



Over 700 children are being fed lunch



11 acres of land purchased



Condemned Latrines

### September 2009 Children of Bukati (COB) Newsletter

Dear Donor,

Thank you for your support of the Children of Bukati. Your financial contributions are enabling over 700 AIDS orphans and destitute children to eat lunch and to receive an elementary school education. The image on the left above shows some of the children enjoying a lunch of maize and beans Saturday, July 25, 2009 when Randy and I first arrived in Kenya and visited the school. As you can see, most of these children enjoy having their picture taken.

There are several key new initiatives. We have bought 11 acres of land through the generous donations of members of the Norval United Church and the families of Norah and Laura. This is a key component of the long term sustainability of the project that will reduce the reliance on purchased food. In total, 2.5 acres adjoin the school's property and 8.5 acres is located only 300 meters from the school. This proximity will enable the school children to help work the land and plant and harvest the crops. The land will provide food for the lunch program, fodder for the livestock, trees for the whole community and a source of income for the school. This project will serve as an educational opportunity for the children and adults in the village. They will learn sustainable, organic farming methods that include irrigation and soil enhancement through composting and intercrop planting. There will be bee hives and an expanded tree nursery that will include a wide variety of tree species, providing nuts, fuel, fodder, fruit, building materials and shelter. Michael Nickels of Seven Ravens farm on Saltspring Island, BC will travel to Kenya to direct this project. Michael has completed several of these projects in Kenya and in many other countries around the world. More information about Michael can be found at [www.seven-ravens.com](http://www.seven-ravens.com). He will work with the children and adults in the community. Patrick Mwangi Kariuki, a Kenyan who has worked with Michael for 10 years will oversee the completion of the project. The long term goal of the project is to provide a sustainable source of food for the children, feed for the livestock, income for the school and an educational opportunity for the whole community. We are currently raising the funds for this work.

Kenya is experiencing a year of severe drought. I am sure you have read about this in the news or seen it on television over the past few months. I was first told on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 5:30 am. I received a phone call from Nick Obiero, the school principal, exclaiming his concern over the numbers of Kenyan children who were dying of hunger. He said "I am sure it must be on the Canadian national news, children in Kenya are dying now, today. The situation is serious!" He was calling because the cost of food had gone up so high that he was not able to feed the children with the money that we had sent in December. He needed more money to buy the food to feed the children to the end of the term. Nick went on to tell me that the drought showed no signs of ending and that the crops that were typically planted in February were likely not going to be planted until April. Well, Nick's predictions came true. The crop was planted late and produced only 70% of what was expected from those fields. The price of maize is 130% of what it was a year ago and beans are 4 times their previous cost. With the increases in the costs of food and the ever expanding number of AIDS orphans at the school, we are constantly working to raise enough money to feed the children. If you are in a position to support the Children of Bukati this year we would certainly appreciate your support. If not, we understand. Please know that your contribution has made an incredible difference in the lives of these children and in the hope of this whole community.

Another major concern at the Bukati Primary School is the shortage of latrines. In 2006, there were two latrines (out houses) for each grade – one for boys and one for girls. At that time, there were less than 600 children at the school. In 2008, with funds from the Kenyan government, 12 new latrines were built. Unfortunately many of the original latrines were condemned this past year (shown in the photo on the right). The school is in desperate need of 18 latrines. The cost of these is \$12,000. Without these, the Department of Public Health has the right to close the school. Reverend Doug Sly and his fellow Rotarians have been giving presentations at several Rotary Clubs on Vancouver Island in an effort to raise money for this project. The Rotary Club of Kakamega in Kenya has agreed to be the local sponsor of the project. In my mind, this problem is reminiscent of the broken well at the school that the Children of Bukati project repaired in 2007. Without latrines, this project cannot succeed.

There are 5 high school students who are AIDS orphans and are being sponsored by Canadians. These are the children who have graduated from the Bukati Primary School with the highest grades in grade 8. There is a boy and a girl in grade nine. The three students in grade 10 are doing well academically, standing in positions 12, 13 and 23 out of 130 in the grade. One of the girls is a prefect in the residence and the boy has been made the assistant head boy for the school. It is obvious that these children are being recognized for their leadership skills. Three individual Canadian families have offered to sponsor 3 students graduating from grade 8 in 2009. They will sponsor the top 2 girls and boy who are currently supported by the project.

If you have donated through Canada Helps, you will have already received a tax receipt by email. Otherwise, your 2009 tax receipt will be sent to you in February 2010. If you have comments or questions 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))