



“Behold, I Myself will search for My flock and seek them out ... I will tend My flock and make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, bring back the strays, bind up the broken, and strengthen the weak” Ezekiel 34:11, 15-16



The 2026 Missions Trip was successful on so many fronts; truly a realization of progress in our vision to tangibly change hearts and lives among the poor families in the Kitale, Kenya area, and to build a Kenyan team equipped to take that vision into the future. Everywhere we looked was fruit, and all glory goes to the God who gave the vision, and provided the people, the wisdom and resources to bring it to pass. There were children who came into the preschool at 3 or 4 years old, now grown and serving in the church; youth struggling to make it in the slum now serving as competent staff; “Sho-shos,” grandmothers whose lives were saved through medical intervention, or currently sustained through our milk cows, hens, and garden plots so they can care for the children left to them. Mamas who were brewing alcohol are now using a new skill and raising their kids in Christian community. In Mark 16:15 Jesus commanded us to “go into all the world”... and in obedience to that command so many have been blessed, including the ones going. Transformation of lives through the gospel of Jesus will never be realized without sacrifice; it takes moving out of our comfort zone. We are deeply thankful that God keeps us moving, and for all those who sacrificed to help us, and others, to go.

The US team was amazing, consistently demonstrating the flexibility and faith necessary to navigate life in Kenya. All were thrilled that Sue Choquette joined us on this trip after having to sit out last year due to health issues; she is so loved! We found it difficult to leave our dear friends on the Kenya team; as we labored together, our relationships were greatly deepened and enriched. We have the greatest respect for Pastor Apollo and Rose Juma and the entire team. Their passion, love and focus on the mission is truly inspiring.



Outreach: In addition to the all-important visits to the homes of the ~ 160 children in our



programs, there is a renewed energy toward getting the message of Jesus into the **local public schools**. Many doors are open, and the hunger we witnessed for the true gospel of grace was overwhelming. Teen pregnancy is so common, one Girl’s High School we visited had many students who lived in a nearby Children’s Home where their babies were cared for so they could attend classes. In that session, more than half of the class eagerly responded to the message of the Father’s love through Christ. A team of young men has committed to continue this ministry into schools, as well as local prisons and hospitals; 30 young people, some of whom grew up in the IMS program, are being mentored to go into the highways and byways with God’s love. Bob was particularly focused on this aspect during the trip, and is excited for the potential it holds.

The members of Connect Chapel raised funds to expand to double its size while we were there, and is filling

quickly. Apollo is actively mentoring leaders, and has a vision to plant churches in the future. There are currently 9 **cell groups** using the same discipleship curriculum, and the **Bible College** is thriving. **Radio** continues to reach ~ 3 million, into Uganda, urban centers such as Nairobi, and even Tanzania.





Connect Premiere Preschool: Within the landscape of extreme poverty, how fortunate are these children that join Connect Premiere! They don't have to be told to be thankful...to receive two meals a day, including eggs and milk, a new uniform and shoes, and a top-rated education in such a loving, safe, beautiful environment is an indescribable gift. The most important message these children can receive as



a foundation for their life is "God loves you, and created you uniquely for Himself." **Games Day** is a great way to communicate this, as it provides a free day of sports and fun together for students, who have no where safe to play in the slums, as well as for the staff who work long days and even on weekends. We loved getting



to know the kids through play, and serving them watermelon and cupcakes made by the new Baking Class, headed by Lillian Armstrong. Afterwards the children enjoyed another rare treat – Kuku (chicken, provided by Connect)!

Uniform Day is always a highlight, when the US team joins the Kenyan team to dress the Preschool and primary children with new uniforms, shoes and sweaters. It's a precious sight to see these children so happy! Please pray for consistent financial support for the preschool, as its status as a free program makes it one of the few programs that we don't anticipate will become self-funding.



Empowerment: the new **Baking Class** was a major focus of this trip, and through the hard work, love and perseverance of Lillian, was a great success! As she left for home, the class of 7 parents were baking cookies for school closing day, and beginning business training. After their practical exam, which will involve a commercial baking project, a new class will begin with a Kenyan trainer.

Kathy Rexrode arrived in Kenya with a mat woven from scrap material, and taught our seamstresses and hairdressing instructor how to build the loom and weave the mat. Those ladies are now teaching the mamas,



particularly the elderly, to make these mats in varying sizes, to be sold as table or door mats and even sleeping mats for those small children who normally sleep on rags on the floor.

Farming and Husbandry: Emmanuel, the head of this department, is a hard worker with a clear vision, a teaching gift and experience in microfinance. He is currently teaching sustainable agriculture, then will move to teaching poultry (husbandry) and beekeeping. He says, "Our programs are designed to foster "true empowerment", aiming to teach sustainable farming methods that allow farmers to "fish, and not giving you fish."

The business venture of raising poultry and making our own feed for production is already paying off, as that program is now totally self-funding, with prospects of making a sizable profit to help support the compound.



Cobbling: We are thrilled to see men are coming to learn this trade after work, or early in the morning. In order to train more people, we need four additional machines and supplies, totaling **\$1400**. Later this year, we plan to be producing our own school shoes.

Ian Memorial Sponsorship Program: 103 students are now supported in school through IMS sponsorship. As government subsidies fail to materialize, schools have

turned to raising fees, and randomly adding fees. I am told that the average Kenyan family spends 50-80% of their income on school fees. For those with jobs, it's difficult; for many, it's impossible. Despite raising sponsor fees, IMS continues to depend on donations to the IMS General Fund to meet rising school costs.

Home visits are a wonderful opportunity to see how these children really live - which is often heartbreaking - and observe the obstacles to caregivers getting involved in our programs. Poverty is complicated; it takes perseverance, faith, and encouragement to navigate out of its grip. Last year we found Lucky in Falklands, who was sponsored in Primary school. His grandmother was brewing alcohol in a particularly dangerous area. Since then, the grandmom stopped brewing and is attending church. Upon visiting this year, I met Lucky's older sister, Lavin, who should have been in her third year of high school. Upon her mother's death, a pastor was paying her school fees, but had stopped. Her situation was very unsafe; we posted the need, and Lavin is now sponsored and in school! It was truly gratifying thing to see our **High school graduates** actively engaging in service and community at Connect. The months following graduation in Kenya can be grueling, waiting to either get called to university, or to get a work permit. Vocational school is an option once their direction is clear. Meanwhile, three of our graduates, Charles, Kennedy, and Zablon, took the step of moving out of the slum and renting an apartment together near the church, where they are also getting casual work and support in setting up their new home.



Medical: Natasha is happily back in school in her new uniform! She has two remaining surgeries, but her sight is already markedly improved. Mama Margaret is undergoing surgery this week, and will soon be starting treatment for cervical cancer. Slowly, we are getting our parents signed up for SHA, the Kenyan Health Insurance, which demands a high registration fee. We continue to need regular support for our Medical Fund, costing at average \$500-600 per month. This includes care for all of our students and chronically ill grandmothers.





Another encouraging step was the strengthening of the Connect partnership with **Cherangany Hospital**. The hospital will be sending doctors to instruct parents at our Parent's meetings, conduct free community clinics, and check on the kids once per term. Also Emelda, our head social worker, started classes in the Cherangany Nursing School!

Primary/Jr Secondary school! We are pleased to report that we have received a donation of \$50,000 toward the construction of our Primary school! Thankfully, we will not need to tear down the temporary primary school, which means construction can begin soon, following obtaining a new site plan and government permits. **We are still in need of the remaining \$25,000 for Grades 1-7 classroom.** In 2027, we plan to add the Jr. Secondary annex, **costing \$62,500**, which will include Grades 8 & 9 classrooms, offices, and required labs. **Overall cost: ~\$137,500.**

Thank you for making this trip possible, and partnering with God in this work through the years.

LuAnn Herring, for the AC team US and Kenya

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