

June 2013, Summer Newsletter, Mercy and Caring Children's Homes (MCCH)

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As I await my open heart surgery for mitral valve repair or replacement on June 26 (it got delayed), here is our Summer Newsletter. Thank you for all the prayers following the serious nature of our May Newsletter, and praise God, our MCCH boys seem to be back on track. Attached photos are inside Mercy and Caring High School, where the wall between 2 classrooms opens to form a space big enough for church. Two big girls are worshipping in one, and the other shows the size of the room. I wonder if our faces look like these near the end of a sermon! The photo of young Vincent shows one of our new children and I have included his case history just as it was written by our social worker, Epong. I think you'll smile at his way of writing it. Out of the 8 children needing sponsors in our May News, we now need 6, one being Vincent. If you would like to sponsor him at \$50 per month, please email me.

Please pray for the team of 6 in Kenya as they continue to serve, and for finances as the High School has increased our monthly budget. Thank you so much for everything you are doing, our team of praying sponsors. **Now, come for a visit to Mercy and Caring Home through the eyes of Els and Rebecca.**

With our love, Edwin and Nancy Cahill

Hi to everyone from Els in Kenya

Day 24 of my African adventure:

We are now settled in at Mercy and Caring Children's Homes, each of us slowly finding our places. All the children know how to say, "How are you?" in English.. and every hand has to be shaken and every face touched with our faces on both sides(double hug). We wake up early by a combination of songs, drums, cows, roosters, and birds pecking at our windows. Over the week we have things like fasting Monday mornings until 12:30..(I continue to pray and meditate on I Peter 5, Ps. 116: 1-8, and Ps. 118.), staff lunch hour teaching from 1330-1400hrs., 3x/week, by Pastor Monicah on leadership, we dispersed donated items for the children with the social worker Epong 1x/wk, occasional meetings with the department heads and teachers and evening devotions with the junior kids at 1900 hrs, in their bunk houses.

These young people are amazing with one student leader, leading the worship and another playing a 'bucket drum'. Another student then gives a mini sermon in Swahili and another one translating in English for us. On Wednesday we go with Pastor Monicah to the 'mama's meeting', where we visit local ladies in the neighborhood. We sing Swahili praise songs, hear their personal stories, and Monicah translates. We pray for their needs and share a word with them.

Once a week we drive to Kitale in the Mercy truck to send e-mails/blogs, get groceries and supplies. We also spend some afternoons on project days like-writing sponsor letters with students, taking them for a 'chai' outing, and a special separate boys and girls night, this Saturday, to answer questions on 'relationships and purity'. We already have received many interesting questions from them in our ice cream bucket.

I enjoy getting up early before the others and walking around the field for 20-30 min. I meet the various workers like the guards, the people in charge of the barn and milking the cows, (I learned how to milk a cow!) the cooks, the farm and fishpond workers, and teachers coming to class. Dr. Andrew and lab Tech Samuel gave me a tour of their newly set up clinic and what your funds had purchased.

The highlight during this week was attending the 'bride price or bride dowry' bartering. The father and other male representatives of both the groom and the bride to be, met at noon in pastors Monicah and Gerishom's house in Kitale. All the rest of us were inside waiting and treated to chai, mandazzi's, and ground nuts (peanuts). The negotiating teams from both families came up with a tentative list of appropriate dowry items to be bartered for. They moved from one area outside to another as the bartering began. If the families cannot agree on the price- the marriage cannot go ahead. Thankfully after 4 and a half hours agreement was reached while Dr. Andrew waited restlessly – not being included in the negotiations. The whole day while this was going on- Monicah was preparing a huge traditional African buffet- as no one on the negotiating team was allowed to eat until an agreement was reached.

Some of the bride price items included 10-12 head of cows, a cash sum for the brides dad and one for the brides mom, a pair of bed sheets, a pair of rubber boots and a certain amt. of kerosene. A cash sum had to be paid up front (good faith money) , and the rest in installments. Photos were taken of both 'fathers' as they shook hands and signed 'legal' documents. Then we all enjoyed the African buffet outdoors. I found out marriage is extremely important in the Kenyan culture and they view it as a great blessing. - they begin to prepare for marriage around 19-20 years of age, (but like Andrew, many wait until finished their education if they are so privileged.)

A day ago we visited the Kipsongo slum with Epong- where Mercy and Caring Children's Homes were started from. At the time the homes people lived in were dome shaped houses made out of plastic bags. There are still some there. The sanitary conditions remain poor with animals of all types wandering around freely and raw sewage everywhere. We purchased some beaded necklaces from some of the women there which helps them to buy food. We went into some of their homes and prayed for their needs- so much poverty!

I now am helping the seamstress at Mercy and Caring Children's Home as her official 'button hole' and 'button sewer' for the boys and girls uniforms. It doesn't rain often but when it does it's a downpour with thunder and lightning. P.S TROY, everyone loves the stuff sac pack that converts to a raincoat! I used it for the first time.

I am continually humbled personally by everything I am confronted with here- I cannot go back as I came... blessings to you all. I miss you! Love Els

June 13 from Rebecca:

The Skin Reveals All

One of the hardest parts about being in a different culture is always the language. Here in Kenya especially at the children's home, English is an important educational language. Most of the secondary students have learned enough to communicate fine without a translation and most of the time a secondary student can translate for the little ones. However, in my interactions with the the younger kids, I made a discovery. The facial expressions here mean exactly how they look. In Canada we hide our feelings and try to look like everything is OK. But here, it's obvious how the kids are feeling. Their faces convey every aspect of how they feel. When they're excited it shows in the grins and their wide eyes and the little scrinch in there noses. Sadness is a small quiver in their lips and a look of pain in there eyes. Passion and joy both look the same, deep eyes and intensity coupled with a huge smile and fast speech. Not to say we don't have that in western society but its not the same kind of openness.

Rushing Wind

I remain convinced that the sound of the rushing wind Luke talks about in Act 2 has nothing on the sound of 130+ Kenyan children praying at once. The sound starts off so subtle but it quickly becomes this roar of tiny voices. It's the kind of roar you feel, like thunder, in your gut. I've never experienced that type of sound before in Canada. It's so wonderful to think that they're so united in individual prayers.

So there you have it folks. Thanks once again for reading, praying and giving.

I am hearing positive feedback of some receiving their child's letters written and sent out by Candice who was there in Jan to March. If you would like to reply by email, send your child's reply through this email address and I will forward it to our social worker who will see that the child receives your letter. If you wish to send a letter to the child by post, use MCCH PO Box 1962, Kitale 30200, Kenya for your address with the child's name inside. Please don't give out personal information like your email or phone number, and use MCCH 285 Glassford Road, Gibsons, BC V0N 1V8 as the return address on the envelope. Thanks.

May the Lord be glorified in all aspects of my surgery next Wed.June 26. Thank you for your prayers.

Nancy

for MCCH Canada & Kenya