



New Dawn Association Newsletter

April 2009

Registered No 2302261V

New Dawn Association is an international, humanitarian, non-profit making association, initially working in Sub-Saharan Africa. Inspired by the Gospel, New Dawn Association's aim is to help the most needy, and more specifically, orphans and widows, without race, social or religious discrimination.



“Arise and Shine” Kogony Orphanage and Community Project, Kisumu, Kenya.

We returned to France at the end of February 2009 from a three month (including Christmas 2008) working visit to the Kogony project, our second visit in the last 12 months, working beside Nancy and Jonas, the Kenyan leaders of the project. The time we spent with them was extremely productive and encouraging. The “Arise and Shine” orphanage, situated in Kisumu on the edge of Lake Victoria, is now well established as the hub of a project which extends far beyond the boundary of the orphanage and is reaching out to the local very needy “bush” community.



It was wonderful to spend so much time with the children, particularly during the first six weeks which coincided with their Christmas holidays. Each time we return to Kisumu we discover positive changes in the children – they now seem to be so happy. During the summer holidays Jennie ran art and craft activities while Don held story-telling afternoons. **The Christmas Day festivities** included a Christmas Carol service with all the children performing the “Christmas Story, Don’s final episode of “Scrooge”,



presents for the children and staff and a special Christmas dinner. Then, just before they returned to school in January, the children and staff enjoyed a **day out at an animal park** including searching for hippos on a boat trip on Lake Victoria.

Open Days are held on most Saturdays when other orphans from the community are invited to the orphanage to share in organised activities, such as paint workshops, story telling and stone picking on the approach road to improve car access. Nancy also runs a porridge feeding program for the very needy local children with meal donated to the orphanage.



During our final week, with Nancy and Jonas and Chotu Pabari of the “Ladies in Action” team, accompanied by the District Children’s officer, we rescued a family of four small children who had been abandoned by their mother and were in a desperate condition. The children, Alphonse, Doreen, Hillary and Stephen, were integrated into the “Arise and Shine” orphanage bringing the number of **resident orphans** up to 24 with one distant orphan living at home to help his ill mother but supported by the project. A morning **Nursery School** for up to 25 children drawn from the orphanage and the community has been established in the classroom for children between

the age of 3 and 6, and older children who are still too academically weak to attend the Primary School. Primary education up to the age of 14 is free but secondary education (lasting 4 more years) has to be paid for. In January two of the boys passed their exams to enter secondary education and the project had to commence financing the remainder of their schooling on an annual (in advance) basis. These additional costs will increase as more of the orphans advance to this stage of their education.

The heart of “Arise and Shine” reaches far out into the community. Much of our time during the three-months stay was also spent with widows and children of the surrounding community. Nine **Widows Empowerment Groups** were initiated during our April 2009 visit. Products were given to each group to enable them to start mini-businesses. Nancy has been monitoring the progress of this program and during our recent stay we interviewed each group and discovered that this program has been so positive and encouraging that a new **“Loan Incentive Scheme”** was introduced while we were there. Also in February 2009 a **tenth empowerment group, an AIDS Support Group**, known as the **“Special Group”**, was launched and we provided funds for this group to set up it’s own mini-business, producing and selling the special high protein meal so vital for AIDS sufferers.



The **“Desperate Widows Group”** comprising 20 particularly desperate women, chosen by the community (initiated in April 2009), continues to run well, each receiving monthly food packs and home visits and we visited them all at least once during our stay taking special needs such as mosquito nets, extra blankets, body oil etc. We visited Angelina whose wrist was out of joint since a fall in October and had not been treated due to lack of money. We paid for hospital visits and treatment (just 25 euros) to re-set the wrist. She

wore a plaster for a month and on our next visit it had mended and she proudly used both of her hands to sell us mangoes! On another visit we found widow Janet very sick with AIDS and we feared, close to death. It was decided to bring her to the orphanage, and with the assistance of the staff, resident children and our American friends, Mary Lynn and Wayne McLemore, part of the cowshed was joyfully transformed into a clean hut for her. After 6 weeks of medical treatment, good food and loving care, Janet made a wonderful recovery, put on 9 kilos, increased her white blood cell count enormously and, to everyone’s amazement, was able to return home.



Just before our visit, following a successful special appeal, we were able to send the money to buy a desperately needed decent **second-hand car** for the project which had been without a vehicle for nine months. Having retained the monthly sums needed to cover the general running costs of the orphanage, we took with us the remainder of the monies raised from last year's fundraising initiatives. With Nancy and Jonas, we decided how best to place this money, addressing pressing needs in the orphanage and the widows' community program. School fees were paid, school uniforms, clothing, mattresses, shock absorbers for the car and a small generator are some of the many items purchased during our stay. In addition we financed the re-siting of the double entrance gates to create a safe play area for the children. During our visit we also received a handsome donation from the Rotary de Lavaux of Switzerland and this helped us to upgrade the toilet and washing block, replace the double span roof of the original dormitory and classroom block to a single span roof, fix new guttering on both sides of the whole building and install a new 6,000 litre storage tank to facilitate better storage of rain water. In addition this funding will also provide simple solar lighting panels to the block.



In February "Arise and Shine" hosted it's second "**Medical Camp**" sponsored by local Indian team, the Bhagini Samaj, the Dutch aid group the "Klara Foundation" and the Kisumu "Ladies in Action". 440 mainly women and children received medical attention, medication and treatment from the three doctors and the support team. They also received **AIDS counselling** from a mobile Aids testing Unit which was mobilised for the day and about two thirds of them received **AIDS screening**. The promise is that this will now become an annual event. Such was the success of the Medical Camp, that "Arise and Shine" was chosen to host an **Eye Camp** on the site

sponsored by the Lions Club International organisation and this took place a week after we left,. Over 500 people streamed in from the local bush community to have their eye problems diagnosed and many were treated. Those requiring cataract treatment were taken to the local hospital and 48 were successfully operated on by the visiting team of doctors. Five of our "Desperate Widows" underwent operations and the first to come back to the orphanage was overjoyed that after not being able to see for five years she now had her sight restored!



The Scottish based Aid Agency, **Edinburgh Direct Aid (EDA)** continues to support the project, successfully launching an appeal to purchase, ship and deliver from Scotland to the Kogony site, **a container** carrying much-needed items to help equip the project. Their team arrived at the orphanage just after we left in March to oversee the delivery and placing of the container on the site. The contents of the container include clothes, medical items and toiletries, sports equipment, bedding and household goods, toys, books, tools and school furniture, as well as 10 sewing machines with which Nancy intends to set up a tailoring training workshop on the site to assist the widows in the community and to create job opportunities for

the children. On this trip EDA also funded the completion of the new dining room and kitchen which they commenced during our visit last year (initially co-funded by New Dawn Association.) Unfortunately, although the container has arrived at Kisumu, clearing it through the complex customs procedure prevented the EDA team from completing the task within their timescale. Another EDA member is now travelling to Kisumu to take delivery, distribute the contents and transform the container into workshop units.

Although vegetable are being grown on the site the **main horticulture program** has been on standby until the container is placed on the site to allow ample space for manoeuvring it into place.

The "Arise and Shine" Orphanage and Community project is in the process of becoming a very fine project but it is still in the early stages of development and much still needs to be done to reach the necessary standards demanded by the authorities. Increased **water supply** and **electricity**, **a boys' dormitory** and **improved toilet and washing facilities** for both boys and girls remain firmly at the top of the list. Inspired by the success of widow Janet's story on the site, it is intended to provide a short-term **Hospice** home of six to eight beds for very desperate, and very lonely, sick/terminally ill widows, so that they can be cared for in their last days and allowed to die with dignity in a loving environment. A site for this building has been earmarked, to be set in a peaceful, beautiful and shaded garden.

The children, staff and widows are so grateful for all the help they are receiving. Nancy and Jonas, and our other New Dawn Association Board members, all join with us in thanking all our kind and generous supporters, as well as Edinburgh Direct Aid, Rotary de Lavaux. Switzerland, Kisumu "Ladies in Action", the Bhagini Samaj, the Klara Foundation and Lions Club International (*Although we have been successful in bringing this wonderful additional support to the project, raising money for the annual running costs of the orphanage and widows programs rest firmly in our court and is the main purpose of the sponsored walks*). **Thank you all so very much.**

