



Rubble left from collapsed kitchen and stoves Temporary kitchen structure made of mud Brick building with stoves at Bukati PS

December 2017 Children of Bukati (COB) Newsletter

Dear Donor, Thank you for your on-going support of the children from this remote rural area of western Kenya. We continue to keep the overhead very low – it was less than 2 cents per dollar this year. The Children of Bukati project is about providing food and an education to children who would otherwise not be given this chance to make the most of their lives. Academic performance: Augustine, the principal of Bwaliro PS, says that he expects there to be more than 1000 children at the school in January 2018. When we began the project, there were 8 students in grade 8. Last year there were 76 and 118 students will enroll in grade 8 in January. This illustrates the huge impact the lunch program is having on retention and completion of elementary school by both boys and girls. The school has improved tremendously in its overall academic performance on the standard Kenyan exams. Augustine says that is a result of the lunch program. I always thought that the academic performance would suffer when the class sizes increased dramatically. As an example, there are grade 2 classes with more than 100 students with one teacher. However, the students' performance continues to improve. This is thanks to your generosity in providing the lunch program for the students. It is also a result of the dedication of the teachers who manage such large classes, and of Augustine and his team who manage the lunch program and agro-forestry projects at the school.

Agriculture: The school farm did not produce as much maize as expected due to insufficient rainfall. They were only able to harvest 5 bags of maize to help to supplement the lunch program. This short rain season (that occurs during Canada's fall) tends to provide even more unpredictable rainfall. Currently the land is planted in sweet potatoes that are expected to be harvested in January 2018. If there are insufficient rains for the potatoes to grow, the land will be replanted in vegetables that are more resistant to drought. Therefore, the land will produce food but the result will be food with fewer total calories to go towards the children's lunches. Livestock: The school has one male pig that is doing well. These communities have a shortage of boars to breed to the sows owned by local farmers. Typically, a sow is brought to the boar to be bred. Once she gives birth to her litter of pigs, the owner of the boar is given one of the piglets as payment for the breeding. The owner of the boar receives the pig when it is weaned at 8 weeks of age.

The school sold their sheep and purchased three dairy cows. One cow has calved and the other two will calve in the new year. Milk is an important food commodity in the community because people drink large quantities of milk in their tea. They serve 'sweet tea' which is half boiled milk, half tea and a large quantity of sugar.

School Kitchen: As you can see from the pictures, the kitchen was completely destroyed by a huge storm that descended on the community in early November. The building and the stoves were all ruined. We are therefore appealing to you to help us raise \$10,000 to build a modern kitchen with cooking stoves. In the meantime, the school has constructed a mud hut to provide a place to cook the school lunches. However, if they were to build a brick structure, it would withstand future severe wind storms. That is what we did at the Bukati Primary School.

University Students: I asked the three university students who we are sponsoring to send us a message. Each of these students began at one of the Children of Bukati schools (Evans from Bukati and the others from Bwaliro PS). They are orphans who were supported by our lunch programs in primary school, and by individual families during high school and now at university. Their messages tell of their gratitude, their struggles, and their dreams. *Evans'* note included the following: 'I hope this finds you well and in good health. I am fine too. I hope His divine grace and peace is reigning over Canada. In Kenya, we are experiencing a little bit of political unrest, demonstrations, police brutality and the likes but I am positive the Almighty will restore harmony. In January 2018, I will be going for teaching practice. I will need money for accommodation, some little pocket money for the 15 weeks and some cash for printing reports and project work. I can't find enough words to thank you with. **You changed my life.** You gave a meaning to my miserable life. What my selfish crooked society couldn't give me you offered it to me free of charge, with bonuses. **Sometimes when I reflect on my life, I fail to find where to place the wonderful people in my life (my sponsor) and others who have supported Children of Bukati. Tell my sponsor I love her. I cherish her actually.'** *David* said education simply means being prepared or guided to realize your potential and **how useful you could be to yourself and to the society at large.** *Eugine* said: 'I am doing well here in school thus I appreciate this gift of education you are enabling me to pursue. In a special way, **I take this opportunity to thank you for all good you are doing unto my life by facilitating my education.** God bless you very much. I do request you to help me acquire personal computer (laptop). It will aid in research of my project proposal and report writing. I thank you for every support you instill unto me as you always make me realize my potential in life. THANK YOU AND BE BLESSED.'

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If you have donated through Canada Helps, you will have already received a tax receipt by email. Otherwise, your receipt will be mailed in February. If we have your email address, receipts will be sent in early February. Donations are accepted by cheque made out to Stone United Church with COB on the memo line. Please mail the donation to Marg Baker (see address in paragraph above). Credit card donations are accepted through Canada Helps, on-line via the website. Thank you for your ongoing support of these children and their community. Sincerely Cate Dewey (www.childrenofbukati.com)