 'strongly persuade' the staff of the schools if we feel something needs to be done for a particular child. He is also saving me a lot of long bumpy journeys on dirt roads, going to 'parents meetings' etc at the various schools which our children attend.

It is good for the boys especially to have a positive male role model around at J&D, and Kennedy is good at exercising gentle but firm discipline. Kennedy lives nearby so we do not have to provide accommodation. His wife lectures at Maseno University and they have grown-up children and some young grandchildren.

*Right: Marianne and Zawadi having fun making head-dresses.*



### **The children 'take over' in the Christmas holidays!**

Schools in Kenya closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> October for the Christmas holidays and opened again for the Spring term on 7<sup>th</sup> January, so the older children were home for over two months for school holidays which they enjoyed very much.

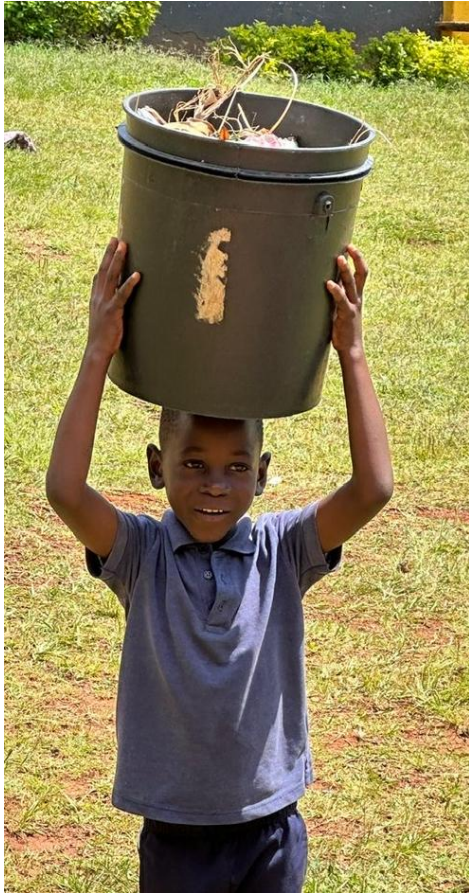
Immediately they came home for the holidays, they told me that they were willing to do all the work of running J&D themselves, and that I should send the four 'Aunties' (Care-givers) away on two months' leave!

We decided that this would be good experience for the older children. I asked them to write down for me how they were going to manage the work without the Aunties. They discussed and agreed as follows:

The Boys' group and the Girls' group both sorted themselves into pairs and then divided the tasks among themselves. Each pair did that task for a week, and then they swapped roles.

With the Girls, two girls agreed to do all the daily washing of clothes (which is quite a lot, with 39 children and so many babies), fold the clothes neatly and put them away; *Right: Clothes and mattresses drying in the sun.*





Another two girls would mop the floors of their house and the dining hall; and another two would look after the younger children. They didn't feel very confident about looking after the smallest babies, so we agreed that Auntie Grace should remain behind at J&D to do that.



*Above: preparing potatoes for supper*

*Kipchoge helping to clear rubbish away from the garden*

As for the boys, they agreed that two of them would cook and serve all meals for a week; two would wash up all the utensils. Another two would mop the kitchen floor after breakfast, lunch and dinner, mop their own house in the morning and clean the bathrooms.



*Above: The boys cleaning the floor outside the kitchen*

I was very proud of them all! Both groups of girls and boys did quite a good job except the boys would not allow the girls anywhere near the kitchen. (The boys liked controlling the food! On Sunday evenings when they have their favourite food, chapatis, the boys would hide some of the chapatis for themselves to eat later, which made the girls annoyed! ).

**Andala** tried walking around in his suit and pretending that he was organizing everyone (*see photo on right*), but the others managed to make him do some real work! Apart from this, everything else went very well.



Even the babies chipped in by carrying firewood into the kitchen:



*Time for everyone to relax in our garden, chat, plait each-other's hair, eat bananas from our trees (at the back of photo) etc.*

### Fun in the Christmas holidays

It was very exciting to have my sister **Eugeniah Adoyo** visiting during the holidays. She brought us very nice Christmas decorations which she and the children put up - the houses looked lovely. She also brought the children many Christmas presents which they loved.

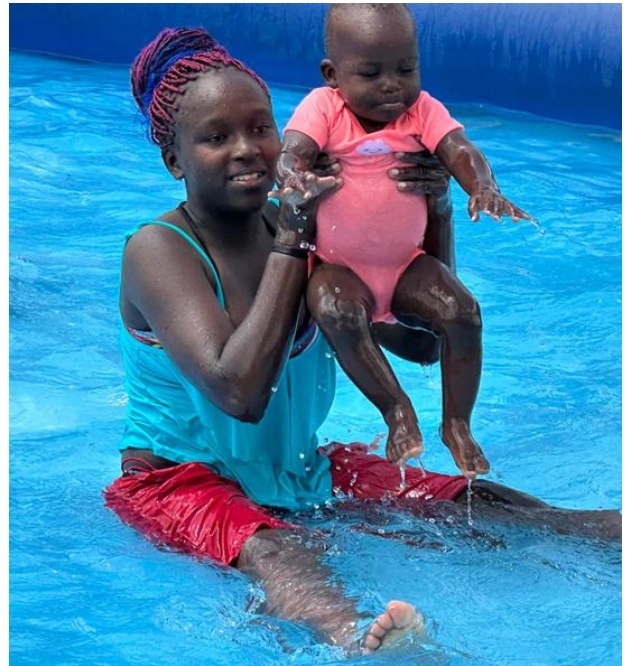


Another exciting event during the holidays was that we all went for a trip to **Kakamega Fun Park** courtesy of one of our supporters who kindly provided the money for a

Christmas treat. (Kakamega is a town about an hour's journey north of here). The 'Fun Park' had a lot of different games. It was a lot of fun for the children who enjoyed themselves thoroughly.



The children 'swam' and paddled in a shallow water pool, played on a 'bouncy castle', jumped on the trampoline, rode on an electric train, had their faces painted, and played on the slide and many other activities. That truly made their holiday very memorable.





## Confirmation

Marianne (aged 14) decided she wanted to be confirmed, so she has attended all the church's teaching sessions over the past year. The confirmation service took place during the Christmas holidays and was a wonderful celebration. It was led by our Bishop Asilutwa, and there were over 150 young people from our area being confirmed.

*Marianne wearing garlands after her confirmation.*

## EDUCATION.

When I wrote you my last newsletter, schools had just closed for the Christmas holidays, so I included all the educational news and end-of-year reports for the children. I therefore won't repeat myself except to say that the children are all doing well in their various schools.

We have managed to change **Moses' school** (Moses is the boy who had a bicycle crash and his leg was crushed by a car). He was being bullied at his old school and getting into bad company, so (with difficulty) we got him a place at Ekwanda Boys High School which is a much better school. Moses' exam grades were so poor that when we took him to Ekwanda, they refused to admit him into the school. I don't like 'pulling strings', but that is often the only way that you can make things happen in Kenya.... so I dropped a few names....

Ekwanda school is sponsored by our Maseno North Diocese, and I know our Bishop Asilutwa very well because he has supported J&D enthusiastically for many years. So I said "Oh by the way has Bishop Asilutwa been here recently? He speaks very highly of your school, in fact he recommended it to us" (which is true!). Anyway, the minute I mentioned the Bishop everything changed, and to cut a long story short, Moses is now at Ekwanda Boys High School, though he will have to repeat form two. He is much happier at his new school and has promised to work very hard to prove to his siblings here at J&D that he is not as foolish as they think he is!

## Our new Nursery School teacher

Another big change here is that the Nursery School teacher Grace, has left. In November the children came to me with evidence that Grace and her husband were stealing from us and being a bad influence on a couple of our older children. The J&D children were insistent that we should dismiss Teacher Grace, so I checked the situation and we did dismiss her. When she tried to come back (I was out at that time), the boys even escorted Grace firmly outside the gate and told her never to step in our compound again!

We now have a new Nursery School teacher by the name of **Eglen Akoya Mukara** (see photo on the right) who is very nice and also good at her work. She lives locally and was recommended by the wife of Bishop Asilutwa, who is an experienced teacher herself. The younger children have already settled happily with Eglen.



## ..... And more developments on the home front

For various reasons we decided not to take all the Aunties / Care-givers back at the end of the Christmas holidays. Some were getting old and needed to retire. We have kept Auntie Grace (not the same person as Teacher Grace!), who was here all through the Christmas holidays.

So Auntie Grace continues to look after the babies. The new Care staff are **Phillis and Anne**, who share the work of cleaning and washing of clothes. Instead of having one of the Aunties doing the cooking, **Paul** is our new male cook (cooking for 40+ people involves heavy lifting). **Eric** is the grounds man and gardener. So far, the new staff are doing a very good job. The food is excellent and our compound/garden is so clean and tidy now that people keep on referring to it as resembling “*compound yo muzungu*” (a European’s garden)!



*Left: Kipchoge in the foreground, with me (Flossie) in the background helping a child with homework.*

### Children moved to a new Children’s Home.

In early February, four of our children were collected by the Children’s Dept. and taken away to a Special School and Children’s Home in Kajiado known as ‘Miale ya Tumaini’, about 600 kilometers away beyond Nairobi. It is a large Home with over 250 children and has specialist facilities to help and support children with learning or social / family difficulties.

These children were:

1. **Kesley Mushindi** (who has been with us since birth in October 2014, and has cerebral palsy). This new Home has doctors and nurses on site and has the resources to help him to learn to talk. It is a great answer to our prayers for him. We have no speech therapist available within 200 miles of Maseno, so were unable to help Kesley with his speech.

So I am glad that he will now get the extra help he needs, but we will miss him and it will be a big emotional shock for him, being transplanted to such a different place.

*Right: a picture of the people who came to pick up Kesley, Fidel, Enos and Maria. Kesley is on the left front, in a blue patterned shirt.*

2. **Maria Michelle**: To be honest, it is quite a relief that Maria has been taken away. She was placed with us by the courts when she was a big girl aged 12 years and has been at J&D for nearly 2 years. She is mentally challenged, unable to go to normal school (she attended our Nursery School with the younger children). She is also emotionally disturbed because she had been sexually molested for several years by her father. She calmed down a lot emotionally while she was with us, and I hope the new Home will be able to help her learning.



3 and 4. **Enos Gadi** (aged about 11) and **his brother Fidel Brian** (aged about 9): It was very traumatic for everyone when Enos and Fidel left. They were screaming their heads off and saying that they did not want to go away. That made everybody else start crying and it was just so terrible. These two brothers have been here with us at J&D since 2017 and this is the only loving home they have ever known. Although their father is still alive, he was a violent alcoholic and used to attack the boys with large knives, so they were brought to us and have been very happy here. The new Home they have been taken to, is nearer to where their extended family live, so the Children's Dept hope to do some family therapy and work at re-integrating Enos and Fidel with their wider family.

Baby **Noah Hawi** who was brought to J&D last Summer as a one-week-old baby, has also been transferred from here now aged seven months to a different children's home. When he was brought to us, he was stinking as he had not been bathed since birth because being a baby born out of incest, nobody was willing to bathe him or feed him. To make matters worse, he was brought here naked, not even a piece of cloth to cover his poor little body - I could not believe the children's officer who brought him here. I even told her off. At least we have been able to feed Noah well and bring him to good health, so he has a better start in life.

### **Government issues affecting our children at J&D.**

The government's Children's Office have taken away Kesley, Maria, Enos, Fidel and Noah for the children's benefit, but also because I have often asked them to reduce the number of children they land on us without consultation at J&D.

Our stated 'mission' is to rescue babies who are thrown away at birth and to bring them up in a stable loving home and give them a good education and life..... and we continue to do this as our core commitment.

But the Children's Dept keep dumping older children on us as well, because there is no other orphanage in this county and the Officers don't know what to do with children who are 'at risk' or have to be removed from their parents.

It is real challenge. Even as I write, a baby girl has just been brought to us whose arm was broken by her mother a week ago. The child is in terrible pain because the arm should be in a cast but she was not even taken to hospital. We will take her tomorrow to see the doctor. The mother was put in prison today.

Four other children aged 4 - 14 have also been brought to us recently on a temporary basis by the Children's Dept. They are from terribly deprived backgrounds - the two older ones have never been sent to school and cannot read or write. I feel very sorry for them, but we cannot continue to take all these older children.

The Government of Kenya has just changed its policy (yet again!!) and now says that no child should stay in a children's home for more than three years. So now theoretically all our young children should move out either to be adopted, move to a different home or be reintegrated into society. This policy is unrealistic (as the Children's Dept does not have the resources) and creates big issues.

As far as adoption is concerned, I think that it is a good idea for the children to get a place they can call home and a father and mother of their own. But this should be done when they are still very young, like less than one year old, not waiting until they are 3 or more years old (by which time they have bonded with us and we with them!). I think that this government policy is not fair to the babies or the care givers. Anyway, the local and national government do not have the resources to put the policy into effect, so probably it won't happen!



## Health

We have had a few cases of sickness here and there but not serious ones, overall the children have been well.

Zawadi came home from boarding school in early February because she needed to see an eye specialist at the Sabatia eye hospital (a leading not-for-profit referral eye hospital). She saw an optometrist and an ophthalmologist, who have ruled out eye surgery for now, and given her new spectacles and medication.



As I mentioned before, I have been unwell myself for some time, with spinal damage and pain from a car accident years ago, and resulting problems such as very high blood pressure, high blood sugar and very swollen legs. I went into hospital in Kisumu on 18<sup>th</sup> January this year and stayed there for ten days. I had not felt free to do this earlier, because I didn't want to leave the children, but now Kennedy had started work as Manager and was able to look after everyone at J&D. The hospital did lots of tests and procedures, checked me thoroughly, changed my medication, and thank God that now I am feeling much better.

I missed the children and they missed me too!

*This is when I came back home from hospital and the children were wondering where I had been. They were 'clingy' for a while but now are back to normal!*

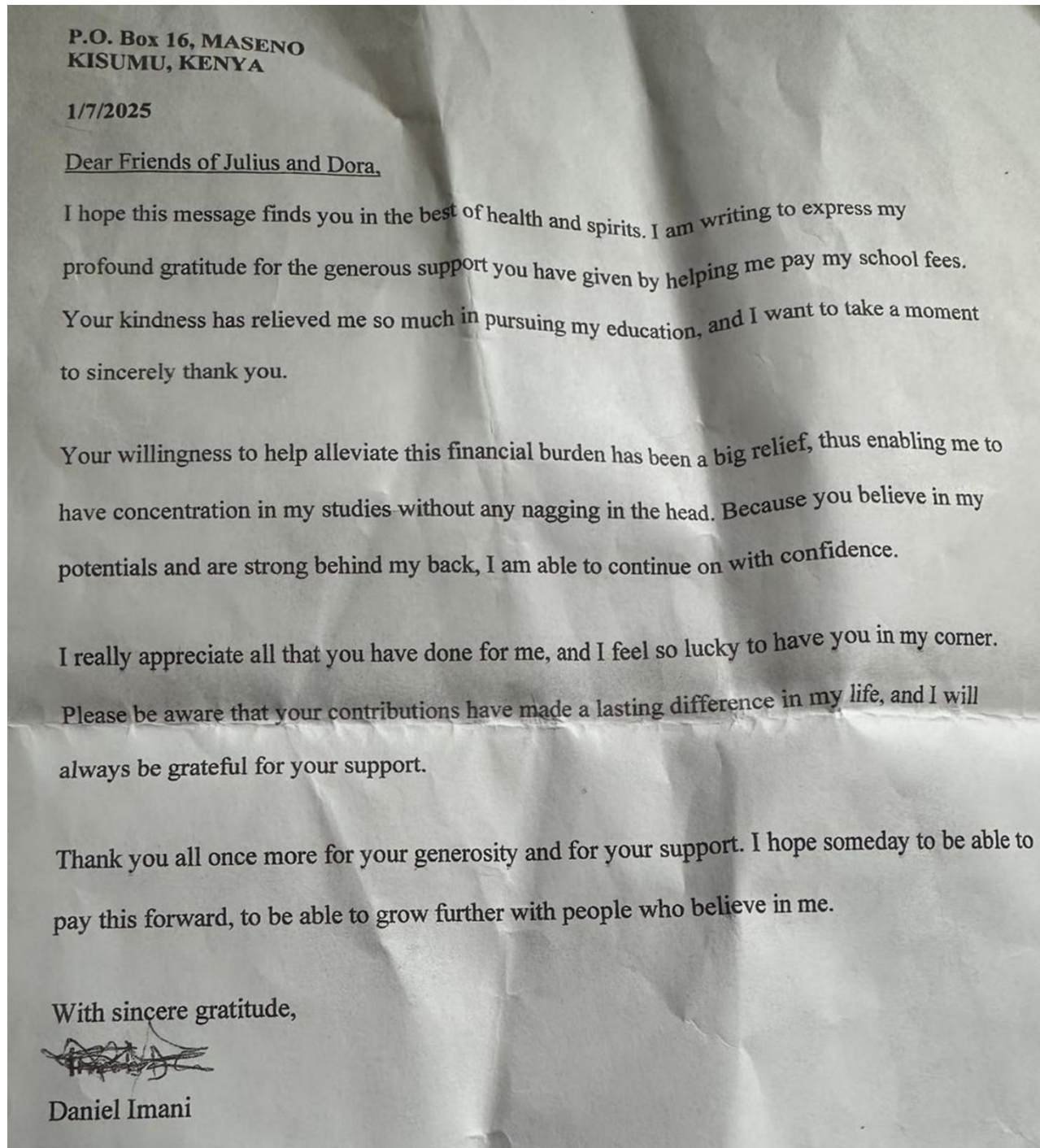
Apart from this, everybody else is in good health and we thank God for His protection.

**Our roof, and the solar panels,** which have been mended since the lightning strike and are now working fine!

The rocky hill behind J&D with huge granite boulders as big as houses, is typical of the Maseno area.



Daniel (aged 16) wanted to write personally to you all to thank you for your support. He wrote and typed this letter by himself.



Friends of Julius and Dora, thank you so much for your generous support and your very hard work in raising financial support for us. The children and myself do not take this for granted and continually pray that God will bless you all abundantly and keep you in good health.

With much Appreciation

Flossie Adoyo