

Mufindi Orphans, Inc.

(a 501-C-3 Public Benefit Oregon Corporation)
90420 Hill Road
Springfield, OR 97478
Tel : (541) 747-2246
Fax : (541) 747-2236
Email : info@mufindiorphans.com
Website : www.mufindiorphans.com

HABARI YA MUFINDI



A quarterly Newsletter designed to inform donors about progress made in the implementation of the Mufindi Highlands Orphans Project in the Mufindi District of Tanzania, East Africa.

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MEETING DONOR EXPECTATIONS

Project Progress as reported by Marion Gough. – September 2009

Projects completed during the past year include the Ibwanzu Health Centre, (which was officially opened on 14th September), many improvements at the Igoda Primary School, and construction of both a Community Centre and a Care & Treatment Centre (CTC).

TSchoolsAfrica, based in Cheltenham UK, have donated 20 laptops to Igoda and Luhunga Schools. A library has been set up at Luhunga Secondary School which many Igoda children will attend.

Other Igoda Primary School improvements included a rainwater collection and storage system, solar panels for electric lights, and new latrines for students and staff. The rainwater storage tank is filled from the new gutter system on the roof of a large school building (below left). Water is then pumped to a smaller, elevated storage tank to provide adequate water pressure.

Much of the work done at Igoda School, and other sites, has been performed by parents & friends of Igoda students at no charge.

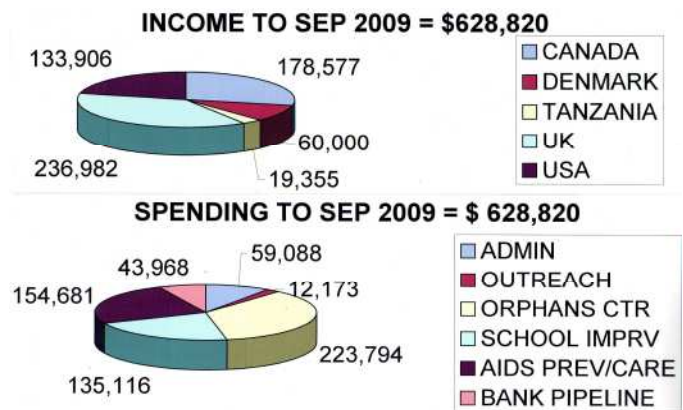
The school improvements were made possible through the donations and on-site supervision of the African Children's Book Box Society of Canada.



The new Community Centre (below left) will be finished by the end of this year. It includes a kitchen where a nourishing porridge called "Uji" is made 4 times a week (above right). This has been started by the African Book Box Society. Many of the school children (below right) are away from home for 10-12 hours each day due to the distance they have to walk to school and the chores they do on the way home. Many go without food all day. Since the "Uji" program started, students have lost fewer days to illness, their classroom behavior has been better, and student grades have improved remarkably.



PROJECT FUNDS STATUS



NOTES ON FUNDS STATUS: - Starting this issue we will show donations by country of origin. All funds have gone through the Project bank account.

The Community Centre will also serve as a place for village classes on the topic of HIV/AIDS Awareness and Prevention. Other projects underway include the Bibi's (Grandmother's) Housing Complex in Igoda Village (overleaf left) and the Mbabulo Counseling and Treatment Centre (CTC).

The CTC will have a huge impact on the health of the communities in this region. In this government approved facility, local villagers will be tested for HIV-AIDS and have their immune levels monitored so they can receive the correct dosages of anti-retroviral medicines now made available by the Tanzanian government. These medications allow those with HIV-AIDS to regain strength, to participate more fully in village life, and to care for their children for a longer time period. The bulk of CTC funding to date has been provided by the Rosaria P. Haugland Foundation in Eugene, Oregon.

Pictured standing in front of the new CTC from left to right are: Geoff Fox, David Still & Gary Drobnack (Mufindi Orphans USA), and Simon Shercliff (Orphans in the Wild UK). Geoff Fox is founder of Foxes Community & Wildlife Trust which originated and manages the Mufindi Highlands Orphans Project.

The third Orphans house is now occupied and the orphans' complex houses 31 children; including 9 girls. (below middle).

Discussions with the house mothers at the orphanage have resulted in a plan to have one full-time Mother in each house of 10-12 children and employ one 'helper' for each set of two houses during the daytime only. The helper will be evaluated by the existing Mothers for a potential role as a full-time Mother as other houses are opened in the future.

Since last month, we have had lighting and running water which has alleviated the costs of workers hired to carry the water daily, as well as the nightly use of kerosene lamps.

The orphanage farm project is well under way. Crops will be planted on parcels of village land and the produce will be shared by the orphans and villagers. This should reduce our currently high food bills and set us on the road to becoming a more self sufficient unit. We have also arranged for the younger children to each have a chicken to rear. Any profits made, in the form of eggs and meat, will help these children pay for their Secondary School education.



The Community Outreach Program supports children, and their families within the village, by supplying basic items such as blankets, clothes, soap, and school supplies to those most in need. (above right)

Additionally, income generating projects have been started to give families a means to support themselves through their own endeavors, ultimately instilling pride in their hard work and hopefully starting a self sustaining business. These include Batik where the materials can be made into aprons, bags, pouches for Mufindi Highland's coffee beans, purses, wine bottle carriers, and cell phone pouches.

Members of another group are mastering the fine art of making quality rugs out of the materials donated from overseas. If successful, these rugs will be sold in several locations as quality products desired by locals as well as guests to the country.

Finally, members of the Luhunga village community have started a group called 'Tumaini,' or 'Hope,' in which each member is building a chicken banda to raise their own chickens to create some supplementary income, and also feed their families. To participate, each group member has to contribute \$4.00 which buys the necessary building materials. They can borrow this money from our micro loan scheme and pay back the money from future sales of eggs, meat, and fertilizer to the local villagers.

In the past, local shops had to travel to the closest town (over 50km away) to buy these items. An additional benefit will be increased supplies of local protein, which had been in short supply in the area causing many malnourished children.

This month an organization called Global Cycle Solutions (GCS) has been contacted that has some innovative ideas using bicycles. For example we have ordered a machine that takes maize off cobs 40 times faster than by hand and one which grinds the maize into flour. We have received positive feedback from people in the area.

In summary, the Mufindi Highlands Orphans Project has already set up infrastructure and programs that will help the local villages deal with the problems created by the HIV/AIDS pandemic still sweeping through the District. There is a long way to go. But with the continued help of donors and the dedicated professionals who have led Project activity, there is no doubt that the people of Mufindi will soon recapture the self-sufficiency they enjoyed before AIDS devastated the local communities.

Marion

Celebrities

We are, indeed, privileged that Dr Leena Pasanen (who has been in Tanzania now for 27 years) has joined us part time and visits Mufindi two weeks per month and is making a big difference. Dr. Leena has this year been awarded 'Overseas Finn of the Year' by the Finnish government.

The NGO was also honored when Jenny Peck, Orphanage and Community Outreach Manager, was the celebrated guest at the celebration in Luhunga ward for Children of Africa day (June 16th). This is not only a great reward to Jenny, but is also an example of how the NGO's many projects have been accepted and appreciated by the community.

Mufindi Orphans Mountaineers (MOM) reached the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro on 3 October 2009. Left to Right—David Still, Rod Nuss, Gerald Meyr, Gary Drobnack, Ronda & Brad Miller. This fund-raising event is targeted to raise US\$ 25,000 for the orphans and people of Mufindi. As of 31 October, Mufindi Orphans, Inc. has received US\$17,246 (69% of goal) with 6 pledged donations in the mail. These stalwarts have done their best to show what they would do for the Project. Don't be left out. There is still time to contribute to MOM. Donate Now by sending a check to our address or going to our website www.mufindiorphans.com and use the Donate button.

