

COB project now supporting 319 AIDS orphans Children of Bukati - March 2007 Update



In July – Cecilia was wearing this orange dress to school. In Western Kenya, it is inappropriate to have bare shoulders. She was constantly pulling on the sleeves to stay covered up.

The Bukati Primary School was bustling with activity in February and there was a feeling of excitement and hope in the air. There were 212 children with new uniforms – dressed to feel like they belonged at the school. Most importantly, in direct response to the project, there were 109 new AIDS orphans who started school in January. Almost half (48%) of these children are girls. The children are all ages and attend classes from kindergarten to grade 8. Some are starting school for the first time, others are returning after having missed a year or more. We have ordered uniforms for these 109 new children. There are now 319 AIDS orphans supported by the project. The school has 712 pupils.

In February, the children made 3,000 green, white and yellow beaded bracelets. These five-dollar bracelets help to raise awareness and funds for the project. Students at the Ontario Veterinary College and Sir Isaac Brock Public School have raised thousands of dollars through bracelet sales. If you know of a place to sell these \$5 bracelets please contact Cate at 519-856-2301.

The community in Bukati is rallying around this project – by donating building materials and labour for the kitchen and the grist mill building and as mentioned above, by sending the AIDS orphans in their care to school. On Feb 14th, the wooden frame and the metal roof of the kitchen were completed. The children knocked down an old, disused classroom that was crumbling on its foundation. The mud from the old building will finish the walls of the kitchen. On Feb 15th, we purchased a 10-horse power motor that will be used to for the corn grist mill. Ground corn is cooked with water to make the staple food called ugali. People living in the community will pay money to use the school's mill. This will provide the resources needed to continue the project in 6 years when our project funding ends. The grist mill building was completed on Feb 19th.



In February Cecilia and 211 others were wearing new school uniforms that your donation helped to buy. Cecilia was shy about being singled out for this photograph but I wanted you to see her for yourself. Thank you for your support!

This COB project has grown beyond our wildest expectations. Originally, we hoped to support 50 children over a 6-year period with a budget of \$15,000. Now there are 319 children in our care. The lunch program is now running two days a week. This will increase to 3 or more days as more funds are available to support this important need.

In the first year of the project, we have raised more than \$30,000 – all by word of mouth, a few presentations, one newspaper article and one short TV interview. Isn't that amazing! Our work has just begun. We will need \$330,000 to outfit and feed 319 children 5 days a week for 6 years. If you know of a group who would listen to a presentation about this project, please contact Cate with the details. She welcomes the opportunity to share the story.

Thank you for your generous and on-going support of this worthwhile project. Together, we are changing the lives of these AIDS orphans and in doing so, are giving them and their community a future. If you know of someone who would like to donate to this project, please ask them to make their cheque payable to Stone United Church and put Kenya Outreach on the memo line. Please mail the cheque to Cate Dewey, RR 1, Rockwood, ON N0B 2K0.