



The Good Hope Update December 2009

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Good Hope Trust is a small, local NGO in Onana Village, a poverty-stricken community in Umbwe-Kibosho, located high on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro. While tourists spend thousands to trek the mountain, close by and unseen are large numbers of people whose lives are controlled by poverty, hunger and illness. A very high rate of HIV/AIDS in the area has resulted in large numbers of children being left on their own or in dire circumstances.

Founded by Josephine Machuwa in 2003, Good Hope started out as a hostel for young AIDS orphans, most of who had been left to destitute grandmothers or were homeless. There are over 300 such children in this small area and that number is expected to rise to 2500 by 2010. Mama Josephine has transformed the house she grew up in into a haven of hope. In addition to providing a home for children who have nowhere else to go (there are currently 15 children aged 3-17 (read about them on our blog), Good Hope has also evolved into an out-reach support service for affected families and infected individuals in the small community of Onana, one of the hamlets in Umbwe. Where possible, relatives are helped to keep orphaned children with them. Help with accessing food, education, medical treatment and other necessities has helped many children stay in their family compound. A vehicle donated in 2004 has travelled up and down the mountain thousands of times taking people to clinics, and enabling Mama Josephine to advocate with district officials for the community she serves.



Realizing that many AIDS orphans are at a great disadvantage once they began school, if in fact they even got to school, Good Hope built and operates a nursery school which serves about 35 kids every year who are described by Mama Josephine "AIDS and poverty orphans". These day-program kids get a basic meal, often the only one they will have that day, and produce from Good Hope's maize shamba (small farm) and garden is shared with their families. Over 200 graduates have moved on to the local primary school and teachers were quick to notice that the Good Hope

kids have a real head start towards school success. They also became more sensitive to the special needs of AIDS-affected children. One teacher said " The AIDS orphans have a dark cloud over them and sometimes they don't hear us. They have watched their parent(s) die and often were their only caregivers."



An important lesson we have learned is that everything has more value if it has a cost, however small. Initially the nursery school was free and while people were eager to enrol their children, regular attendance was an issue. In response to this a new policy was developed. Each child must bring a small stick of wood for the fire to cook the daily porridge and a clean cup to eat it. Attendance improved dramatically! Families are also encouraged to send along a bit of maize or other food if and when they can. This has really increased the sense of community ownership and pride in the program and increased demand to the point that there is now another class at another location



A very special offshoot of GH was the formation of WAVUMBE, a group of local people who are living positively with HIV. WAVUMBE now has 50+ members, Four years ago their leader, Balthazar Munishi, recognized that that if he and other infected adults in the community did not make a public stand to try to combat the stigma of HIV and AIDS they could hardly expect young people do test and seek treatment. Theirs has been a hard road as ignorance and social pressure were definitely against them.

Using song as a medium for sharing their message, they have carved a niche for themselves. They provide moral and physical support for each other and encouragement and assistance for other community members to take the scary step of testing. They help them make the long trip to the clinic in Moshi for the critical follow-up care that they need. They also help them understand the importance of adhering to medication schedules, the importance of nutrition (a challenge when there is so little food) and generally provide moral support. They were able to get a small grant from TACAIDS, the TZ agency responsible for getting money from international programs to local communities where it is most needed. This allowed them to provide bus fare to town for many community people living with AIDS so they could get to the clinic. Unfortunately when they requested the second half of the grant they had been awarded the rules had changed and they were told that the funds were no longer available. Just as people started to have confidence that there really was help at hand their hopes were dashed! Small organizations like this have great difficulty getting official funding. They lack skills of proposal writing and cannot afford to pay an accountant to audit their use of their very limited funds. WAVUME's latest initiative is the establishment of a group of 12-17 year-old kids who are infected or affected by AIDS. At this point they aren't sure where to go with the group or how they will support it, but recognize that teens need to be able to deal with HIV and AIDS in an age-appropriate way.



Support for Good Hope has come from a variety of sources. Initial funding was supplied by a small group of Canadian friends, several of whom have decided to replace family Christmas gift giving with donations to GH. Garage sales and donations to mark special events like birthdays, anniversaries and thank-you's have also raised money. An American family whose daughter was a Peace Core volunteer at a nearby secondary school have been wonderfully faithful in sending a small monthly donation which over the years has made an important difference.



Small grants received a few years ago continue to make an important difference. Thanks to the Tanzania Diplomatic Spouses group in Dar Es Salaam we were able to acquire a nearby shamba (field) which usually produces enough maize and beans to provide daily porridge for the nursery school kids and the children who live at GH, with some left over to share with the area. We have also been expand the maize to about 4 ½ acres – using a field belonging to a old lady who lives nearby and another we were able to rent. This creates

work for a few local people who share the labour and the harvest. Unfortunately this year severe drought has ravaged crops across much of northern Tanzania. Because we are high on the mountain and did get a little rain we only lost about half our crop but people lower down have nothing. The Corona Club in Dar es Salaam, funded the establishment of a small piggery which has become a very successful on-going income generation project. In addition to providing GH with a small cash income annually it has enabled us to give over 100 local women piglets so they too can generate income which allows them to care for the orphans in their extended families. Agriteam Canada has included GH in the charities its personnel support. Several people who have included a visit to Good Hope in their travels to climb Kili or do a safari have also become supporters. Many individuals who have heard about us have been more than generous. Recently Immaculata High School in Ottawa became actively involved in fund raising for our latest project – a community resource centre and health clinic.





A group of wonderful Norwegians who learned about Good Hope by chance and fell in love are important friends. They have constructed a wonderful kitchen and dining room. What a difference that has made, as these pictures



Not only can everyone now sit together to eat and do home-work, small meetings can be held and visitors can sit together to discuss ways to help out. The Norwegian Friends of Good Hope Group has also committed to pay the salaries of the teacher and two care givers. Recently they have funded the construction of toilets and showers which are making an enormous difference in the lives of the GH residents, many on who are now entering their teen years.

On-going support is critical and will make an enormous difference. Recently new friends from Egypt provided a supply of educational toys and teaching materials and are sponsoring three secondary students. Canadian friends are also sending kids to secondary school – something that would only have been a dream without this generosity.

Non-financial support is also important to the Good Hope kids. Senior students from nearby Umbwe Secondary School are regular volunteers and provide great role models. Thomas Harty, a Peace Corps volunteer at a nearby secondary school came on Sundays to help the children learn English. A neighbour who is Head Teacher at a nearby primary school is a great source of support to Josephine and gives Mwalimu Rogati guidance about how best to work with the nursery school children. Visitors are always welcome, whether they come for a few hours or a few days. All bring a message of hope and support, and often become keen supporters. Balthazar Munishi, the WAVUMBE chairperson works closely with Josephine and is playing a major role in overseeing the construction of the resource/medical centre.

Our dedicated teacher, two care givers and two security guards are the only paid staff. Mwalimu Rogati is a secondary school graduate whose home is a few minutes down the mountain. The small amount of training he has been able to get has enhanced his natural ability. He is the only father figure these children have and the children love him dearly. Two young women, one of whom stays at GH, cook and care for the resident children and the 35+ nursery school kids. Since invariably younger children arrive with their nursery-age siblings, one of the women looks after the 'little ones' while classes are going on and they too have their mid-morning meal, which is breakfast, lunch and maybe supper for many! In addition to running the nursery school Mwalimu Rogati also helps out with the piggery and oversees the progress of a large vegetable garden which



provides a great source of healthy food for all. In the New Year Mwalimu will be spending some time at the Aga Khan nursery school in Dar learning more about early childhood education.

The presence of these dedicated young people allows Mama Josephine freedom to provide a lot of community outreach – taking people to hospital, meeting with civic officials and other NGOs and generally trying to drum up support. She has been appointed by the district to committees dealing with HIV and AIDS, is on the board of two local secondary schools and is the treasurer of the community group which is building a much-needed primary school very close to GH which means the children won't have to make the daily 5 km trek up and down the mountain to school.



A young Tanzanian woman whose family is from Kibosho and who recently graduated from university in the USA was able to get a grant from her scholarship sponsor which enabled GH to begin construction of a much-needed community resource centre and health clinic. Completion of the centre has become an enormous new challenge for Good Hope, and a fund raising campaign is underway. If you have now of any companies or

groups or individuals who might be interested please pass on this information! The District Health Office has promised that when the building is completed they will provide medical equipment and visiting medical staff – a doctor, nurse and counsellor. This will make an enormous difference to people who now have to make a long, expensive and frightening trip down the mountain to Moshi for testing and medical follow-up. It will also enable WAVUME to provide even better service to people living with AIDS in the community and provide space for the youth group and other community groups to come together. There are also dreams about providing some skill-training activities, and maybe even opening a pharmacy and an internet café one day!



Directly or indirectly hundreds of vulnerable children and adults in Kibosho-Umbwe have been touched by the efforts of Good Hope Trust. Many of you have been partners on this journey of hope and are helping Good Hope to live up to its motto: "Save a life and make a difference"

There are no words adequate to thank you, but please know that YOU are making a big difference.

Tunashokuru sana!



If you would like to become a part of our continuing effort to transform our community please contact:

Josephine Machuwa, Director
Good Hope Trust.
P.O. Box 7748, Moshi, Tanzania
Goodhope2003@yahoo.com

in Canada: (or wherever she is)
Rosemary O'Shaughnessy
rosemaryoca@yahoo.ca

Visit us at www.goodhopetrust.blogspot.com/ to meet some of the Good Hope kids
Donations can be made:

Directly – send cheque made out to Rosemary O'Shaughnessy (GHTF) to 274 Nelson Street, Ottawa K1N 7S2, Canada or by e-mail transfer to rosemaryoca@yahoo.ca
Or

On-line through the Kesho Trust via www.thekeshotrust.org – just follow the Good Hope link. Canadians will receive a charitable donation tax receipt from the Kesho Trust.