

## January 2009 Children of Bukati (COB) Newsletter

Dear Donor,

Thank you for your generous support of the Children of Bukati. Your financial contributions are enabling over 500 AIDS orphans and destitute children to receive an elementary school education. Even though there were 35 children who graduated from Grade 8 in December, Nick, the principal, says the enrolment in January was higher than ever. I do not have the exact count of children who will be supported by COB this term. The enrolment increase was sufficient to require additional teachers to be hired. Uniforms will be purchased for new children who are part of the project and also for some children who were given uniforms in 2006. After 2 years, the one uniform that they wear day after day will be too small and threadbare to last another school year.

Some donors have asked us to facilitate the support high school students. Although not part of the general COB funds, through these individuals, we are now supporting 5 high school students; 3 in grade 10 and 2 in grade 9. The pupils attend a boarding school that is a 30 minute drive from Butula. The school has a very high academic standing compared to other high schools in the region. Four of the students are the orphans. We selected the one boy and one girl from each year with the highest academic standing in the standard Kenyan Grade 8 examinations. The fifth student, Julianna, has outstanding leadership skills and very good academic ability. She is pictured on the left.

Julianna definitely stood out as the school's leader when she was in Grade 7 (1<sup>st</sup> photo). She wrote and delivered a very passionate poem called *Who Poisoned our Well?* during a school assembly in 2006. The poisoned well was a metaphor for the AIDS that struck the community, killing people who were old and young, rich and poor. In 2007, (2<sup>nd</sup> photo), Julianna was the lead dancer and singer in the senior presentation. Often the children sing using a "call and response" technique, where the leader sings a line and then the chorus repeats the line. Julianna was the caller. She danced with purpose and energy and enthusiasm, directing the other students in the correct moves and timing.

I visited the high school in June 2007 to meet the two orphans we were sponsoring. Nick told me of a destitute child who was at the school for the 1<sup>st</sup> term but who would be forced to leave because her parents could not afford the fees for 2<sup>nd</sup> term. He asked if I had a sponsor for a third child but at that point I didn't. After spending an hour with the orphans, Nick asked if I was willing to meet the third child who needed a sponsor. That child was Julianna. I immediately knew we had to support her. As an elementary school pupil, she had left such an impression on me. Shortly after I returned to Canada, a friend agreed to be her sponsor. She is now set for 4 years. She belongs to the soccer, drama and debating teams at school and she is fluent in English. She hopes to become a pilot. I believe her leadership skills will help her community.



The livestock at the school continue to proliferate – in the first week of January, the school had 4 lambs and 4 piglets and the hen population was expanded by 40 birds. The plan is to add hens to the coup in increments of 40. The cow had not yet calved in early January, but perhaps she has by now. The children at two churches in Ontario are collecting money to purchase more livestock for the school. We hope to raise sufficient money to buy two more cows and some more sheep and pigs. There is definitely a good market in the school area for young weaned lambs and piglets and for milk.

The lunch program has been expanded once more. Beginning this term, all AIDS orphans and destitute children in the school will receive lunch 4 days a week and all children in kindergarten through grade 2 will eat lunch 5 days a week. The additional day of food for the orphans is because of the school's December corn harvest. This corn was grown on the 6 acres of land that they rent.

Over the next two years, we hope to raise sufficient money to purchase 10 acres for the school. Each acre will cost \$2,000 (CDN). This includes the land transfer taxes. The school will use the land to grow corn and beans. This will enable the lunch program to be sustained long after our 6 years of funding has ended. Friends, who are faithful supporters of the Children of Bukati project, organized a very successful silent auction in Eden Mills, Ontario in December. The proceeds from that one event will buy the first acre for the school. When I wrote the November newsletter, the land purchase seemed a distant dream – it is now becoming a reality. Thank you!

There is a team of students at the University of Guelph who are planning a trip to Kenya this summer that is being led by Jamie VanderBerg. The team will live in the village of Butula for three weeks. Nick is arranging for families to host the team in their homes. The team will raise the money and then provide the labour to build and furnish a new classroom at the school. They will also provide some educational modules for the elementary school children each morning. The trip is planned for August, when school is officially closed. I have no doubt that the community will be buzzing with excitement and the pupils will return to the school to learn from these Canadians, even though it is vacation time.

The December donations to the Children of Bukati project were higher than any previous one month period. Many people donated to this charity in lieu of Christmas presents. It is as if the gift was given twice – once to tell a member of your family or friend that you loved them – and then again to give a needy child a gift of hope by providing food and an education. Others have donated in lieu of birthday, retirement or going away gifts or in memory of a loved one. Thank you everyone for your generosity and thank you for helping to share the story of these children through your donations.

The project also received more visibility through the article written in the December issue of the United Church Observer magazine. This helped to bring awareness of the project to Canadians across the country. I am willing to give a presentation to schools, churches and community groups. Please contact me at the email below if you would like to book a presentation. Sincerely, Cate Dewey

If you have donated through Canada Helps, you will have already received a tax receipt by email. Otherwise, your 2008 tax receipt is enclosed. If you have comments, questions or concerns or wish to receive future newsletters by email, please contact me at [info@childrenofbukati.com](mailto:info@childrenofbukati.com).

Donations are accepted by cheque made out to Stone United Church with COB or Children of Bukati on the memo line. Please send to Cate Dewey, RR 1, Rockwood, Ontario, Canada N0B 2K0  
Credit card donations are accepted through Canada Helps, on-line via the website  
([www.childrenofbukati.com](http://www.childrenofbukati.com))