

2 May 2009

Dear Friends and Family,

*“<sup>17</sup> Fig trees may no longer bloom, or vineyards produce grapes; olive trees may be fruitless, and harvest time a failure; sheep pens may be empty, and cattle stalls vacant--<sup>18</sup> but I will still celebrate because the LORD God saves me. <sup>19</sup>The LORD gives me strength. He makes my feet as sure as those of a deer, and he helps me stand on the mountains.” Habakkuk 3:17-19*

On Saturday 18 April the Community Health Department hosted the AIDS Orphan's April Fun Day. It began in the Chapel at 10am with loud and grateful singing, prayers, and sharing by the young people. By 11am they were taking tea and ready to go to the School of Nursing field for games. It was a gorgeous day and everyone was excited. Our last fun day in December 2008, we had over 600 children. This time there were about 300. In December everyone has a month off but in April many of the students have to go back early to revise for upcoming exams.

The children and youth, (actually we are amazed at how many of the children we knew during our first five years here (1998 – 2003) have grown up! It is so wonderful to see that. The children and youth participated in races which included individual races, relays, sack races and several others done per age group. The children and youth laughed and had such a marvelous time.



Boys doing sack race



Boys doing a 50 meter race

When the races were completed, we gave T-shirts to all the children and youth who ranked in the top ten in their class at school. We were so excited about this as we had over 50 of the children/youth who are doing very well in school and presented 45 T-shirts (some of the children were not present that day). We thought it was especially wonderful for them to be acknowledged and receive an award. The first student to be given a T-shirt was in Form 4, a senior in high school, and had been number one in her class all through school. The first many students called were all girls but after a bit there were several boys. As the children/youth came forward and received a loud ovation from the others there and were given a T-shirt by Mr. Gitari, you could see the joy and pride in their eyes and occasionally in their smiles. (I had the privilege to take their pictures.)



One of the 45 children to receive a T-shirt



All the recipients wearing their T-shirt for being a top 10 student

Then the hospital evangelist, Limiri Johnson, came and talked to the children/youth about God's plan for their lives. When the sermon and prayers were finished the children went for lunch and then were dismissed. Everyone seemed to have such a good time and as they left we realized how every child and youth was a winner. How grateful we are for your support of the AIDS Orphan's program over the last eight years. You can never imagine how radically you have

changed the lives of children who had no food, no hope of attending school, no future. As we watched them leave, some running, some skipping and leaping and most laughing, we could only thank God for these children/youth and what their future holds. We are hopeful they will be the future leaders of Kenya for they know how it is to have nothing and to be given a chance. Unlike our present leaders who seem to be so removed from the average Kenyan who works so hard just to be able to put food on the table. These young people give us tremendous hope for the future of Kenya.

## **GREAT NEWS:**

1. We have had rain in the last few weeks and we cannot thank you enough for your prayers. We have had 2 – 3 rains that were actually like the normal rainy season rains – very heavy for several hours. The area is looking much greener and there is water in the river.
2. Clurisa went home and will return for two out-patient visits. What a miracle it is that she is alive after the snake bite and that her arm is looking so good considering what has happened to it in the last month.
3. Linnet was fitted for her prosthetic hooks last week. Rahab called us from Kikuyu Hospital to say she had been fitted, shown how to do a few things and told to go home and practice. Rahab said she was so excited she hardly knew what to do and had already drunk a cup of tea picking up the cup with the handle. God's goodness and your prayers never fail to amaze and delight us. Thank you so much.

(If you have just started receiving my emails and are a bit confused you can read the past emails by going to the following web-site: <http://sites.google.com/site/specialorg/savuto>. That will allow you to read about our need for rain, about Clurisa and Linnet!)

**Prayer Request:** Last week I received news about Florence Mubichi. For those of you who do not know Florence, she was my supervisor/boss/mentor here at MMH when I worked at the School of Nursing (1998 – 2003). Many of you have met her and many of you sent money to help pay for her Masters in Nursing Degree.

She is now in the US, Oklahoma City, working on her PhD and working as a professor at University of Oklahoma.

The following is her email to me:

"It all started suddenly on Monday, March 2nd, 2009 as I drove to work I felt some abdominal distress which I thought was indigestion. I decided to drive through OU Family Medicine Clinic just across from the OU College of Nursing where my office is. After the MD examined me, he sent me to Emergency Room (ER) for further consultation, where I still drove myself. From there a cascade of tests and exams followed which led to my admission in the hospital the same day for further tests. God's plans are incomprehensible by human mind. My daughter Fridah had just come a few days before to visit me en route from Chicago, Florida and California then back to Kenya. Needless to say, she had to cancel her remaining California flight and came in to take care of me in the hospital. Tests revealed ascites of unknown origin and some masses. A decision for exploratory surgery was made. Due to uncertainty of the outcome of surgery and what doctors suspected, they asked that my entire family fly to the USA ASAP. Thus; Steven, Ravena and her baby flew in as soon as they could. I had seven-hour surgery on March 6th which revealed advanced Ovarian Cancer. They removed all the parts they could possibly do. I was in ICU for four days then into the ward for a further two weeks. I was discharged home under Home Health Care Program.

God has been so good to me as I have experienced slow, progressive recovery. I started Chemotherapy three weeks ago and I am due for second round of chemo tomorrow (23 April). Needless to mention the horrible side-effects.

My daughters Fridah and Ravena and Baby Alexia are here taking excellent care for me. Stephen returned home to Kenya two weeks ago to oversee our family business and keep our home. He communicates with us several times a day. I am now able to teach my online classes."

Please keep Florence and her family in your prayers. We are so thankful for her always positive attitude and strong, deep faith in God.

Yesterday my sister, Jeannie, had surgery. I have just heard that it took much longer than expected. Please pray for her healing.

Thank you for your emails, prayers, support, encouragement and kindness. You bless us up one side and down the other.

Standing on the mountains,

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"Faith isn't the ability to believe long and far into the misty future. It's simply taking God at His Word and taking the next step." - Joni Erickson Tada