



Lucy & Felisias with Braids book



University of Guelph team builds a classroom and shares cultural understanding with Kenyans



Norval the cow

October 2009 Children of Bukati (COB) Newsletter

Dear Donor,

In 3 years, the school has expanded from 600 to over 1000 pupils. There have been 3 new classrooms built with Kenyan government support. Even so, in June 2009, there were 2 classes of children being taught outside, under the trees because of the shortage of classroom space. One classroom is being funded through a cost-sharing program that provides 20% of the costs by the government after the parents have raised 80% of the money. In this poverty stricken community, it shows the determination of the adults to improve the learning environment for their children.

The second classroom and the desks for the class were built by a group of dedicated individuals from the University of Guelph. The group of 12 University of Guelph students was co-led by Jamie VanderBerg, the University of Guelph Campus Minister and two student leaders; Jennifer MacIntyre and Jared Wohlgemut. The group completed several fund-raising initiatives to acquire the money needed for the materials and to hire expert local labour for the classroom. They lived in the community for three weeks, being billeted by families in the community. Each day, they worked alongside the local craftsmen, laying bricks to build the classroom. Each of these Canadians covered the cost of their own trip to Kenya and their living expenses in Kenya. Thus, they ensured that the project did not cost anything in overhead to the Children of Bukati Project. With their conscientious decision and generosity, the overhead of the Children of Bukati project has been able to stay at less than 1.5 cents per dollar raised.

The livestock initiative continues to flourish at the school. There are now two cows. One is a black and white Holstein-cross called Norval, that was purchased with funds raised by the children at Norval United Church. There are also many chickens and sheep, one sow and 3 geese. Money raised by children and adults at Stone and Rockwood United Churches and the Hawksville Mennonite Church has been used to expand the number of livestock at the school. The current plan to build sustainability is to expand the dairy operation to 5 or 6 dairy cows, the pig unit to 3 sows and one boar and the sheep to 12 ewes. The school committee hopes to build the laying hen operation to 300 hens and the broiler chicken operation to 300 birds. The estimated costs for the dairy cow building is \$1,600, for the laying hen house is \$1,200 and for each cow is \$1,400. There are good markets for milk and eggs, piglets, lambs and chickens.

I am constantly amazed and humbled by the generosity and creativity of Canadians and Americans who support the Children of Bukati project in so many ways. I am not able to mention everyone – but let me tell you about initiatives of children and students. Alex and her friends sold lemonade; Tyler, Adam and Tyler shoveled driveways on a snow day; Lilly, Jason and Avi donated their birthday money; Alex and Adam gave up the money they were saving for a horse; and Lilly raffled a soccer jersey. The children and teachers at Sir Isaac Brock School raise money through a used toy sale, year after year. Cindy and her children hosted a back to school party. Alison and her children, friends and family hosted a Teddy Bear picnic. University of Guelph students have bake sales, host luncheons and raffles and auctions. Many, many people from community groups and churches invite me to give presentations, to share the story of this project and show the photos of these wonderful Kenyan children. Doug puts hours into keeping the website updated. I encourage you to take some time to visit the site. There are many new photos of the children. Peter spends much of his life maintaining the books.

Last year, Taya Kendall, a grade 3 student at Sir Isaac Brock Public school started a monthly newsletter to raise money for Children of Bukati. Robert Munsch, the well known and much loved children's author of two of my favorite books; Love You Forever, and The Boy in the Drawer, donated an unpublished story to Taya Kendall so that she could put it in her newsletter. This unpublished story has become Robert Munsch's newest published book. It is illustrated by the students at Sir Isaac Brock Public School and was printed by Infinite Images, who prints all of our newsletters and brochures (at cost!). The COB fund paid to print 5,000 books. Within just a few weeks, we had covered the cost of the printing. The book is available at many bookstores and can also be purchased online. You will find all of the details if you visit www.childrenofbukati.com.

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, wish to receive future newsletters by email, or are willing to organize a presentation to a school, church or community groups, please contact us at 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)