



## TANZANIAN CHILDREN'S FUND

Volume 1, Issue 14

Fall 2010

### *Mission Statement*

*The Tanzanian Children's Fund was established to aid the children of Tanzania. Working in partnership with registered non-governmental, non-profit organizations in Tanzania, TCF provides financial and intellectual support to projects and programs designed to improve the lives of children in need.*

### **TCF Board of Directors**

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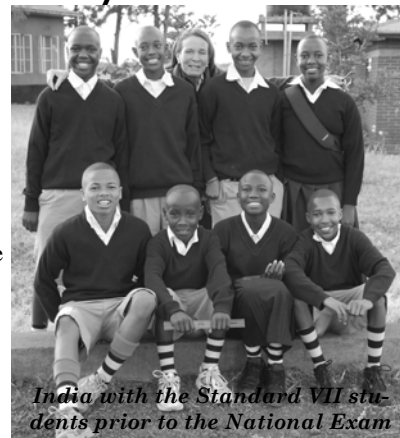
### **A Letter from the Executive Director By India Howell**

Life at the Children's Village has been so full of activity and progress over the past months it is hard to know where to begin. We have had an incredible stream of energized, creative and hard working volunteers this year which has taken all of our programs with the kids to new heights. The restructure of our microfinance program moves apace with great effect and our partnership with Gyetighi is paying off with amazing results. For the first time ever 100% of the Standard 7 students passed the "mock" National Exam!

With life flying along at supersonic speed like this I guess I should not be surprised that kids who just yesterday were little tykes (Riziki, Lucy, Doctor, Juma, Abdul, Saidi and Benja) are now fully fledged teenagers and about to graduate from Gyetighi Primary School! Of course I have always known this day would come. I have worked hard to get

these kids to this point. The surprise is that I am absolutely distraught at the thought that my kids are growing up and about to head off to boarding school. I never understood why my mother cried when I graduated from Greenvale School (9<sup>th</sup> grade) or why she cried when she dropped me off at boarding school. Now I understand! So, picture me on September 9<sup>th</sup> hiding behind my big sunglasses simultaneously bursting with pride and dabbing at my tears as my first kids graduate from Gyetighi and prepare to set off for their next stage of life.

This landmark event marks the achievement of one of our original goals -ensure that our kids complete their primary education. What happens next? In October they will take entrance exams at several schools we have identified as "good fits". We will be sure that they all enroll in a school with at least one of their peers and



*India with the Standard VII students prior to the National Exam*

then in January they will enter Form 1. This group of kids is so extraordinary I have no doubt that they will soar during this next phase of their education. They are bright, motivated and full of dreams. Doctor wants to be fighter pilot, Juma wants to be a park ranger, Lucy plans to be Miss Tanzania and then a clothing designer and Riziki wants to become a kindergarten teacher and then the Minister of Education for Tanzania. Big plans, big

*Cont. page 2*

### **Summer Read-A-Thon By Jane Hubley, Volunteer June 2010**

*"Why are all the children looking for stars but not in the sky?"*

When school ended in early June for the summer vacation, we began a reading program for standards 4 thru 7. For us, the volunteers, what felt chaotic and crazy at first, became a wonderful example of how kind, caring and spectacular the children of the Children's Village are.

The challenge like last year was to read 30 books and write a book report on each one. The rewards; dinner with Mama India, a trip to go swimming, a day in Karatu and best of all....dinner with the vol-

unteers! Sounds simple?

At first, there were a few highly motivated children who read books and wrote book reports. Some even read more than one book a day! Others skipped play time to read. Seeing their success made more and more kids want to join in. We went through the first 50 book report forms in just a few days.

Children read and read. They made lists of the books they were reading, talked to their friends about the books and the characters. Within a week, the children were helping each other find books that were interesting, fun and appropriate for

their reading level. They even made lists of the books they read sharing favorites with each other.

We were delighted to notice children helping other children with their reading and book reports. Children who could read English and speak Swahili were reading and interpreting books to others so that they could get stars. Older children were sitting with younger children carefully filling out papers (the forms had long since run out!) for them with the questions on it. Who *is* the main character? What *is* your favorite part? Would you recommend this book

*Cont. page 3*

## A Letter from the Executive Director cont.

dreams!

Since they will all have 3 months between graduation and heading off to boarding school we have loads planned to keep them busy, engaged and out of mischief. Coffee Picking will be at the top of the agenda as an object lesson of what to expect if they don't put forth true effort in secondary school. But it won't all be hard work. To celebrate this momentous event, Jim and Barbara Schubauer are sponsoring a graduation trip to the coast in November. Four glorious days of frolicking in the ocean should leave them joyous and loaded with memories they will treasure for a lifetime. We hope to add this trip to our list of "traditions" here so that all of our children are able to mark their graduation with a truly memorable adventure.

Another big piece of news is that we have recently been invited to partner with Peace House Academy to identify orphaned and poor children (6 boys and 6 girls each year) from our area for sponsorship beginning in Standard 4. Each of these children will be offered a full scholarship to Peace House Academy after graduating from Gyetighi. This is a dream come true for us. Thanks to the improvements at Gyetighi over the past


three years so many more children are passing the national exam and many do not have the means to afford even government secondary school. Hence, this new partnership gives so many kids a reason to hope and a reason to dream!

The announcement of this new partnership has clearly had a motivating effect on our community. Peter came back from our most recent parent's meeting positively beaming! For the first time people showed up on time (relative to Tanzania standards of course), no one was drunk AND there were 150 parents there! Usually we see a dozen or so. From there the meeting was truly productive with parents offering valuable thoughts and making plans to take action on things like, truancy, getting kids to school on time, escorting students during the elephant season, making sure that kids go to bed at a reasonable hour, checking kids school work, etc. This discussion was launched when one parent stood up early on and pointed out that Mama India has done so much for our school and it is now time for us to do what we can as well. "She can't do it all! We must participate!"

The meeting ended with a plan to form parent committees in each sub village to be sure that

students are getting support and guidance at home in order to take full advantage of what happens at school and improve their chances of earning a scholarship. So, fingers crossed – we seem to be headed into a new era with our parents!

With all of this progress has come the need for more help and more office space. Our offices are literally bursting at the seams! Thanks to a recent grant from the Helen Clay Frick Foundation we began construction of an office extension this fall. As of October 1, we will begin moving in! Building office space is not terribly glamorous but when I think of what this will do for our productivity, I am over the moon! So be prepared for news of even more accomplishments!

As I write this I can hear our toddlers outside playing on the swings and bouncing balls in the Rec Hall. I need to stop writing and go give each and every one of them a hug immediately as I realize that in no time at all they will be teenagers and graduating as well! It's hard to believe that we have come so far in only 6 years; we are here thanks to all of you and your support. You have given hope where once there was none and even better – a reason to dream of a bright future. Asante Sana from all of us at the Children's Village! 

## The Tanzanian Children's Fund Strategic Outreach By Nano Chatfield


The Children's Village is an enchanting place because of our kids, which so many of us deeply care about. It also serves the needs of the community by providing essential outreach services. The Board of Directors of the Tanzanian Children's Fund recognizes that TCF has reached an important point in its development.

The Children's Village has formed a thriving family by welcoming 69 orphans, the maximum number we anticipate housing; the unique Charter Gyetighi Primary School is flourishing with new teachers and textbooks; the Microfinance Program is serving a large number of clients; the Model Farm is producing vegetables for hot lunches for 800 students; and the bi-monthly medical clinic is providing healthcare for the Children's Village and the community. While the Board continues to focus on these services, Board members recognize there are still areas of significant need in Tanzania, especially for our children beyond their lives at the Children's Village, particularly for their post-primary education.

The Board believes it is important to balance honoring the original vision of TCF and utilizing the energy and vision of Board members to support new outreach projects. After considerable reflection and discussions, John Higgins, *Treasurer*, Beth Currier, *Sponsorship Coordinator* and I agreed with the Board as of July 31, 2010 to develop a new outreach program, separate from TCF, with its continuing support. We are launching a new nonprofit which will support a local NGO which is building a girls' private boarding secondary school and vocational center in Karatu, Tanzania. We believe there is a great need to provide educational opportunities for our adolescent girls from the surrounding rural areas, as well as from the Children's Village and Gyetighi Primary School. We are deeply appreciative of the new grants that TCF is awarding the new nonprofit.

After 5 years of service as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, I am so proud of the work the Tanzanian Children's Fund has accomplished and welcome Peggy Wiles as my successor. I cherish the learning experiences

and friendships I have formed with everyone who has contributed to creating the Children's Village. There are so many people I want to thank but most of all, I want to thank our Founder and my friend India whose vision and courage has inspired so many of us to volunteer, donate and work to providing a home, a family, a community for our children.

I am excited about our new work -*The Girls Foundation of Tanzania*- as I continue my committed journey to advocate for vulnerable girls and young women in rural Tanzania. We will provide opportunities for girls to learn to think critically and creatively and to make good decisions for themselves. We will empower girls to learn to sew, to teach, to nurse, to cook, to weave, to dream. 

## By The Numbers

### Tanzania

**6 million to 35 million**—Population growth from 1966 to present

**19,564 feet**—Elevation of Mt. Kilimanjaro

**40 hours**—Door to door travel time from the East Coast to Tanzania

### Gyetighi Primary School

**19% to 87%**—Rise in students passing the National Exam from 2004 to 2009

**100%**—Number of students who passed the “mock” National Exam in 2010

**50 to 5**—Rise in ranking of Gyetighi Primary School from 2004 to 2009

**0 to 5**—Number of learning friendly classrooms at Gyetighi from 2004 to 2010

**2**—Number of lunch programs operated by RVCF since 2005

**6**—Number of teacher houses renovated at Gyetighi

**7 to 20**—Number of teachers at Gyetighi from 2004 to 2010

### Rift Valley Children’s Village

**0 to 60**—Rise in number of students with access to scholarships for secondary school from 2004 to 2010

**0 to 33**—Rise in number of orphaned children receiving support while living with relatives from 2004 to 2010

**4 to 569**—Overall rise in number of children being supported and educated from 2004 to 2010

**250**—Number of microfinance clients who now have the chance to improve their lives and the lives of their children.

### Tanzanian Children’s Fund

**1000**—Number of donors in 2009

**\$2,000**—Cost to support a child through one year of secondary school

**\$100**—Cost for one year to provide uniforms and supplies for one child in primary school.

## Summer Read-A-Thon cont.

to a friend?

The books were everywhere. The volunteers tirelessly assisted kids in choosing books, helping write book reports and understanding how the words make a story. Kids began to ask what if they read 40 books or 50 books? A shelf of “recommended books” was created. Mole and Vincent (age 10) spent whole afternoons organizing and reorganizing book shelves so that books would be easily accessible, always.

We found books and book reports on our beds at all times of the day. Kids would greet volunteers with information about books and main characters. One volunteer spent time explaining the Titanic to the older boys who needed more details about *that* disaster. “Was the water really *that cold*?” “Was the ship really *that big*?” Another boy discovered encyclopedias and wondered how many stars one could get for reading that!

Near the end of June, it was clear many children had read 30 books. But the children who checked the charts daily (if not hourly), saw that there were some children who were close to 30, but running out of time. They asked us if they could help those children; they would be the teachers! We watched and waited, as child by child reached the 30 book mark with the help of other children.

And then, during the final days of the challenge, something extraordinary happened. When someone reached the milestone, we would bring



Volunteers Meg Leary and Nancy Hubley with kids and their star charts!

them outside of the library, announce another 30 star victory, and everyone would applaud. It became a community accomplishment rather than an individual one. When we were done, we took the charts off the wall, and walked through the village showing our completed charts with over 1000 stars to everyone.

And then.....the prizes! The first prize, dinner with volunteers, honored 11 readers who chose chicken and chips to celebrate their success and the success of the whole reading program. It was a grand event that left every volunteer in awe of how much chicken those kids could eat in one sitting! We had to have four such dinners as so many boys and girls made it to the 30 book award!

For those of us participating in this adventure the reward was the children and their love of learning, their generosity of spirit and joy. They were our stars, and like the Tanzanian night sky, brilliant, beautiful and breath-taking. 🐘

## Student Spotlight: Riziki Then and Now

Economists and sociologists have suggested the key to eradicating poverty is empowering girls and women in the developing world. Easier said than done.

One of the greatest challenges we face is building confidence and a healthy ego in the young girls in our care as well as girls from the greater community. The Gyetighi Girls Club, our English Confidence Class and the athletics program have all been launched with this goal in mind.

When I first met Riziki she was a drone. She didn’t know how to laugh, kept her head down at all times and blindly followed orders from anyone of the male persuasion – including 5 year old Doctor! That was then.....this is now:

“The thing that I am most confident about is that: I am a leader, people respect me and I respect them. I respect my mother, all the adults and children. They love me and would do anything for me. When I finish University I will be a good example to the young ones and

most of all to the girls.” ~ Riziki, age 15

Riziki’s transformation is a testament to what can happen when girls are given the chance to learn and grow in a loving and empowering environment.

We look forward to watching Riziki grow into a leader for other young women in Tanzania. Bravo Riziki!



India Howell with Riziki

## Volunteers Unite: TCF Launches an Alumni Association


Since 2004 more than 300 volunteers have given their time and their hearts to the children at the Children's Village. When these volunteers leave the Children's Village, it is often a bittersweet goodbye. While friends and family at home call them back they realize that they have a new family in Tanzania: The Children's Village family. As a result, many return and most want to stay in touch, with a community that so consumed them for 3 weeks, 3 months or a year.

Since the beginning, the Children's Village has attracted a wide range of volunteers who have found ways to contribute through their own special talents. Others have continued projects started by previous volunteers and brought their own special talents to refine these projects.

Kate designed the layout of the Village, Jessie started a remedial reading program at Gyetighi, Vanessa brought computers to start a class for local Gyetighi graduates, Lisa taught the children to sing Grace before meals, Deanna and Marie set up physical therapy for James.....the list goes on and on because each and every volunteer has contributed in their own special way. Asante sana to all of you! Each of you represent the changing energy in our children's lives and provide exposure to English speakers as well as every kind of game, reading, writing, art and love. Be assured that even after you have left, your particular magic lingers in the hearts and minds of the children.

With this in mind the Tanzanian Children's Fund will be inaugurating the Rift Valley

Children's Village Alumni Association. We would like to keep the magic alive for you as well! We want to keep you in the loop! In October we hosted our first alumni gatherings in New York, Boston and San Francisco. These gatherings brought together volunteers from many different periods in the Children's Village history. Oh the stories they all had to share!

If you would be interested in hosting such a gathering in the future let us know and we will send you contact information for former volunteers in your area. If you would like to become more involved please volunteer for the volunteer alumni committee. This group will plan events, send bulletins and help all former volunteers stay in touch with the children they grew to love. Simply write to Peggy Wiles Bacon at: [peggywiles@gmail.com](mailto:peggywiles@gmail.com). 

## Family News 2010


We have lots of happy news on the family front. On May 21, Arael Lesikar (one of our senior staff social workers) and his wife Neema proudly welcomed baby Charity into the world. Arael was able to time his annual

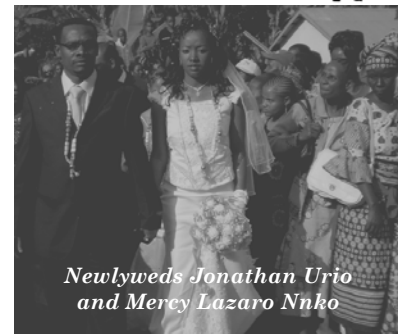


*Arael with his new daughter, Charity*

leave so that he was at home with his wife and the new baby for the first month. Like most new fathers, he was stunned by how different life is with a new baby in the house!

On July 31 Jonathan Urrio (one of our senior staff social workers) married Mercy Lazaro Nnko. This was a grand event held in his home village on the slopes of Mt. Meru. Our entire senior staff along with 20 other members of staff attended this much anticipated event. All of the Mamas that went to the wedding wore matching dresses made of gold colored fabric. Instead of crystal and silver, Jonathan and Mercy received a veritable herd of cows and goats along with a television

from our staff to start their new life together! We are all hoping that Mercy will join our teaching team at Gyetighi when she earns her degree in Education next year. 



*Newlyweds Jonathan Urrio and Mercy Lazaro Nnko*

## “Slow and Steady wins the Race” by Magdalena Heywood, Microfinance Director

Since the founding of our Microfinance Program in 2008 we have seen lives changed and futures altered as our clients strive to make a better life for themselves and their families. We would like to share here one such story.

Talking to Regina Domestiani about herself and her business, you get the distinct impression that you are talking to someone that understands the message of Aesop's Fable, *The Turtle and the Hare*, without ever hearing it. Regina takes pride in the fact that her success has come slowly and through hard work.

She starts the story of her success by appreciating the hard work of Mama India and the project facilitators. Since Mama India started the Rift Valley Children's Village and helped the children of the area Regina says that, “people like her have been able to send their

children to a better school.” This was the first step for her and many like her to consider the possibility of a better life for their children. The advent of the microfinance program and the business training offered was the next step. For the first time the adults of the community have the opportunity to “grow economically” and plan for a better future for the whole family.

Regina's story is tragically common for our area. She is a widow with five children, one of whom is an orphan that she has taken in. Regina pays to send two children to the secondary school in Oldeani. Two other children are in primary school at Gyetighi. She works seasonally at the Shah Coffee Plantation, picking coffee but the income has never been enough to support her family.

Seasonal coffee picking is the most common

occupation in our area. This backbreaking work pays roughly the equivalent of 39 cents a day. All too often Regina would be forced to borrow money just to feed her family. She says, “In Oldeani it is very hard to live.” It's hard to build a life since we live on coffee plantations. There is no security as we are not allowed to build permanent homes and could be forced from the housing we have at any time”.

There are some difficult truths that back up her sentiment. Most families in this area live in workers camps on the plantations with no hope of building their own home. In order to live close to their seasonal work they have few options as the surrounding land is all privately owned by the coffee plantations. Additionally, lack of infrastructure (roads and public transport) makes even simple things, such as acquiring inputs for expanding *Cont. page 5*

## “Slow and Steady wins the Race” cont.

a business, more challenging and therefore hinders people’s ability to push past the level of poverty that has defined their families for generations.

When the Microfinance Program was created, Regina was able to start her business and increase her monthly income. Regina started out with a loan of roughly \$100 dollars, which she used to buy and raise pigs. After successfully paying off the initial loan, Regina has been able to increase her loan and expand her business.

One of the reasons that Regina is a “Success Story” is that due to the business training she has received through the program, she does not simply request higher and higher sums as she completes her loans. Regina keeps records. She thinks about her business. She considers the season and how the weather will affect her work. In short, she uses the skills that she has learned from our business training to determine the optimal time to take the next step in business expansion.

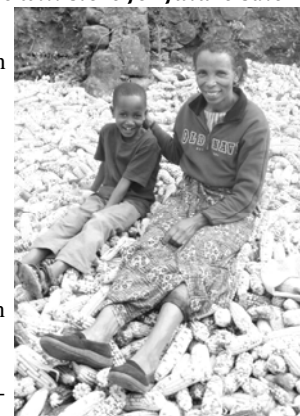
The result is that Regina has been able to increase her income by 50% in just a year and a half. Today, Regina continues to raise pigs and has added goats plus storing maize and beans. She no longer has to borrow money from friends and neighbors to feed herself or her children. To her credit she is now using some of her business success to assist relatives beyond her immediate family.


Considering her level of education and background, Regina’s success is even more remarkable. Her ability to take pride in growing slowly, to not over extend herself with debt has been noted not just by the RCVF microfinance staff, but also by her peers.

It is no surprise that Regina was elected to be the first Community Based Trainer for the Shah area last May. Community Based Trainers (CBTs) are the most recent adaptation of our Microfinance Program. CBT’s are elected by their client peers in each of the sub-villages we serve. Their role as representatives of the

*Below: Regina and her daughter sitting on the maize that she will store for future sale*

RVCF Microfinance Program in their sub-village provides a stronger link between clients and the RVCF microfinance staff. In addition, their proximity to clients in their village ensures that problems can be identified and early and new strategies executed to ensure new entrepreneurs of success.



Regina’s ability to work tirelessly has always helped her to be someone her family could depend on even when things were hard. Today, her ability to “work smart” has allowed her to succeed in her business venture and to become a person that her community respects and looks to as a leader. 

## Photo Album



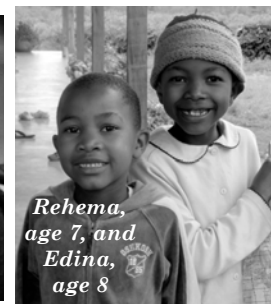
*Lucy, age 15, with Baby Grace, age 1*



*Some of our Standard VII Graduates with Mamas from RVCV (From L-R the graduates are Juma, Doctor and Riziki)*



*January, age 1, gives Grace a kiss*



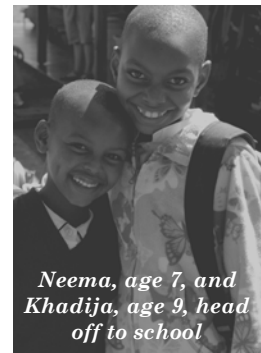
*Rehema, age 7, and Edina, age 8*



*Ally, age 7, gives the camera a big smile!*



*Benja receives a lei on his graduation day*



*Neema, age 7, and Khadija, age 9, head off to school*



*The Manyara House girls are all smiles before going off to school!*

## Asante Sana

Our volunteers are such an important part of the Children’s Village. They shower our kids with the hugs, laughter and love that was previously missing from their lives. They help make our kids feel special and part of a loving family. Just as our kids become part of a family as soon as they arrive at the Children’s Village, so do our volunteers. Asante sana to all of our recent volunteers since June who have spent many hours with our kids tutoring, playing soccer, going on walks, solving math problems, reading and forming long-lasting friendships. We couldn’t do it without you!

**Thank you** Kheli-Meshyl Baucom, Nashville, TN; Sallie Bear, Hudson, OH; Margo Bombardiere, Massapequa Park, NY; Ashby Brown, Westport, CT; Dede Brown, Haverford, PA; Fiona Chai and Brendan Timmins, Montreal, QC, Canada; Alice and Jane Eliza Chisholm, Savannah, GA; Jessie Cronan, Winchester, MA; Oona Doyle, Nashville, TN; Katie Flowers, Saratoga Springs, NY; Libby and Madeline Gordon,

Cumberland, ME; Caroline Gummo, Saunderstown, RI; Lisa Ho, New York, NY; Jane Hubley, South Portland, ME; Nancy Hubley, Pittsburgh, PA; Kate Kingsley, Elkridge, MD; Megan Leary, New York, NY; Rod and Pam Morgan, Steamboat Springs, CO; Daphne Murphy, Bryn Mawr, PA; Nini and Fleur Pellet, Opio, France; Patrick Prentiss, Park City, UT; Eric Quintana, New York, NY; Sara Reichert, Englewood, CO; Daphne and Lucy Rowe, Bryn Mawr, PA; Michelle Russell, Garden City, NY; Elle Schurtz, Mason City, IA; Matt Simon, South Glastonbury, CT; Emma Simmons, Rockport, ME; Megan Slattery, Boulder, CO; Cynthia Smith, Bryn Mawr, PA; Gale and Emma Tureff, Yarmouth, ME; Alison Woolworth, New York, NY; Elissa Zirinsky, New York NY

We would also like to thank our fundraising hosts and hostesses for allowing us to share our story with their friends and family. Thank you to Lisa Ho, New York, NY; Carter and Peggy Bacon, Cambridge, MA; Nancy Smith; Greenwich, CT; Todd and Lisa Cronan, Winchester, MA

**Please send your email address to Emily Poole at [epoole@tanzanianchildrensfund.org](mailto:epoole@tanzanianchildrensfund.org). We are planning to send out an email newsletter in the near future!**

Don't forget to join our **FACEBOOK** group! Keep up-to-date with news, photos and videos from the Children's Village. This a great way to connect (and stay connected!) with our dedicated volunteers and friends!



*India Howel with Musa, age 3*

LAYOUT/DESIGN and EDITOR: Emily Poole



**Asante Sana!!**



45 Exchange Street  
Portland, Maine 04101