



Bwaliro school trophy



Kale in green house



Boys' latrine



Say no to child labour



Bukati trees, barn & green house

December 2013 Children of Bukati (COB) Newsletter

Dear Donor, thank you so much for your support of the children and the community development projects. The permaculture work continues in the three primary schools in Kenya where we have projects. The high school students are showing tremendous success and at graduation are being offered placements in public universities. Sponsors of these students are being asked if they would be willing to continue their sponsorship for university costs.

Bwaliro Public School, the 2nd school we are supporting, grew sufficient food to feed the school children themselves during the 2nd school term in 2013. This is impressive because it happened earlier than we expected and shows the sense of ownership of the project by the Project Board of Directors. Bwaliro Public School received the trophy for the top academic public school (of those with less than 50 students in grade 8). The teachers at the school are very dedicated and the vice-principal keeps a close eye on the classes' progress through the curriculum. The lunch program enables the students to learn better – the food increases their cognitive abilities. I am sure it also helps that the children now have desks to sit at. When we first began at Bwaliro, only the grade 8 children had desks and the classroom floors were pitted and in poor repair. Many children got jiggers (open sores on the soles of their feet) from the insects living in the floors. These we repaired. Bwaliro's academic success is particularly impressive considering the school is attracting AIDS orphans and destitute children from families living in extreme poverty. It is to your credit as a donor and to the credit of the staff at Bwaliro that the school has achieved this recognition. Thank you and well done!

We have been following the strategic plan that was developed by the Project Board of Directors at Bwaliro to continue to move towards self-sufficiency. We sent funds to purchase a second green house and to start a pig keeping project. The staff and students currently have a kale growing experiment at the school. There are kale plants growing in the green house (see photo). They also planted some kale outside. This will give the school and community an opportunity to compare the relative success of the two methods and provide a living, practical experiment for the students to watch. The second project is their first livestock rearing effort. The school built a pig barn and purchased 3 pigs. They will buy 5 more in the January. The pigs will provide manure for the school gardens and will also give some students the opportunity to learn about livestock rearing.

It is thanks to Natalie Carter, a Canadian PhD student who is working in Uganda that we have these up to date photos and stories from Bwaliro. Natalie visited the community in November and gave a first- hand report. You can see more of her photos at the website (www.childrenofbukati.com). Augustine, the principal, has posted "Say NO to Child Labour" signs in English and Swahili around the school property. They are making a point that children should be in school, not staying home to work. This is a bold and courageous act for the school and in particular, for Augustine.

Together with your donations and the school staff's encouragement, we have indeed attracted many more students to the school since we began. The number of students enrolled has grown from 685 to 901 students. We, of course, were hoping to increase the education of AIDS orphans – their numbers have increased from 171 to 473 children. With this success comes additional stress on the school's infrastructure. When I was at the school in February, the boys' latrine had completely collapsed leaving the boys without a safe toilet facility. The school management team applied for a grant from the local government to build a new latrine. As you can see in the photo, the latrine is completed. However, there are only 3 stalls for 466 boys. To add onto this latrine would cost \$1988 per unit. It seems this is a cost of success. Hopefully we will have the funds in 2014 to add to this existing latrine. Similarly, the school is again short of desks and classrooms. We will deal with the hygiene problem first.

The last picture on the first page is of the trees towering over the poultry barn, the old dairy barn that is renovated for pigs (in the background) and then the green house on the right. The poultry barn is built over a corner of the fish barn so the poultry manure feeds the fish. The fish pond is fed by run off from the well at the school. The trees include both eucalyptus and sesbania. The eucalyptus grows fast and straight and are valuable as poles for electricity. The sesbania provide high protein fodder for the sheep, a source of food for the fish, and are also nitrogen fixing, so they enrich the soil. This image from Bukati shows a small section of the very successful permaculture project.

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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 to you in February. Donations are accepted by cheque made out to Stone United Church with COB on the memo line. Please mail the donation 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.

We at the Children of Bukati team, in Kenya and Canada wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a 2014 filled with peace, joy, love and laughter.

Sincerely Cate Dewey (www.childrenofbukati.com)