



The Connect Compound 2023: L: Preschool; R: Primary classes, garden; Back: Chapel, toilets; Not seen, Kitchen, well, water tower

“Enlarge the place of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. [Isaiah 54:2](#)”

As we toured the new compound for the first time, we were stunned to see this verse painted behind the pulpit in Connect Chapel. Pastor Apollo and Rose Juma were unaware that this same instruction was given to us as we first ventured into Kenya nearly 20 years ago. What a beautiful confirmation that God is now fulfilling the vision He gave so long ago! He has surely enlarged our territory... and surely He has only begun!

Our mission trip to Kenya was so full, it can't fit into one letter; so in this one we will give a Trip Overview and updates in the IMS and Empowerment programs, and in April we will cover Medical Missions and Outreach.

TRIP OVERVIEW

As I write this from my comfortable home, I am acutely aware that our friends in Kenya are suffering. Prices have risen so high, food is increasingly scarce, and school fees have become out of reach for many families. Even those with steady jobs are facing unthinkable decisions –“do we pay school fees or feed our family?” or ‘which child do we put in school?’ High rental prices force families to live in increasingly dangerous neighborhoods. Yet in the midst of this, we see a steadfast faith and determination to remain thankful, an abiding joy in God’s people as they compassionately reach out to those even more needy than themselves. Many are hungry for food, but they are also very hungry for God. These people have a great deal to teach us.

Our US team was very diverse but effective, all eager to serve; your prayers kept us all protected and healthy. The Herrings, Sue Choquette, Lillian Armstrong and Ben Farrington left the US on Jan 30th and returned March



Missing: Bree, Courtney, Marge, Pastor Apollo Juma (taking the picture) Agnes (on medical leave)

15th; we were joined by Marge Adorno and Bree Engstrom for 2 weeks, and Courtney Rousseau for 3 weeks.

This trip was unique in that it was not only the school staff, now 21, we were working with, but now all our activities were an

outflow of the Connect Chapel church body, Kenyans and Americans serving alongside one another in the same vision. Parents, youth, elders and worship team all joined us in doing God’s “down and dirty” service; we visited homes in the slums, and preached to eager groups of kids and adults; we served long days in rural clinics, ate meals together and studied the Word of God. We laughed a LOT, and also shed tears as we encountered deep suffering. In this short time, love grew, and a cross-cultural team became family.

On February 26 a Dedication Service was held, celebrating the one year anniversary of Connect Chapel (already packed!), the opening of the new preschool, and the realization of the Africa Connect vision given 19 years earlier. We danced and praised God and a student who went through our program who is now in college, a parent, a teacher, and AC members shared stories of God's faithfulness through the years. Afterward Bob and LuAnn cut a cake that was a replica of the preschool, cut the ribbon to open the classrooms, and then everyone ate! Many were honored, but God definitely got all the glory.



EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS:

The preschool is thriving with 60 needy children in the new building, the church is growing quickly; now, with families suffering, we must focus on getting the caregivers equipped to produce income in meaningful ways.

We can only start these programs if we receive funding. Here is a list of viable options:

- **First step: Security!** Heavy rains began on the day we left Kenya, and the power often goes out, so security is an even greater issue. Before we can add any more machines or tools to the property, we need to finish building the cement wall on the three sides of the property that are accessible. **Remaining cost: \$3000.**
- **Business Class: \$1500** This is a two month course taught by head social worker Wyckliffe Majani, who recently graduated from a College Business course. Full participation will be required for any parent to take part in Connect empowerment programs or Business Boost. The first class was attended by nearly all of our parents, and their enthusiasm was encouraging! Participants will open a bank account, learn good business principals and how to write a business plan, then they will divide into five groups. Each group will choose a business plan, subject to review by the leadership. If approved, the group will be given a microloan to begin. If initial payback terms are met, a larger loan will be issued to the group, with specific terms for payback and length of the loan. With greater structure and accountability, we believe this program holds a lot of promise.
- **Hairdressing School: \$1300.** A 6 month certified course to train 10 students for men and women's hair care.
- **Poultry Farming: 60 chickens startup: \$1300.** Poultry farming is now part of the Kenyan school curriculum; children will learn how to raise chickens organically and benefit from the protein of the eggs weekly. Income will come through sales of eggs and of chickens at Christmas time as part of the traditional meal.
- **Curtain production and sales: \$750.** We received a request for curtains for the preschool classrooms and office, but realized for a bit more we can buy the two machines needed and go into the curtain business!

IAN MEMORIAL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM:



Letter Day

The IMS program is flourishing, with nearly 100 students now sponsored! We have 40 students Grades 1-3 in Connect

Premiere Academy, 21 in high schools, and nearly 40 in other primary schools! We had to move the Class 7 students from Seed of Hope to local schools due to the high costs of fees and transport for that program. The team was able to visit ALL the homes to get vital information for sponsor reports and encourage the families. Many more care-givers are now attending Connect Chapel and/or participating in the programs. We still have sponsors who have not fulfilled their 2023 commitment; please pray for all the children to be sponsored!

Thank you for your amazing love and support! We have many more amazing stories to tell, coming up!

LuAnn Herring, for the AC team

Donations can be sent to Africa Connect, PO Box 598, Lee MA 01238, or Paypal at www.africaconnect.org