



Top Science Award



Nia King, Augustine Wasike, David Borish



Pigs with the keeper

School Girls

November 2014 Children of Bukati (COB) Newsletter

Dear Donor, thank you so much for your support of the children at the Bwalio Primary School (PS), the High school and University Students and the community development projects. The project at the Bwaliro PS continues to be very successful. The numbers of students have increased from 685 in 2009 to 960 today. The lunch program enhanced attendance and has greatly improved academic performance. In July 2014, Bwaliro PS was named the top school for Science in the entire county of 250 schools. The science program is heavily focused on agriculture. Augustine says they are successful because of the lunch program. I wonder if the hands-on experience with agro-forestry is also part of the success. Bwaliro PS was also named the top day school.

The success of the program in attracting students has increased our costs substantially. We are feeding all of the children from kindergarten to grade 4 and the orphans and destitute children in the other grades. Unfortunately, we are struggling to meet the demand. We appreciate whatever support you are able to give towards the lunch program. We continue to build the agro-forestry projects that were described in the Dec. 2013 newsletter available on our website. These will help the community work towards sustainability in the future. Last year we funded a pig project. There are three sows whose piglets have been sold to raise funds for the school. This year we will fund a sheep project. The school has plenty of grass for the sheep and also grows suspania trees which provide protein-rich fodder. They are also nitrogen fixing plants that enrich the soil in preparation for crops. The manure from the pigs and sheep will also enhance the soil.

Five of the high school students who we have sponsored graduated this year. Two of these students received an A average on the national grade 12 exams. Their university fees are currently covered by special donations to COB earmarked for this purpose. They are currently being sponsored to attend university. Individual sponsors are supporting the education of 14 other high school students. We are currently looking for people wishing to sponsor a high school student. If you are interested, please let us know. The commitment for boarding school is \$900 per year for 4 years.

This past summer, two University of Guelph students; Nia King and David Borish lived with a family in the community and worked on the Children of Bukati project. Their responsibility was to conduct research to help to move the project forward. It should be noted that none of the costs of their trip came from Children of Bukati donations. Nia and David began by conducting 66 interviews with the project leadership team, school staff, parents and guardians of students, community health workers, municipal government workers, and county education specialists. The research included interviews of 32 guardians of orphans and 32 parents of natural born children. The children were selected randomly from grades 1 to 8 and included 4 boys and 4 girls per grade. The demographics of the participants (guardians and parents) give a sense of the community. On average, they were 39 years old and cared for 5.3 children. The families earned an average of \$1.68 per day. On average, the participants had finished grade 6 and they left school because they could not pay the fees, were girls or orphaned. Many (14%) had never attended school. Grandparents were the caregivers for 22% of orphans and 12% of children whose parents had not died. Most students walked less than 20 minutes to school, but 11% of the students walked more than 30 minutes. These children chose to go to the Bwaliro PS because they could eat at school. If they go home at lunch and there is no food, they do not return in the afternoon.

Nia's research investigated reasons why children were absent from school, dropped out or did not attend at all. Overall, 80% of the adults in the community valued education. The participants said education was important to improve community security, provide job opportunities, enhance the child's **future**, and improve family care, and self-reliance. The students who were interviewed said that girls and orphans were more likely to be told to stay home to work in the fields than were the boys. The District Education Officer described the universal hierarchy of need as food, shelter, clothing, and then education. Most children (76%) had missed at least one day of school in the previous 2 weeks. The most common reasons were malaria (40%), lack of exam fees (18%), other illness (18%), and typhoid (9%). I will share more results in the next newsletter.

David's research looked at the impact of the project. Participants said the program had a positive impact on the children's health because they met their nutrition needs, were less prone to illness and had increased energy levels. They also said the children had improved academic performance because they had better concentration and more motivation. Half of the participants said they gained income because of the project because they have learned new farming techniques. One farmer said **"I have great changes in income with new farming techniques, so I have abandoned the old ones"**. Many commented enthusiastically about the termite resistant bananas, dry land rice, and green house tomatoes that have enhanced food security in the community. Most participants (91%) said they saved money when the children were fed at school. Most of the money was used to pay for food for the household but some extra was used for soap, fuel, or livestock.

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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 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. Sincerely Cate Dewey (www.childrenofbukati.com)