



“The people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.” Matthew 4:1

SERVING THE POOR THROUGH SPONSORSHIP

Sue Choquette, as Director of Ian Memorial Sponsorship Fund, a key ministry of Africa Connect, has been quite busy sending out over 100 reports on the students sponsored through that program in 2023. This is an excerpt from the letter she sent to sponsors accompanying their child's report. I couldn't say it better...

As I was reading through the reports from our field social workers describing the conditions of the homes of our sponsored children, their situations and their neighborhoods, my heart was breaking. Inadequate housing; lack of sanitation; rags for clothing; no food in the house – indeed, most families are taking only one meal a day because that is all they can afford. Neighborhoods are filled with drunkards and drugs and crime and desperate people trying to survive just one more day. At every turn, there is another barrier in the road, preventing escape from destitute poverty – sky-rocketing inflation; food scarcity; joblessness; unusual weather patterns confounding food production; corruption; heavy taxation; broken homes; broken hearts. Where does one find relief from such deep hopelessness, despair, and darkness?

There is a LIGHT that shines in the darkness, a light that the darkness cannot overcome (1 John 1:5).

She explains that sponsoring a child enables us to be the hands and feet of Jesus, the “Light of the World.”, an investment in the lives of these kids that shines a light in the slums. Through IMS sponsorship, they are enabled to “receive not only an education, all books and supplies, but also two nutritious meals per day, a uniform and “games kit” for sports, shoes, urgent and preventative medical care, and lots of love and nurturing by a dedicated Christian staff of teachers, social workers, administrators and support staff. Parents are eligible to participate in several empowerment programs sponsored by Africa Connect, engagement in which will be mandatory if the parent does not have a skill or steady means of employment. Monthly Christian Discipleship classes will also be mandatory, as the goal of the program is complete transformation of the heart, home and community, and this does not occur outside of a heart enlightened by the Truth that is Jesus Christ.

Economic and other difficulties has caused some of our sponsors to reluctantly give up their sponsorships; we now have at least 10 children who need new sponsors so far. Additionally, 20 children have graduated from Connect Preschool and their families are unable to enroll them in Primary classes due to the costs involved.

If you would like to sponsor a child, Grade 1 through High School and beyond into Vocational Training, we currently have all ages desperately in need. I have enclosed a FACT SHEET in this mailing that gives more information about the program, the costs involved, and how to become a sponsor for the 2024 school year. Please share with others who may be interested, and pray with us for these kids – We need another miracle!



GRADUATION CELEBRATION!

On October 25 the Connect family celebrated the graduation of 20 preschoolers with all parents and staff attending. They danced to a brass band, parading through the neighborhood, gave out awards, gifts and cake, and attended a somber flag raising ceremony. In the midst of a hard life, Kenyans know how to celebrate.

Afterwards the parents attended a meeting, receiving Biblical encouragement from a local pastor and information and requirements regarding student enrollment for the upcoming 2024 school year. Parents then signed up for empowerment and discipleship programs such as Hairdressing, Tailoring, Baking and Business.

Nine tailoring students also graduated, showing off the dresses they had made, as well as shirts and dresses sewn for the staff and teachers. Two are taking the National Exam, a first for the program. Graduates from present and past years are joining the Tailoring production team to make items to sell such as uniforms for schools and Christmas clothes. They took out a loan from the Business program, and will pay it back with interest as they move into a sustainable production position.



OTHER NEWS, NEEDS, AND PRAYER REQUESTS:

- **Farming and Poultry:** Pastor Apollo has hired a caretaker for the farmland, who is now planting maize, beans and vegetables for the next harvest in 2024. He is very knowledgeable, and is also cultivating fruit trees for consumption and flowers for income. The eggs will be sold over the holidays; when school begins again, the children will be eating not only the eggs, but meat! Apollo will purchase more chickens, and sell chicks to parents and others in the neighborhood. They are also producing feed for use and for sale to local farmers.



- **Food Distributions:** With the closing of the school term these families face a long 2 month holiday with little to no food and inflated prices common to Christmas in Kenya. Connect staff handed out food and laundry soap to the most desperate families in early November, and will again in December to all 120 families in our program. AC also began a Clothing Fund, as some of our students are literally wearing rags in the heavy rains. Thank you to those who have generously funded both of these needs.

Note: *The Clothing Fund will be an ongoing fundraiser.*

- **Emergency need:** Unfortunately, the Christmas holidays in Kenya also bring higher threat of crime. Attempted break-ins to the compound have recently forced us to increase security alarms, lights, more weapons for our night watchmen, Dogs (and kennel), and tin and wire added to fencing. **Estimated cost: \$1000. Please pray!**
- **Land purchase:** We received the balance of funding for the two plots needed to install a new well! However, the landowner is now considering only selling the full five plots of land available as one unit. The balance needed for the other 3 plots would be \$30,000. Please pray with us about this newest challenge!
- **Well:** Upon purchasing land, we have decided to install a machine dug well, as it produces more water, is cheaper to drill than a borehole, and more stable and long lasting than a hand-dug well. We currently have funds for the water tower, piping and pump, but the cost of drilling is determined by how many meters it needs to drill into the soil. Estimated cost: **about \$3000.** Rains are filling our water harvesting system now.
- Repairs are ongoing to convert a storage room into a classroom for **Connect Premier Grade 4.** After this year, we will need to construct a Primary building, hopefully on the "other" 3 plots of land. In place of the room, we are building a shed to house equipment, tools and firewood for the kitchen. These will cost us about **\$1500.**

Please consider making Africa Connect your channel of compassion in Year-End Giving, knowing 90% of 2022 spending went directly to the field, providing hope and practical help to a poor community in Jesus's name. Donations can be sent to Africa Connect, PO Box 598, Lee MA 01238, or Paypal at www.africaconnect.org or scan this code.



Gratefully, LuAnn Herring, for the AC teams US and Kenya