



# Makindu Children's Centre

A project of the Makindu Children's Program –

A not-for-profit NGO operating in Makindu, Kenya

Headquartered in Brownsville, Oregon – Established 1998.

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## November 2000 Newsletter

### Our AIDS Initiative

The AIDS epidemic rages unabated in Africa and Makindu is no exception. We estimate that 85% of our kids have been orphaned by that disease. Three of our kids suffer from it, as do a number of our guardians. The HIV infection rate in Makindu is estimated to be in the range of 25-35%. People are surrounded by AIDS deaths, yet lack information about the disease. Every family has lost members and is losing others. Africa is becoming a continent of grandparents and children. Everyone is terribly afraid. (Editor's Note: When I was in Makindu, Diannah, Kristina and myself gave a talk to parents at a local elementary school. It is not acceptable to publicly discuss sex. People asked several questions, "can you get it from Mosquitoes?", "can Doctors cure them?", "is there a vaccine?" and so forth. At the end, in that way that village people have, a woman arose to speak for the group, and thanked us for talking to them, and then said "We are hopeless." We tried to reassure them, but without outside help, she was right.

Looking at this, the Makindu Children's Center Committee began to wonder what chance our kids would have growing up in this situation. Accordingly, we decided to start an AIDS awareness and education program for Makindu. Winnie is facilitating this decision in Makindu. She reports "the bimonthly meeting of local Makindu leaders, included the District Chairman, (the Makindu District Officer's Boss). He was wondering why there was no organization in the Makindu region doing AIDS awareness and education. I piped up, and took aside the D.O. and told him of our hopes, which were passed to the D.C., who wants to meet with us. We are in the process of forming a local AIDS committee with the D.O., with MCC first on the list. We are also calling most of the area secondary schools and asking if they would be interested in Diannah and I coming to talk with the faculty and students about AIDS. Thus far, the response has been very positive, and school talks will begin in November."

UN Funding is being sought in Kenya.

### The Makindu Water Project:

From the start, we have realized that water is a major problem in Makindu, not just due to the drought, but due to unhealthy water. People have three sources of

water: the river, wells and city water. The river and city water carry parasites and disease. The wells, or boreholes as they are called, are infrequently placed across the landscape, and may be contaminated by pit toilets. Most people do not use city water as it is expensive and they are not near existing pipes. People haul the water, sometimes for miles, have their children haul it or pay a vendor to deliver it. The expense and labor limit the use of water for washing which leads to illness, but the contaminated nature of the water results in disease as well. Dirty water is a major health issue in Makindu, and drought conditions increase the problem.

Winnie reports that MCC now sits with GAA (German Agro-Action), AMREF (African Medical Relief Foundation), the Ministry of Water officials, and the D.O. on a team/committee to review the status of the water supply situation in the MKU region. It meets monthly. She is awaiting a more updated map and sketch of the area served, population accessibility, and the current status of available water sources to finish a formal proposal to the MCC Committee.

At this point, she is proposing to construct two separate tanks. One, 200 cubic meters, to supply the existing and all proposed water projects. A second tank, 100 cubic meters, to serve MCC's needs, as well as acting as a reservoir tank that would supply back-up reserves of water for up to 3-4 weeks in case of pump or power failure.

AMREF has just purchased a brand new pump for the MKU water supply from the Makindu Springs, and it is functioning well, and easily has the capacity for these new tanks. We are, in effect, joining hands with two of the most active NGO's in the area, and our proposed project utilizes community support, labor and funding. It would be a great gift to the entire town area of Makindu, and a perfect way for us to broaden our community and organizational partnerships. (Note: Winnie has been quite successful in getting donations from local Makindu businesses and from Nairobi business people. We believe that local support is the best way to help Makindu. However, monetary support from MCC will also be needed to fund this project. We will keep you posted.)

### A Graduate!

Winnie reports that we are about to have our first "graduate" from our program. Mwendu Kavevi is 16

and is only a few weeks away from completing her vocational education training in dress-making and tailoring. Mwendu had not attended primary school for many, many years, and therefore at age 16, chose the option of vocational training, and has absolutely adored it. She is currently sitting for her final exit exams, and comes on occasion to visit us at the center, smiling and proud. She has been earning her family money in the past few months by making and repairing all of our other kids' school uniforms. (Note: She is an orphan, but is living with relatives.) Winnie says that she is no longer so withdrawn and shy. She has pride in herself and her capabilities, and has a marketable skill. (Note: This is why MCC exists. Indeed, we are proud of our Mwendu!)

### **Community Help!**

**Them to us:** The Sikh temple has been giving us food now, twice a week, for the past 2 weeks. It isn't enough to feed all of our kids, but we use it to feed the more desperate kids a second time before they leave, and any left-overs go home with kids for the next day. It's all very nutritious, and the kids love it.

Also, a local farmer has been wonderful, and has been donating a whole crate of tomatoes, and whatever green maize he has extra every week. He saw the look on my face when he showed me how much he dumps out for his goats to eat each week. It tweaked his guilt and he said he couldn't stand "for the food to go to his belly (as he eats the goats), when it could go to our kids bellies instead." He's a neat man. He works as a lawyer in NBI and is trying to get us a major discount on the purchase of bulk food for the center.

**Us to them:** Winnie has concluded an agreement between MCC and the Area Education Officer, the D.O. and all local primary schools Headmasters to do an annual school improvement project exchange for school fees for our kids. Any year we are unable to raise the funding for such a project, or lack the time to organize it, we will pay the standard school and exam fees for the kids.

This is a very good deal for both MCC and the schools, since our projects generally cost more than the fees would cost, and the schools have very little discretion on how to spend those fees. In the past we have gotten donations to buy lumber and volunteer carpenters to build desks, of which all the schools are short. When we arrived with the desks we were greeted with joyous singing and speeches. Of course, for the next seven years, the secondary school fees are being paid by the \$48,000 I2 grant.

This year, Winnie is organizing the purchase /donations from folks for cement and other materials, as all the area schools have demonstrated the need for cement flooring and/or roofing materials. The lack of desks

causes many kids to sit on the dirt floor. They study and eat their lunch there, and catch diseases there as well. The desks we made last year really helped, but they need many more to get these kids off of the ground.

### **And Here's the Best Part: Letters from Our Kids!**

(Note: In previous Newsletters I have mentioned these trips. We decided that we needed to feed more than their bodies, we needed to feed their spirits. The following letters were written after just such a "meal", and as with all of these kinds of meals, the kids were left hungry for more!)

"I could not believe my eyes when I at last found myself in a train on our way to Nairobi. A night of course with a welcoming weather which allowed every MCC member to feel worth. We left our station almost five o'clock in the morning after the first cock crow. I peeped my eyes through one of the windows of the train and just saw smooth flow of the journey as we passed through ups and down. After a long space of time I could now see the outskirts of Nairobi. As we arrived at the Nairobi Railway Station we alighted just to find our teacher Mrs. Dianah ready waiting for us. She had already set a place to take our delicious breakfast, which could now give us courage to walk to various places. No sooner had we finished our breakfast than a minibus arrived which had to take us to the animal orphanage (Note: it was the Kenya National Zoo). Inside the animal orphanage I happened to learn a lot of things. A lion lay hopelessly which I assumed it had sufficient supper that particular day. On the other hand a young monkey peeped through the netted wire with its hands out which I at last noticed it was eager to greet me. But I was scared that it might interfere with me. Hyenas could be seen as they wandered about in the cage just enjoying their breeze. A lot of animals could be seen like buffalo, wildebeest, and a bird named ostrich with its long neck and legs. But the centre of interest was when we came across a parrot which copied all the sounds we made and loved to retrieve the sounds thereafter. But unfortunately we didn't come across an elephant and wished we could one day see it.

"Back to the museum I saw what I could not expect to see. Snakes lay on top of each other like bundle of sticks, e.g. cobra, puff adder, python. Other aquatic life animals were crocodiles, tortoise, fishes. Later on we went for our delicious supper at Uhuru Park, where we took our supper accompanied by cool breezes from water masses which were beside us. We took enriched porridge and bread, which was quite delicious. After all we went back to the station where we saw street boys and different people of different categories and behavior. Then at around 6:30 p.m. we went back to Makindu. I thank all those who prepared for the trip and

wish we could go back again and learn a lot. May Makindu Children's Centre last forever and ever.”

*--Kimeu Maweu, age 17*

“It was on Sunday afternoon when our MCC teacher Diana told us that we would have a tour on the coming Tuesday. I was very happy about that. When the Tuesday approached, I was very happy as a newly appointed king. I was already in my Sunday best when I approached the centre. There I found my friend Benson already had arrived. We all sat down and started talking about the city. "It is the largest city in the country", my ally said. "But the smallest province", I said. Suddenly, we were called by our teacher for food. I ate hurriedly. The time was not allowing us to sleep too much. Suddenly we were woken up by the others. It was about 4:00 p.m. when the train arrived. We entered the passenger wagon and got seats. I did not sleep at all, but watched out as we were passing by I saw our home and waved to it thinking that it will wave back to me. When we approached the city we were very happy. I was first scared of some things I saw there but never showed it to my friends. We found Diana waiting for us. She took us for a breakfast of porridge. After some minutes a strange bus arrived. We were told to enter. We all entered and I sat at the back bench. There my head was hanging on the window trying to look at some big buildings. At the museum we came around a dinosaurous. At first I thought it was a true dinosaurous, but it wasn't.”

*--Juma Saidi Babu, age 16*

“JOURNEY TO NAIROBI: The day was very interesting because everybody was happy. That night everybody was noisy. We started our journey at twelve o'clock. On the way I saw very many interesting things like lion, buffalo, and many other animals. We reached Nairobi before sunshine and we saw the house which was destroyed by bomb blast, and some people trying to build it again. (the bombed U.S. embassy building). I was very happy because I saw a bigger town than Makindu. The town was very big and there is very many people. We went to very many different places like bomas (gathering places) of Kenya, Kenya National Park and very many different buildings. After that we went back and sat somewhere so that we can have lunch. Before minutes dragged to hours, the lunch was over, and everybody was very tired, so we were to rest for a few seconds. Minutes later we stood up and we went to the Kenya airport and we saw very many things there. The day was very interesting. Thank you.

*--Kavili Kilonzo, age 14*

A VISIT TO NAIROBI: The day dawned dramatically with scanty white clouds skidding across the azure sky. It was about when we had already finished taking our lunch. We were told that one of the coming day we would have a journey to Nairobi. Everybody laughed loudly. We were also told that we must always stay clean. By the times we left our homes for the journey,

darkness was enveloping the earth, and our vision were diminishing. We all got into the train and the journey continued, and we could see trees shaking tirelessly. My ally and I, we saw an ostrich and fourteen zebras. Upon arriving in Nairobi, I was shocked to see lofty buildings. I thought they were to fall on us. After we finished porridge, we all got into a matatu, which drove into supersome speed. Within a blink of an eye we approached to Nairobi National Park. It was my first time to see a lion, hyena, chimpanzee, and many animals. After that we traveled to Museum where we saw many things which even I cannot mention them because of the happiness. We also traveled to Uhuru Park where some of us were rowing boats. We walked in a group to Nairobi station before we took our delicious dinner, and we traveled back to Makindu. The events of that day still linger long in my mind.”

*--Isabela Ndinda, age 16*

“It all started that we had to meet at the MCC on a Tuesday night at 4 a.m. to travel by train. At the center we had a delicious supper, then we awaited eagerly for the watches to tick off and alert us it was time. We set the ball on motion exactly at 2 a.m. to the Railway Station. At the station we stayed there for about two hours waiting for the train to arrive. My eyes were full of sleep, but unfortunately I could not make it because of coldness which pierced into my body deep into my heart. Abruptly the train arrived and we all board in. On the way I kept on peeping through the window. I saw many things including tall buildings, animals, and bigger towns than Makindu. We alighted the train in Nairobi where we had a breakfast of sweet porridge of which I intended to ask for more, but it got finished. We saw many interesting things in the zoo, including the snakes in the park. The snakes seemed to be dead, but I was proved wrong when I saw one of them removing out its branched tongue. I also saw a live crocodile and so many other things. Unfortunately as we were squeezing our way back to the station, a scene of shock happened to us. A short fatty chubby lady opened our teachers bag, and off he snatched a purse out! God gracious, he must have been on our side. The thief was seen within a minute, the police were there. He was beaten, the purse taken back and even his handkerchief was taken. He was then left to go. (Note: The kids all thought this little incident was extremely funny. The teenagers surrounded this poor guy and dealt with him instantly. These are street kids and were not intimidated by an adult thief for a second, particularly one that was stealing from Mother Dianah! I'm sure he was glad to have the police arrive.) We then returned to Makindu and arrived safely. I enjoyed the journey and hope to visit many places in my life span.”

*-- Lilian Kanini Mwema, age 17*

“The tour was earlier announced by Dianah and I dismissed this just as a mere joke. It was the best I have ever had because I spent most of my time that tour to Nairobi. As it was the 24th hour of August 2000, when

my nerves hugged that I should join my friends for a tour at Nairobi. After several hours of waiting for the train, I saw a huge cloud of smoke and that was the sign of the train. When it arrives we all got in one class and after several minutes it took off. The scenery really started to look differently as we were near Nairobi, you could see tall and big building. As we approached I was very happy like a pregnant frog to see all the tall buildings. The things there were wonderful. We saw almost all types of animals like lions, hyena, ostrich, chimpanzee and others which I cannot remember. Strolling in the afternoon when it was so hot, after we visited Uhuru Park you could feel breeze shaking our stress ruthlessly. After we visited all the parts it was time to return to Makindu. The journey was long and interesting, and I shall live to remember it in my life. I hope it will happen again. --Beatrice Musembi, age 17

The day dawned dramatically with scanty white clouds skidding across the azure sky. The birds of the air blended in their sweet lulling melodies to welcome the beautiful morning. I was as happy as Sir Isaac Newton when he discovered the force of gravity. I first came to the centre so that I could know the time of departure. We were then offered a very delicious meal. I then took a bath and wore my Sunday best. ... upon arriving in Nairobi we saw many things, and I was glad to see the tall buildings, which I always had heard of but I had not seen them before. We saw very many things that even I cannot explain myself. I was couraged like a rat from hell. I saw the skeleton of a dinosaur which I heard existed very many years ago. The journey was marvelous for it will remain vividly remembered."

--Geoffrey Ndinda, age 15

"We saw every type of snake like cobras, pythons, red and green snakes, also crocodiles and tortoise; it was all there. I saw Wilson Airport and the Hilton which is the tallest building in the Nairobi. After that we were at the Nairobi Station to come back again. Now we are happy because we saw beutyful things and importand things for the learning children. Thank you."

--Mutunga Kimongo, age 14

"I saw a big town called Nairobi, bigger than Makindu. We did not see an elephant. We did not see a buffalo and rabbit. We did not see a girrafe. And gazelle. We did not see Kikomba. We did not see Daniel Arap Moi home. We did not see warthogs. I did see many things."

--Mwanzia Kimongo, age 10

"One day on Saturday we planned a short journey to Nairobi. By that time the train arrived, as you know any time passes no time, as the train arrived, I walked majestically like properly elected member to get on the train. By the time the train started going, as we reached one town called Athi River. I thought we had reached Nairobi. So I walked like a lunatic person to ask our teacher where were we by that time. The teacher told me later "unless you have been dreaming now." But soon after two hours I was very surprised to hear that

we had reached. Because our feeble legs couldn't carry us, we took a bus. By the time we reached back to the train, I was feeling like a drugged person. I didn't know where I was. Soon I took winks and later I found myself being back to Makindu and our teacher told us our journey was terminated."

--Douglas Kivanga, age 13

"It was Saturday afternoon when our teacher tell us we have a visit to Nairobi very soon. I feel like a raised man from the dead. I jump up and down, running here and there. The day arrived, and it was a shining momen. Thank you for the trip."

--Wambua Ndeto, age 14

"My name is called Kalumu Amina. I see Jomo Kenyatta and many cars, and my school is good, and my teacher of G.H.C. (Geography, History, and Civics) is called Gui. My mother was called Amina. The father of Amina was called Joseph and my best friend is called Mwiali Kioko and my school is Makindu "A" primary school and my headmaster is Catholic. We go to the Nairobi with my Mama Muthokoi (Note: Esther, our cook. Muthokoi is a traditional dish of dried, cooked maize, and a staple at the center) and the children, altho big children."

--Kalumu Amina, age 13

"The night we left all of us were dressed smart. When we reached Nairobi it was almost 8:00 o'clock. When I saw the station of Nairobi I was every surprised to see it because it was my first time. When I saw tall buildings, my heart palpitated as if I was operating a pneumatic drill. I was thinking that Makindu was big town. We went to visit Museum there, and when I entered inside, I was almost to faint when I saw things which was looking as alive. We saw all types of fishes, all types of snakes, lizards, traditional paintings, birds, ornaments, some paintings on the wall and many more. I enjoyed the visit and I'm giving my thanks to dianah, winnie, jimmie. I wish they would took us another day also."

--Fatuma Musyoka (Mulike), age 14

"It was on Sunday when we were informed about the journey to NBI. We were very happy like a king, we keep preparing for it, day and night like an ant on the work, waiting for the day to arrive when we were proud as peacocks. First we went to NBI park when we entered at a mini orphanage. In it we found a big area divided into plots where the animals are being kept. First we found a plot with leopard, second, cheetah, third was hyenas, fourth was lion and lioness, fifth, we saw baboons which interested me the most, like they were greeting people and showing us acrobats things. Up we went to National Museum. Where it was most interesting part I had ever saw. When we got inside we saw many things, man skull like homosapien, homoerectos, etc, birds orphanage, snake park. After that we traveled up to Uhuru Park when we took our delicious meal of bread mired with cheese and porridge.

Then it was time to go back home, but we had not enough time to visit Jomo Kenyatta Airport, giraffe orphanage, or see elephants, so I urge next time we will wish to visit them. Have a good time. Thank you.”

--*Alfred Musembi, age 16*

“My name is Kitheka Mwololo. I am in standard five. When we visit to NBI, I saw some tall buildings and I saw Nairobi National Park. In the national park I saw the following: a buffalo, a gazelle, monkey and many others. The animals that I haven't saw is an elephant. Nearby Nairobi station there is Rocky Driving School. Near Nairobi station I saw Kenyatta International Conference Center. Near museum I saw a snake park inside the snake park I saw a crocodile. I saw Wilson Airport. Nairobi was a very interesting place to visit.”

--*Kitheka Mwololo, age 9*

“My name is Ouliga Musyoka. I am in standard 3. I see a lion, I went to museum. The day was very interesting, into my body deep into my heart. On the way I kept on peeping through the window on train. The first thing we did was to see a crocodile, I see a chimpanzee, I see a snake. Thanks to you.”

--*Ouliga Musyoka, age 10*

“My journey to NBI was very good. My hand writing is not best, but is best to me. Thanks to you and Nairobi.”

--*Vaati Mutinda, age 11*

“My name is Mwikali Kioko. I am in standard two. I see a lion. I went to museum. I see two snake. The day was very interesting. I see to giraffe. I see a ostrich. I went to Nairobi. I see a monkey. I see a thief. I see a bus. I see heyena. I see to crocodile.”

--*Mwikali Kioko, age 10*

“The journey started at quarter to four a.m. on Tuesday. I really enjoyed the journey very much for it was my first time to travel to Nairobi and more so the capital city of our country. At twenty minutes past eight we had already arrived, chattering and enjoying the bright day. Without wasting time, we sat for our breakfast, which was of very high enriched porridge.

“At that juncture, we boarded a *matatu* which took us to the animal orphanage. The naked truth is that after entering the animal orphanage place, I could not believe my eyes. First I saw two ostrich in their cage. The birds are too large and tall, such that are big to the lion's cage. The lion is so muscular that it can kill even a buffalo with its soft pads and very large mouth.

“We visited several animals including the parrot which was imitating what we were saying, and saying exactly that. After a short rest we boarded the same *matatu* with its pleasing music, and went straight to the museum. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw very enormous and huge snakes, others which were about three to five metres long. That was my first time to see such snakes

since I was born. The last animal to see was the crocodiles which were very large, such that they could swallow a whole human being alive. Afterwards, we went to Uhuru Park where we enjoyed some things here and there. Some entered a boat and sailed, enjoying the cool climate of the place. We had our supper at around five o'clock in the evening, then after a short rest, we walked majestically to the railway station for our return journey. The journey back was quite enjoyable, and for my conclusions, the tour to Nairobi was twice better than the one to Mombassa.”

--*Musingila Ndeto, age 16*

“OUR SAFARI TO NAIROBI: The first thing is called taxis and buses. Nairobi is the Capital City. It has many skyscrapars and buildings. On the safari, I saw some wild animals like zebras, monkeys... Nairobi has lots of shops of new horizon clothing and something called retail shoes. Jomo Kenyatta International Airport welcomes airplanes from all over the world. The mandera is on the border with Somalia and Ethiopia. It has a hot, dry climate. Did you know that Nairobi has an ostrich park and a snake park? A giraffe center, an animal orphanage, and Nairobi National Park? Cars, taxis and buses take people around the city. They go to work, school and shopping. I was very happy of that. Thanks be to you. “

--*Madonna Fatuma, age 14*

(Madonna also wrote an additional paper all in Kiswahili, which translates as follows.)

“My school is in one of the forests in Kiboko. It is one of the best schools ever in the area. I like my school so much. I am in standard five. I get four hundred marks and above. (this is a bit above average) I study with a lot of effort so that when I finish school I will help children and the older people, those ones without energy. I am a very nice child. When I become old, my work will be mostly to help the children. Mama Dianah, don't be worried. Even when you grow old, I will help you as much as I can. I promise I will buy you a vehicle. Mama Wini, I will buy you a car, a very nice car and then I will buy a bus-big-so that when the children in the center want to travel, the children of MCC can be taken straight to Nairobi. Mama Wini and Mama Dianah,thank you. My school is Mailu Academy.”

--*Madonna (Juma) Fatuma, age 14*

### **A Report from Dianah Nzomo**

I am sure you are all doing well and in good health, all of you, and I trust that all is well with each of you in all your duties and families. The children are fine, in fact the young Nzilani has a smile because she is satisfied with a cup of porridge earlier than the others who are in pre-primary school. She is the luckiest of all. She takes her porridge very early and she walks all around in the new center trying to help in watering flowers and bananas, although she can't do it, she tries to as much as

possible. She is a real peanut girl, full of life, and a promise of a bright future in her eyes. She looks at you with all her trust on you.

We are in the new center and we all love our home. We have flowers, bananas, spinach, pigeon peas and *sukuma* for the children, and a nice breeze over towards Mt. Kilimanjaro. There is a small bush, and no other building is near us. It's wonderful to feel how the children feel at home and are sure of how much we care for them.

One of the teenage boys known as Muambi (Daniel) is painting the (front entrance) gate, and it's good to see him helping and doing work free in the center. This is all what we hope others will try to do in other activities in their lives, and there will be a difference in Makindu and the whole of our republic. Giving love is giving strength and love is the powerful tool in life. Muambi is going to high school in the year 2001. He has done primary exams and is waiting for final results with a girl known as Adija Salim. Adija Salim, she is a confident girl, and I have no worries she will make her way up to high school. She is bright and strong, but her heart is broken sometimes because she has one guardian with Kabibi, whose health is really going down, and it's not easy for Adija to see Kabibi losing hope.

**Kabibi:** She is not like Muasya. Kabibi loses hope very quickly, but her medicine is love and care, and an outing, and she comes back to life. (like a trip to nearby Kiboko town as we just did) Muasya: Since Winnie came, Muasya came back to life, he can dance and smile. His medicine is Winnie's face, and that is all. Since Winnie is here, I think Muasya will live long. He could not walk, and it was hard for him to eat, and now he can smile, but still treats Winnie like his personal belonging. He does not like to share Winnie's love with others.

Since AIDS virus is a major concern, we have organized ourselves, and today we have our first meeting to discuss and plan on how we are going to start educating the whole of MKU community to help both children and their teachers, leaders, guardians, and all women in general.

We lost one of the guardian yesterday, and we buried her today. Wayua Kiema lost her guardian grandmother and she needs another one after the burial is over. We will let you know her new guardian, and I trust we get a caring one.

The Kioko's are Mbula, Nzilani, mwikali, and Nyamai. They had no guardian kind enough to care for them and they were getting frustrated and abused, by giving them a lot of very hard work. Mwikali was getting strong muscles because of working hard at home. The guardian by the name of Kamenwa has been very unkind to the Kiokos. She could not feed them, and I

can't blame her. Our children go home satisfied, while her own children have very little or no food at all. There is a lack of food around here that helps me evaluate how much MCC has done to save these children, and giving them hope, love, and a smile each day.

**Farm:** While on vacation will mostly be helping in the farm. We have planted almost seven acres in the rented farm: beans, maize and pigeon peas, and since we trust there will be promising rains this season, we plan to work all as a team with the children to clean the farm and get a promising harvest. It's our hope. (It is amazing while I am writing, rains have started, very heavy rains, a lot of rains. Winnie is amazed, and Cindy how much it is pouring down. YES, the rains have come. When I started writing to you there was no rain, now children are all crowded in the office for shelter, and it was during lunch hour. It's so unfortunate for the roof is leaking in some parts, but we are going to fix them.)

**Performance:** Last term, the children improved so much in their scores. I expect more improvement this term. I will let Winnie send you scores when they come back home from schools for December vacation. Trust and believe they are doing well.

We have formed an AIDS education program composed of Winnie, Dianah, Florence from Makindu Hospital, Idah a business lady, and Nzisa, who is a vocal lady, and also the ladies come from different status; married, divorced, single, and soon we hope to get young teenage girls, and we shall start educating all groups of people, churches, women groups, schools, and business and also police officers, all working class groups, and sex commercial dealers who hang around Makindu to wait for the truck drivers... so I trust this goes on well

**My visit to the States next year:** I look forward to sharing and strengthening together our hearts and spirits, and love shall guide us to see our dreams mature. I long to come in June or May; I shall be happy to meet all of you, my friends, in summer.

I started my leave on the 15th, and it's nice to have a break, at least, for my own peace, and to be a bit for myself and give myself comfort. Thank you. Bye.

--- Diannah Nzomo, Program Manager, MCC

### **This holiday season, celebrate in a most appropriate way – give the gift of MCC**

This holiday season rather than just another present for those on your list, why not share your love and concern by purchasing an MCC donation in their name. This is a beautiful way to embrace the true meaning of the holidays and make others aware of our special center in Africa. Your gift will bring food and safety, education, medicine, health, shelter, comfort and most importantly,

hope to the children of Makindu. It takes so little to change the life of a child, help a family or assist the community in Makindu. Why not share that joy with others. Share the story of Makindu, where every child born needs a song. This season let's give songs and sing with the children and community in Makindu. To make a gift donation fill out the form provided with this newsletter and mail it with your tax deductible check to:

Sharing Hands  
PO Box 335  
Brownsville OR 97327  
Phone/Fax 541.466.3110  
sharinghands@dnc.net

As you can see from this Chok-A-Blok newsletter, we need your help.  
Thanks for Caring,  
*Paul W. Baxter, Editor*