



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.

July 2000 Newsletter

Hello to all, This issue is going to be different, and I think special. It is entirely the work of our Makindu compatriots. We start with a report from Program Manager and Co-Founder Dianah Nzomo, and then present some of the letters we have received from our MCC kids I have left her report and the kids letters in there words, but have added some explanations I felt were needed. Hopefully they are not too distracting. Reading this report and the letters, I can see and hear Dianah and the kids, which made this the most enjoyable issue of the newsletter I have so far edited! If this issue doesn't tell you what this project is really about, for sure nothing I can say ever will! ...your editor.

DIANAH NZOMO REPORTS

Editor's Note: Dianah is, by everyone's account who has met her (myself included), the heart and soul of the MCC program in Makindu. MCC is working to bring Dianah to Oregon for a visit, as soon as possible. She is struggling to get a visa to enter the United States. MCC is writing letters and enlisting help in this endeavor. When she comes, we will notify all of you, so that you too can meet this extraordinary person. Dianah has recently gotten an email address and is sending regular reports to the committee. It is typical of Dianah that, even though the most complex mechanical device in her home is a battery powered radio, she takes typing in English for instantaneous correspondence with the other side of the world entirely in stride. Like all Kenyans, Dianah is tri-lingual, speaking her native Kikamba, as well as Swahili and English (and no doubt bits and pieces of other languages as well!)

I trust you are all fine, Dear friends, I am Happy to work hand in hand with you. I have sent a report by Email by Air Mail also and photographs of the children. But I trust Josh has been keeping in touch with you while he is in Nairobi. I am sorry not to have been able to send Emails because I believe you very well know I spent most of the time with the children but since we have Rhonda and Jerry. I shall be coming and giving you a report once [every] two weeks time so that I can improve communication. I have my Passport now, I have my application for VISA card (*she doesn't really mean Visa Card, but no doubt would love to get one! ...ed.*) I will let you know of all the Progress I trust on 17th of July I shall get my VISA because I have your invitation letters and Thank you Don and Winnie and

Dear friends who enable all this to happen. (*In fact she was turned down by the US because her bank account was not large enough. ???! That's right, these people are poor! Duh. Anyway, the committee is working harder on the issue and expect success. ...ed.*)

On 29th/5/2000 (May 29) did finish doing all home visits and I could see why some children are not performing well. (MCC performs home visits on a regular basis to keep track of conditions within the homes of our guardians and kids. The children will often not tell us of problems, and so like social workers anywhere, we must simply go look. Fortunately we have Dianah who "sees" things that are often invisible to American volunteers (*this one anyway*)...ed.)

Mercy's Children: The children Ndile and James (MCC orphans in Mercy's care) suffer mentally about their fate after their mother (guardian) dies (*Mercy is a guardian in the terminal stages of aids ...ed.*) and have no concentration (not doing well in school) but I am doing visits like we have gone this month with Jerry (*an American MCC volunteer*) and [have] seen the situation at home is not well. The children Ndunge, Mwemi (*Mercy's actual children – not in the MCC program*) wonder what will happen when their mother dies so no concentration in their studies but I am helping by ever doing more visits to the family to see who will take over Guardianship. (*Balancing the needs of our MCC kids with the needs of non-MCC kids within the desperately poor families of the guardians is a constant job, and one which often has only Sophie's choices...ed.*) Sophia (*Sophia, the guardian of Wambua and Musingila Ndeto, recently died of cancer...ed.*)

Wambua: Desperate since Sophia died in end of March and he is alone so he is not doing well since Sophia was alive and sick and had gone through hardships in his hear. (*Musingila, Wambua's brother is away at school. With Sophia gone, it is important for Wambua to live there to retain the land, which might be taken by an adult with more means if left vacant...ed.*)

Kithokois: Mutisya, Mwanzia and Musyoka. The children get confused when they remember how they saw their mother die and they have no confidence in their life sometimes they lose hope and are not Happy but the Guardian is good and caring (*The children suffer from depression, especially the youngest boy, Musyoka. There is no medical help available for these*

children. MCC offers them food, friendship, and love, and the knowledge that someone cares about them...ed.)

Mwambi is not in a bad situation at home he has a caring Guardian and he is headboy in GRADE 8 but he shall have to go to a technical School. The Teachers are helping me to see what his talents are in life since he can't improve. He is genetically a slow learner but highly respected by the Teachers and other children he is the time Keeper and responsible and he is full of hope and a smile on his face.

KIVANGAS. The children live almost alone since they were left with their big sisters and they are not responsible for the young ones: Raymond, Douglas, Nicholas and Kavili. These children are under going a difficult time since their parents were working in Nairobi before they died. It was a big blow in their lives (*Dianah means economically as well as emotionally...ed.*) I trust they will change and improve their performance though Nicholas is trying (*performance in school...ed*) and Kavili had run away from home.

KIMONGOS. They were homeless, now they have a piece of Land .) and have moved from Bondeni Primary School to Syengoni Primary School. (*The Kimongos were so-called squatters, whose land had been stolen. They lived for perhaps five years with perhaps 100 other such families in a "village" called Meekemboni, located on about ½ a football field of government land. These were the densest living conditions I have, or ever hope to, witness. American Campgrounds are literally expansive in comparison. Through the efforts of the District Officer they were given land, but the land is scattered and far from Makindu, forcing the kids to change schools and making it difficult for MCC kids from Meekemboni to get to the center...ed*) Academically Mutunga is great, but Mwangia [is having trouble]. I am trying my best to counsel him. And I trust he is going to improve his performance. They are settled now.

MUTHINIS. I am sending a photograph of the children when I visited them. They looked happy and healthy. Mbuvi is doing great -- he was Position 2. Mwende was Position 11. Kilonzo was Position 5. (*Numbers 2, 11 and 5 in their class...ed.*) I was satisfied that they needed to be there, although I miss them and they cried a lot when they saw me. (*They have moved in with a relative away from Makindu and so can't come to the center anymore. Finding a stable and caring guardian for these children has been difficult...ed.*)

MUTISYA MWOLOLO and BEATRICE. [At] Politechnic Engineering School. The boy is happy to be doing Engineering and he says it was a nice decision for him. He likes what he's learning, and he will be able to help others soon, [and will] be able to stand by himself and this is good for both us and himself. BEATRICE

was pleased and showed me around the school. Sat at her typing machine to show me that she can type. I love the way she looked. She looked like a secretary in an office. And she's really serious on her business studies. They are happy to be at a Politechnic school. (*These kids were struggling in highschool and begged to go to a trade school...ed.*)

MWOLOLOS. Mutungi, Mwia, Wambua and Sila. These children are a model to others in the Center on what it means to accept, to belong where you are. And they are clean and confident with the little they have and what we do for them. They look great. (*These boys live alone in a house they were loaned by their uncle. Without a guardian, they have struggled...ed.*)

MBULA and NZILANI, RAYMOND, ABDALLAH, and JANE. They are in primary school and they have good time with our new volunteer Jerry. He has time to show them writing on the dust. He has a big heart for a child and for our program and all the children. I have sent a report, a long one to Winnie and I hope you are soon getting it by mail.

NZULA MWOLOLO. She is going for an eye-check on July 16 at the Lion's Hospital. (*Nzula is the beautiful girl who had growths covering both eyes so that she could never look straight at an object. Winnie arranged to have them removed by a doctor in Nairobi and now, essentially normal, she is recovering from the surgery...ed.*)

NGWENZE. She's going for a medical check on the first week of August. She's a flower in the Center, although she had a burn on her hand. (*Ngwenze is the little girl, one of our twins, who had a terminal heart defect, which was cured by MCC food and love. She actually got her checkup early and the hole in her heart is gone. She is a beautiful, average child...not that any of our kids are just average...ed.*)

KABIBI. She has been coming. She did some coloring. She's losing weight. Today she smiled a big smile and beautiful. But we are losing hope. She's growing weaker and weaker. (*Kabibi has AIDS. We have been taking her to Nairobi for as much medical care as we can find...ed.*)

MUASYA. Jerry went to visit him because he knows his home now. Muasya is trying to live longer, although the days are not many for him. It is hard to watch him go slowly. I just can't imagine how deadly AIDS is. A Disease with no cure. I will keep him hoping until the last bit and his Guardian really cares for him a lot. (*Muasya is six and loves school, where he is at the top of his class. His guardian is his grandma who loves him dearly. He is a beautiful little boy who has brightened the lives of all of us who know him. It will be a very very sad, very very hard day when he goes....ed.*)

HOPE: I would like to thank you for what you are doing for these children. Our hearts, our energy, our Love, working wonders in the lives of these children. It is good to see how the children grow in our MCC family. I'm caring for them for you and myself and for those who will not have time to come here. Thank you so much. I'll keep in touch with you every two weeks from now on.

AND FROM THE KIDS!

(The kids wrote letters to Winnie and the Committee. Winnie typed them. These kids are the best indication of the importance MCC. There is not room for all of them in this issue, but more will come later. Dianah wrote the introduction....ed.)

Hello,
I have decided to send this just as they are, clean, dirty and some not written in the proper English, but they are trying. With love and a lot of stories from your children, I am sending this to you to hear their voice and feel their heart and touch their work with your hands.
Dianah

4/12/2000 My name is Mathias Kimeu Maweu. I hail from Makindu in the country Kenya. Far and for most sending my warm greetings to all of you in that particular locality. I am successfully undertaking my studies in a school by the name "Matiliku Secondary School". To hit the nail on the head I had left my primary studies in 1997 then wandered about in the year 1998 since my grandmother was incapable of producing enough for my school fees. Almost about to surrender, I was glad to find the MCC running at able leadership of Dianah. She requested me not to lose hope and join them in the centre to try my luck. I did everything with a lot of expectations for I finally joined Matiliku Secondary School. I hereby return my gratitudes to Catherine DeLong and Winnie Barron plus Dianah for uplifting the centre and any other person who has contributed to successful running of the centre. To me I promise to work hard and become a responsible and famous doctor in the world. I like playing soccer very much. For church group children send my greetings to Brandon Plubau. Nice time in that particular continent. Mathias Kimeu Maweu

Dear Winny, First is much greetings from I Mwendu. How are you since long? I hope and trust that you are fine as I am here at Makindu. Everyone here at MCC is fine and we have greeted you very much. The main point of writting this letter is to inform you that I am continuing well because for now I am used to make baby's dresses from old materials and sell them to get money to help my brothers and sisters with some needs like salt, sugar, onions, paraffin, tea leaves and any other necessary need like for now. I have made uniform for my sister Mwikali Kavevi and Daina has paid me for my good work and she is very happy with me. I am

very happy with you for taking me to school because I had nothing to do before I was sponsored but for now I can make uniform for MCC and help myself and the rest of the family. Yours, Mwendu Kavevi. Thank you.

My name is Naomi Kamenwa. I am 11 years old. I am in standard five at Makindu "A" Primary School. I like to read storry book. I have one brother and I don't have sister. I like to eat chapati. I like to be a teacher. My brother's name is Charo (Joseph).

Hey!! Brothers and sisters of which I cannot trace your home countries. My names are Lilian Kanini. I am in Form 3 in Makindu Secondary School, under sponsorship of MCC as my parents since the year 1998. I do thank Winnie and her friends for establishing MCC for it has worked alot. We do have a large farm where we have planted maize, beans, sukumawiki, cassavas and so many other things. We have also set an apiary ground at the middle of the shamba. My favourite game is sports. Hobbies: 1.) watching video; 2.) reading novels; 3.) listening to music; 4.) poetry Hopes: I would like to go for further studies and after accomplishing that I be an accountant. Much greetings... wishing you nice time and good luck in whatever you do. Lilian Kanini Mwema

Hello... how is you. I am sixteen years old and am in standard eight. I have nothing in my house. I like learning so much. I would like to be a pilot. Its a good job if someone does his/her best in his studies. ...I would wish to see you face to face. I have chosen you as my friend in my heart. Greet everyone in your family. I love everyone who cares and provides us with everything including food, education, and visiting some different places. It's a wonderful job. God bless you all. Thanks. I am Daniel Musambi.

My name is Musingila Ndetu. I'm in Secondary School in Kabaa High School. I reported late due to some problems here and there (*See above, Musingila's grandmother Sophia recently died...ed*). In fact the latest in my school but didn't worry me. In the end term examination I managed to get position sixteen out of fifty pupils. This was due to late reporting. Otherwise I am promising to be position one from term now to form 4. The journey to school was so enjoyable but before we reached Machakos, we had an accident whereby our vehicle loosed control and entered in the nearby bush making the driver jump out of it. Fortunately no one was injured except that I had some injuries in my forehead and on my right hand, but Emilly was not injured anywhere although she was very much afraid (*Emily is Dianah's sister. She works for MCC. Matatu's, the ubiquitous, overloaded, undermaintained, often insanely driven minivans which constitute the bulk of transportation in Kenya often have accidents, usually with far worse results. Like Emily, I have been very much afraid more than once...ed*) I am very much pleased to be in Kabaa but I wish I could have a transfer

to Matiliku next year, this being a request. After completing my education I would like to be a mechanical engineer. Say hello to Kristina who was good hearted like you Winnie.

My name is Mutisya (Mwololo). I am 15 years of age being in a engineering school. I would like to greet Winnie and her relatives in the United States hopping that they are fine. We are actually missing you Winnie in Makindu Children Centre and we hopping to see you coming soon. In my institute we are going on well... in our last examination I managed to come position ten out of seventy two students. Under the control of Dianah we are going on very well in the centre and with God's willing we will soon be having our own plot and buildings because now the buildings are still on construction. With God's willing we shall soon meet...

Hi! Hey! Paul! My name is Douglas Kivanga. I am fifteen years old and I am in standard seven. Last term I was number twenty with a average 420 but this term I was number fifteen with average of 407. After my education ended, I want to be a lawyer. Say hello to Betty, Kristina, Winnie and others.

My name is Mwanaidi Rukia. I am 9 years old. I am short. I like to be a doctor. I like Diana.

My name is Mohammed Ndanga. I am in standard six in Kiambani Primary school and also my old is 13 years. Very much I want to ask you how you are? We have planted a lot of trees and also what as to plant trees in MCC in the other house which now is near to get finished. Also me I like to read and I like to eat. Also I like to go to school every day. In class I was number 21 and I am working hard. And also I like Winny and mother Daina our mothers. Here Makindu there is alot of sun. Hello my friends.

My name is Kalumu Amina. I am 13 years old. I a go to school every day. I like to smile. I am number 32 class and my class teacher is Miss Gondi and my best frend is Mwaka and my brothers name Matuku. I love Dianah and Winnie and my mother is Amina.

My name is Mutisya Kithokoi. I am in standard five. I was in possition 32 out of 55 my school is Kiambani Primary School. I'm 13 years. My village is Kiu. I like maths, Kiswahili, English and science. I have one sister and two brothers. My family is very good. I like muthokoi and bananas. I like Dianah and Josh. I like to be a doctor. I want to be a good boy.

Mutisya's right.

We all just want to be good boys and girls. And believe me, you guys are! Without your help none of this would have happened or could continue. As Dianah's report and these letters show, what we (the MCC committee, staff and YOU GUYS) are doing is life saving and life changing. The kids and people of Makindu are

incredibly grateful. And we are doing what needs to be done, we are doing the right thing.

The Last Words

Four pieces of exciting news: The new building is finished and a picture of it is posted on the web page (www.makindu.org). Check it out. It is really impressive and exciting.

Equally exciting is the news that the I2 foundation has funded a grant for \$48,000 to pay for secondary school fees for our kids for seven years. The proper response is YAHOOOOOOO, or the like.

And finally a fund raising dinner will be held August 26th in Brownsville at CC's restaurant and ice cream shop on Mainstreet. For more information please contact: Sharing Hands PO Box 335 Brownsville OR 97327 Phone/Fax 541.466.3110 sharinghands@dnc.net

And finally, another YAHOOOOOO is in order. We are proud to announce that in September, Winnie Baron will return to Makindu to direct our efforts there. Mother Winnie is excited. There is much to do. MCC has great plans to continue and expand our programs.