

The Olive Branch for Children
14-3560 Langstaff Road,
Suite #377
Woodbridge, Ontario
L4L 9A8
Canada
www.theolivebranchforchildren.org



The Olive Branch for Children Montessori Teacher Training Program



The Olive Branch for Children is thrilled with the Montessori Teacher Education Program hosted by Pam Leudke and Jamie Rossiter from July 23 to August 13. It was the follow up to the program hosted by Janice Mayhew and Laure Kominar in November of 2008. This year's program saw many of last year's participants and some new additions. 26 individuals participated in the program, representing 19 schools. Since the completion of the November 2008 program, The Olive Branch for Children continued to follow up with the Montessori Kindergartens we helped open. Some failed and some have thrived. Hundreds of children, in remote locations, who had no access to education before, are now going to school Monday through the Friday. We have some very enthusiastic teachers, some of whom have turned their homes into the Kindergartens for their communities. Other communities have started building their nursery schools.

Pam and Jamie worked tirelessly for months to bring together the program together. They brought tens of thousands of dollars worth of materials to Tanzania. The participants worked with Pam and Jamie to refresh their skills from November or learn for the first time how to use the materials. They also worked with the participants to make materials for all the schools. I was so proud to see the end result of the program and beamed at the graduation of the teacher trainees.

We hope to continue the training program annually, as well as provide support to the schools to help see them grow.

Thank you so much Pam and Jamie.

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A Message from Pam and Jamie

Our time here has been fabulous so far. We have come back into Mbeya from the Maasai village for 2 days to rest & do some business for the program in Utengule (the village we are doing our Montessori program in). We experienced a little bit of culture shock on Fri. coming back into 'town' as we haven't had hydro, running water, or a clean 'shower' in 3 wks. We can't imagine the culture shock when we arrive back in Canada!

We have been living in a Masaii village called Suluwya, which has about 50 people & 30 children. It is literally in the middle of nowhere & the village consists of a few mud huts, a couple of cookhouses, outdoor pens for the livestock & 1 bore-hole well for the whole village. Our 'home' is relatively lavish compared to the others in the village. Ours has a concrete floor & chair to sit on. Our bed is quite comfortable & has a mosquito net which is more for keeping the bat poop off our heads than mosquitoes since it is the dry season now & there are virtually no bugs. Our home even has a tin roof where the others only have the thatched roofs. We bathe in a concrete hut that is shared with the toilet (a hole in the ground). The women heat a small bucket of water for us at the end of each day to wash off the dust. The dust in the village is unlike anyone in Canada has experienced. You literally eat it! The bathing room only has 1 small opening as a window & it is always a rush to get washed at night when we come home before it is dark & the bats move in. Fun Fun!! The cookhouse is a small hut with only 1 small opening to act as a chimney for the smoke. All the food & tea always has a smokey flavour & the women's eyes are very yellowed from years of hovering over the smokey fire preparing food. There is a new cookhouse being constructed by another family from Toronto & it will be such an improvement for the people. The food is nourishing but not always palatable. We eat rice twice a day & may have either beans, a vegetable if we are lucky, & a meat cooked in a milk sauce. They will make chipatis for us too, if we ask. We did get sick a couple of weeks ago but got the women to change how they cooked some of the food for the "weak white people's stomachs" & we have been fine ever since.

The people of the village are absolutely wonderful. They have been so kind & friendly & helpful. We have learned so much about their culture as many of the Maasai men come into our house at night to 'talk' through a translator. Topics have ranged from politics, polygamy to cows. The village owns about 6000 cattle & 1000 goats. They are also interested in learning English & some things about Canada. The children here are beautiful also but you have to look past the dirt & flies crawling all over their faces.

Our days start at 6:00 a.m. to the sound of cattle bawling, goats bleating and roosters crowing. At about 7:00 there is a stampede in front of our house as the goats are let out of the pen in the centre of the village to run out to the fields where they will graze for the day. We get dressed in the dark & eat a breakfast of buns (brought out from Mbeya), peanut butter & sometimes bananas or oranges. By 7:15 we hop onto our bicycles for our 9 km ride into Utengule. Our 'drive' to work is not all that different from ours in Canada. We dodge potholes (the likes you've never seen in Canada) & road kill (in this case cow poop), we have been cut off by other cyclists, had traffic jams (cows or goats) & Pam has experienced road rage when she accidentally caused someone to go into the ditch by riding on the wrong side of the road to avoid a huge pothole. None the less, it's one of our favourite times of the day...it's cool, no wind & the sunrise is amazing. We arrive at school by 8:00 a.m. & return home by 5:00 p.m. We eat lunch then (since we don't have time during the day), bathe, wash clothes & do





Continuation - A Message from Pam and Jamie

anything else that requires daylight before it gets dark by 7:00p.m. We have been having men & children come to us to learn English & often teach again until 8:30 or 9:00p.m. 1 night we even had 13 children come to our house at 9:30 p.m. so have a lesson in English. You don't see this in children in Canada!

The night sky in the village is breathtaking! There is absolutely no light pollution (except for the full moon right now) & you literally feel that you are in the Universe. It is also silent & still.....so peaceful. The men & women have danced a few times at night & that is an incredible sight to see & hear. Jamie has even jumped with the Maasai men!!

Our Montessori Teacher training program is going very well. We have 26 dedicated men & women representing 19 different schools. They range in ages from 18 to 70. All have a gr. 7 education & a few have Gr. 10. We go from 8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with only a 1/2 hr. break, 6 days a week. Yesterday (Sat.) was a national holiday so we actually got a week-end off. Some of the women bring their young children with them on their back everyday also. Some women walk or bike 1 1/2 hrs. 1 way to come and go from the school with their kids on their back. Jamie has seen A LOT of breasts in the past few weeks as the women use them not only to feed but also as pacifiers when the babies get fussy. These women are so strong & they never complain. They are all loving the material & lessons we have been teaching them & feel so grateful to all the Canadians who supported us to make our project possible. These teachers literally have NOTHING in their schools & are so grateful for even the pencil we have supplied them for the program. Some only know a limited amount of English & we have been working through a translator who has been great. We have all managed to come together as a community & have a lot of laughs together. The best is watching & listening to them sing the English children's songs we are teaching them like 'Head & Shoulders, Knees & Toes'. We have video to show everyone back home. We have 3 days left of the program (1 of which is their exam) & 'graduation' day & celebration. We have managed to visit 4 of the schools who are in our program. It was very depressing seeing them.....the teachers have NO supplies for the kids, most have about 60 students & many of the schools are held under a tree. How can children learn without even a pencil, chalkboard or piece of paper to hold? We so admire the teachers' commitment & dedicated to education. They know it is the only hope for their futures & will not let anything deter them from trying to teach. When we come back to Canada, we are going to start a school sponsorship program to help these villages out & are even more committed to The Olive Branch for Children's quest to help establish Montessori schools for these people.

Well.....this quite a lengthy email & we can't even begin to convey all we have seen or experienced in our time here. It is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that has impacted us deeply. We miss all of our friends & family & can't wait to share our photos, video & tales with you. Hope you are all doing well. I hear we are having a much better summer here than you are in Canada. It's sunny every day here & daytime temp. is about 28 degrees Celsius. It won't rain here until Dec.!!

Love you all & Kwaheri.

Pam & Jamie



The Olive Branch for Children Mobile Medical Clinics

On July 26, 2009, The Olive Branch for Children embarked on a 6-day mobile medical clinic. The clinic began in Mpolo and ended in Luhanga. We were happy to welcome Meg Wolfe-Wylie, a second year medical student from The University of Toronto for the second time to The Olive Branch for Children. The Olive Branch for Children team treated 350 patients. Dr. Sangare was thrilled with the outcome, since our mobile medical clinics appear to have made a marked difference in the health of villagers. Instead of treating 200 per day, the team saw on average 30 to 50 patients; a real symbol of the success of the mobile medical clinics.

The Olive Branch for Children was thrilled to see the progress on the Mpolo permanent medical clinic. In May, the Olive Branch purchased 69 bags of cement for the construction of the medical clinic in Mpolo. Now, the foundations are being laid and the walls are going up (refer to picture below).

In addition, we were able to continue our community research component, which will be able to help us help the communities we are working in with greater efficiency and effectiveness.



The Well Rig

Another Chapter in the Kovac Journey

The objective of the well rig is to make it much easier to bring buckets of water out of the 22 meter deep well under human power, it has to be very robust to withstand any possible abuse that it might be subjected to. The life expectancy should be 20 plus years.

Today we got in the Toyota land cruiser to go into town to find the supplies to build the well rig. This would be an evolving plan based on materials available. I spotted a man walking with a homemade two-wheeled pushcart. I noticed the wheels turned straight, not off camber and wobbling like most of the carts I had seen and it had a solid axle. Thomas, our translator/negotiator jumped out of our vehicle and chased him down. We pulled up, jumped out and had a closer look. The axle was the perfect diameter, 2" and a 1" spindle with a roller bearing on a homemade wheel. The outer rim was from a motorcycle and the spokes were replaced with welded re-bar and a machined tube hub (very sturdy). We asked him where he got it and that was our first step. Then we went to a welding shop. We showed our drawings and explained the purpose of this unit. Paul jumped into the car with us and we went to a steel yard to buy a slightly curved 2" diameter rod that was 12' long and slightly tapered at each end. A man carried it to another shop 500 meters away as we followed in the land cruiser. It was a machine shop with two huge lathes and an assortment of heavy-duty vintage American machines. There they would machine the end to accept a bearing. Thomas would go inside alone and negotiate the price and then I would come in and verify that everything was going according to this ever-evolving plan. White men pay more so Thomas always goes in first.



Then off we went to another shop to find the bearing. The last stop of the day at the spare parts for motorcycles shop, but they did not have the rim we needed. It was 6:30 p.m. and all the shops were closing. We paid Paul, the welding shop guy, two dollars and said we would meet him and Mr. Bolt, the owner of the machine shop, the next morning.

Thomas, the driver and I left Iwambi at 9:30 a.m. to finish getting the parts for the well rig. We met Paul after buying a new 17" motorcycle rim for \$35. He would weld re-bar spokes to a home-made hub sized to fit the bearing we bought. We hadn't had a real breakfast so we stopped at a place that Thomas frequents of course, he knows the owner. (Thomas seems to know people everywhere we go.) I have decided to order whatever Thomas does every time we eat out together. Our dish was goat soup; a light broth with unidentifiable pieces of goat innards and meat laced with bones, gristle and fat. There were three sides; a fried banana, slices of hot peppers and a 1/2 lime. I ate most of it and was happy to be provided with a toothpick after the meal.

Back we went to meet with Mr. Bolt and Nut. They had machined one end of the steel shaft to fit the inner race of the bearing and they cut threads beside it to accommodate a nut. We still needed "u" bolts to attach the shaft to the angle iron posts. They took a steel rod, cut it and also cut threads on each end. I must say it was the most professional place we had dealt with; speed, efficiency and a reasonable price. We even made a deal with him to deliver the goods to the village at a reasonable price which included taking extra passengers, goods and several stops. I hope this thing works!

Well, it's not done yet as we never tested the rim, shaft and washer before we left Mbeya. Modifications need to

be made on the hub and washer. But we decided to dig the holes. It had to be done by hand as all things at the village are done. A 5' steel rod to dig and our hands were used to pull out the dirt. Matt, David and Paul all helped dig the holes. David dug with the metal rod and Paul and Mathieu pulled the dirt out of the hole and at one point, Mathieu was reaching so far down his whole arm, shoulder and head were in the hole. The holes were deep enough and now the cement had to be mixed. A huge bag was used with a lot of sand and six shovelfuls of gravel all mixed right on the dirt with a very old shovel that had a tree branch handle. Thomas and David J. put rocks down into the hole trying to secure the posts, for whatever reason, I did not know since we had more cement than would possibly fill the holes. We finally put cement in the holes but had most of it leftover. It was decided to make a pad on the surface around the posts. We wrote our names, our country and set coins in the pad as well. Not how I would have done it, but it will be sufficient.

Back to Mbeya to try and complete the unit, we picked up Paul and another bearing, then on to Mr. Bolt's place. I also wanted a spacer, which we found at a used parts place (an 8X10 shack with an assortment of partially rusted washers, bolts, nuts and transmission parts). When we got to Mr. Bolt, the discussions started. The hub for the wheel was no good, too rough, so the bearings would not line up. He would have to machine a new one and install it in the wheel. The shaft would have to be machined again to fit two bearings, the new hub and spacer. Unfortunately the power was out as it often is in Mbeya, so we would have to come back the next day to pick it up. Thomas returned the next day and picked it up, arriving at the village just before sunset. We quickly installed it on the posts and began bringing up water, first with the usual 20 litre bucket and

then with a 30 litre bucket.

My design was not quite right and the shaft and posts had too much flex. The shaft got a slight bend in it, so I decided to go back to the 20 litre pail for the time being until we could add two more posts closer to the wheel at 45-degree angles. Thomas called Mr. Bolt and ordered the pieces. Again, Thomas went back to get the parts.

The next morning we dug the holes, mixed the cement and installed the angle iron posts. Everyone was told not to use the rig until the next morning.

A last application of paint and the unit is complete! It works well (ha-ha) and I think it meets all the original objectives. The total cost was approximately \$750.00CND but without all the back tracking etc, it should cost approximately \$400.00CND.

- JP Kovac



The Kitchen and Base Camp Project

All good things start with women, Deborah McCracken and the Olive Branch was the start of this. Denise Kovac my partner for life provided the inspiration and motivation in this next step to help improve the lives of the women in the village of Soloway. Her ideas and realizations will hopefully provide a model for other families and villages, together with a base camp for Deborah's medical clinics, it is our hope that this project will have a long reaching impact.

The ideas get discussed, pen gets put to paper and things begin to evolve. Initially it was to be an addition to Baraka's house, which was already under construction. Soon it changed to a separate building built parallel to the house in order to create a courtyard. The building would be 12 feet by 40 feet with 4 rooms; a kitchen, food storage/laundry room, office for Deborah and a medical supply room.

The workers would arrive at dawn or sometimes sleep in the building under construction. They were an interesting bunch; Michael A. Ngobola was one of the two most experienced of the crew of four. He wore a pink hat, had a hammer with a pink handle and had a pink measuring tape, so I called him "Pinky". Pinky would arrive at the job site and take off his green-patch work boots and put on his foam open toed, pink sandals. What a contrast from Canada, you would not be able to work on a job site without, safety shoes, a helmet, gloves, hearing protection and safety goggles. James Kashoa was a labourer with some additional skills,



which included the ability to do a tumbling and back flip routine, his handle: "Flipper". The 3rd man on the job was Eluidi Polela, he was also a skilled worker, and on one occasion was constructing the footings; he is the shortest guy on the job. "Shorty" was wrestling a large rock and could barely move it, but he never asked for help or gave up. He was a very hard worker. The last man on the job was Andason Kyejo; he was a straight labourer who slugged bricks, rocks, sand and water, mostly on his head. He had the largest upper lip I have ever seen, so you guessed it, I called him "Lips". There was no fixed weekly schedule, they would work Saturday and Sunday. Then nothing would happen for days.

Construction materials were much different than in Canada. The materials consisted of extremely soft red bricks at \$0.10 each. The rocks for the foundation were 20 km away and the only the cost was for transport. Lumber came from Igurusi, all rough-cut with no grading, a 2X6X12 costs \$3.50. More pieces were twisted and warped than were straight. The vast majority of the mortar for the bricks was mud and water made on site. The cement bags are \$13.00 each and sand was delivered by truck, all loaded and unloaded by shovel, in fact most of the materials are loaded and unloaded by hand.

There are no building codes; permits or inspectors, if you have land and money you can get started.

Once the floor plan was finalized the construction commenced. Sticks were driven into the ground and strings were tied to layout the footings. A 6-inch deep trench 18 inches wide was dug with a Tanzanian hoe. The stones are laid in, large ones first all along the perimeter facing up. A mud and water slurry is mixed

together and packed in between the rocks and smaller ones are added until they almost reach the strings. It dries overnight and then boards are placed along the top sides 2-3 inches above the surface. Cement is hand mixed (of course) and added to the top of the footing. It dries overnight and then the walls go up, they lay up the bricks with a mud water mortar mix. They switch to cement when they get to the top of the doors and windows. In Canada we would use steel lintels to span the window and door openings. Here a solid strip of non reinforced concrete is used.

Now a simple shed roof gets framed and it's covered with corrugated metal. The walls are finished with a rough cement mixture and then coated again with a fine mix that looks like Venetian plaster when finished. The kitchen is really coming together! The stove is finished, as well as some of the concrete counter tops. Denise and Meg the 24-year-old med student put some paint on one wall the day before we leave, 'sun glow' yellow and incredibly bright! We start a fire in the stove the night before we leave and it seems to work well.

This kitchen idea was initially conceived when we saw the conditions in which the women and children were forced to work in. The huts are small with dirt floors one very small window and a wood burning fire surrounded by stones to hold the pots. There is no place for the smoke to escape, and so women with newborns on their backs sit and inhale smoke so thick your eyes begin to sting the moment you walk into the room. Every child and women has a chronic cough which sounds like the worse case of bronchitis you have ever heard. Our hope is that the new kitchen will allow them to stand in a smoke free environment while preparing their meals at counters, which



are at a comfortable height.

- Jp Kovac and Denise Kovac



Meg Wolfe-Wylie - My Tanzanian Experience with The Olive Branch for Children

One year ago I was given the opportunity to travel to the rural villages within the Mbarali District of Tanzania to conduct community development research for SickKids Hospital and to be involved in various programs run by The Olive Branch for Children. It was one of the most eye opening and educational experiences of my entire life; so much so that I spent the last year fundraising to go back this past summer. Despite having had a prior interest in the field of international health and a theoretical grasp on the challenges that people who live in the developing world face, it wasn't until I actually went over that I was able to fully get a sense of how the people live and the vast disparities that exist between wealthy and poor nations.

I realized that in Canada, we take for granted some things that the people there only dare to dream of: clean water, good education, proper roads, adequate transport and quality medical care. One such realization occurred the first time I saw a woman in clinic and asked her how many children she had, I was shocked when she answered "12, but 10 have died". I was more shocked by the demeanor in which she reported this, as if it were not out of the ordinary, but a mere fact of life. By the end of my time there I was no longer surprised, and had come to expect similar answers from most women. The most devastating part is that these scenarios are entirely avoidable.

Throughout my time in Tanzania, I became increasingly aware of the number of obstacles that these people have to overcome daily if they are to succeed in improving their quality of life. It seemed so unfair and even depressing at times, but it also made me happy to know that I was there trying to help. It made me grateful to be involved with a grassroots organization like the Olive Branch that is dedi-



cated to implementing the programs necessary to improve the lives of the people of the Mbarali District. I worked everyday along side Deb and took part in running medical clinics, organizing women's and orphan's groups, teaching nutrition and hygiene seminars and educating the people about small businesses and personal financing. I had a lot of responsibility and was forced to learn a lot of new skills quickly. The Tanzanian doctors that we worked with taught me about tropical medicine, the common illnesses from which the people suffered and how to diagnose and treat them. Deb taught me all that goes into running and maintaining the programs that she had implemented and learned through experience how to teach the people about health and hygiene in a way that they would accept and potentially practice.

Since being home, I have realized that these skills are just as helpful in my day to day life as a medical student. I am more comfortable interviewing patients, especially those who do not speak English as a first language. My clinical skills have improved, simply by having had so much practice. I also find myself to be a better teacher, more patient and able to describe concepts in different ways until someone understands.

I gained so much from my experience in Tanzania, that I think that it is necessary to provide people like myself with the opportunity to partake in similar experiences in hopes of shaping their goals and career towards helping those less fortunate. I believe it is impossible to witness a lifestyle like the ones led by the people of Mahongo and the surrounding villages, and not leave motivated to get involved. The more people dedicated to making a difference on the global stage, the more chance we have at succeeding in bringing about change.

- Meg Wolfe Wylie



Courtney Watson - A New Addition to The Olive Branch for Children Family



I recently had the incredible privilege of travelling to the Mbarali District of Tanzania and while there was given the opportunity to spend time volunteering with The Olive Branch for Children. I am a registered social worker and am currently furthering my education in the field at the graduate level. My experience with The Olive Branch has deeply enriched my life both personally and professionally.

The majority of my time with The Olive Branch was spent in two Masai communities: Mpolo and Solowaya, teaching the children and engaging with them in play. From the moment we rode into those communities on our rented bicycles, I was overwhelmed by the generous and welcoming spirit of the people I encountered. I was an outsider to these



communities and their way of life, however I was never treated as an intruder, always a welcome guest. It became clear to me that the unique experience of being immersed within Masai culture was made possible through the dedication of Deborah McCracken and the community development philosophy underpinning The Olive Branch for Children.

I feel strongly that The Olive Branch operates in a manner that is compatible with the values of social work practice and I feel privileged to have been exposed first hand to the practices of grassroots community development. It was clear that our work within the Masai communities developed out of an investment in relationships, founded on the values of equality and respect. Deb's commitment of herself and her time into these relationships is what has made it possible for The Olive Branch to begin partnering with Masai communities to initiate development projects that meet the needs of the villages and are truly sustainable. I was privileged to witness one such initiative; a training program where twenty-seven different adults, from nineteen different villages were trained as Montessori nursery school teachers. These individuals were empowered with knowledge and skills that they can now pass onto the children of their own communities. I had the opportunity to be an audience member during their graduation ceremony; an experience that has solidified my belief in the importance of initiatives that empower others to make changes in their own lives and their own communities.

Although I spent my time within the villages in the role of a teacher it would be more authentic to refer to my experience as that of a student. I learned countless valuable lessons from the children and other community members I spent time with. Through their incredible and insatiable enthusiasm for learning, the children taught me how extremely privileged I am to have access to an education. I returned home to my studies with a re-

newed drive and focus in my own educational pursuits and vow never again to complain about studying for an exam or working long hours on an essay.

The generosity shown to me by the members of the village who offered me their last chair to sit in or the women who worked hours to cook me food, of which they have so little has renewed my sense of giving. Despite the immense challenges faced by these communities such as extreme poverty, the deaths of loved ones due to preventable illness and a lack of access to clean drinking water, education or medical treatment, they demonstrated truly inspirational resiliency. Witnessing their courage has given me the strength to face my own challenges with a renewed sense of determination. More than anything, the joy expressed through dance, singing and laughter in the face of pain and suffering has helped me to believe in the power of hope and positivity.

The Olive Branch for Children is contributing to meaningful and sustainable change within the lives of those in the Mbarali District. I feel blessed and privileged to have been involved with this organization and I feel committed to continuing that involvement in any way possible now that I have returned home to Canada. I urge all of those who have an opportunity to support this incredible organization to do so and become part of the initiative to bring about change in the lives of these incredibly deserving people.



The Olive Branch for Children welcomes Kate Scully from the Peace Corps as The Olive Branch for Children Assistant Director of Tanzanian Operations.

Home-Based Care and the Right to Quality Healthcare

The Olive Branch for Children and its many friends are excited to inform our readers of the latest news from our Home-Based Care Program. The Olive Branch's HBC program serves 11 villages in the Mbarali District of Mbeya. Mbarali, being the largest as well as one of the most poverty-stricken districts in Mbeya, is in special need of our attention. Edina Chungu, our current HBC leader and rock-star, has been heading-up the program with the help of various other Mbarali residents. Her responsibilities are intimidating, but her efforts are praiseworthy. She leads the purchasing of fruit, meat, vegetables and eggs for our various patients, assists with the distribution of food and medicines, writes songs and skits to inspire hope and faith among her fellow citizens, and, with the help of her staffers, collects data about the ever-changing health conditions of the patients we seek to serve. Without Edina there would be no HBC program; we are deeply grateful for her contributions and seemingly endless energy and spirit of service.

But Edina and her handful of helpers cannot continue this project on their own. They need your help and support. Let's talk about health for a moment? What does it mean to be healthy? In Africa, and more specifically in Mbarali, 'health' is defined in many ways. Health means having access to trained health-care providers. Health means a certainty that tomorrow your children will have enough to eat. Health means knowing that even if you become ill, there are options. You can get to your local clinic easily and when you get there you will be treated by kind and knowledgeable people. Your confidentiality will be protected, and you will

have the ability to follow the instructions of the health-care providers who have assessed your condition. For most of you, these things are taken for granted, no? They are seen as basic human rights. But the human beings who live in Mbarali are not receiving their basic human rights. The Olive Branch, with your help and the hard-work of people like Edina, seeks to change this.

In November, The Olive Branch will be conducting a three week Home-Based Care Training for residents of various Mbarali villages. This training will be facilitated by our very own Dr. Sangare, with the help of other trained home-based care providers. The goal of the training is to provide the most remote and poorest of Mbarali's 100 villages with trained health-workers who can help bring the human rights mentioned above right to the doorsteps of ailing Mbarali residents. The participants of our October training will be educated in basic HIV/AIDS information, such as mother-to-child transmission of the disease, community de-stigmatization of AIDS victims, nutritional care for people living with AIDS, ARV treatment and adherence management, and the list goes on. At the end of the three-week training, these people will be empowered to be catalysts of change in their various communities.

The Olive Branch for Children recognizes the many problems that face the country of Tanzania and the continent of Africa as a whole, but we who work here have no reason to lose hope. In fact, we are incredibly hopeful. If people like Edina Chungu can teach us anything, it is that this is a land full of potential, and this potential is largely in the hands of the people who call this land their home. We do not ask for your help that you may solve the problems of our Tanzanian friends, we ask for your help that they may solve these problems them-



selves, with better resources and greater efficiency. We thank you, as always, for your continued compassion and support.

- Kate Scully



Kate The Great

Straight from the searing desert that is south-central Texas, we have a brand new kind of cowgirl on our team. She's a little crazy, a lot of fun, and very flexible... but not in the Brian Kest Power Yoga sense of the word. Thanks, Deb! She is a 3rd year Health Education Volunteer for the United States Peace Corps, and after spending 27 months in a village near Makambako, in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, she decided she just hadn't had enough ugali, so she turned to Nagalal, a.k.a. Lover of Ugali, a.k.a. Deb, and asked if she could hop on her horse and, lasso and all, ride on over to The Olive Branch for Children's offices.

The answer was a resounding, "Yes!" And so the dynamic duo was formed.

During her two and a half years in Tanzania, Kate has done some pretty goofy things. Once she told her neighbors that she was on her way to beat frogs, when what she really wanted to say was that she was on her way to vote. Another time, she managed to get locked into her own home, and after frightening away several

small children with her scary shouts for assistance, finally attracted the attention of an old woman, who swiftly approached her window to take Kate's keys and set her free. Yet another memorable moment was when she walked 50 miles in a day, merely because her friend asked her to. Yes, we aren't really sure what Kate will do next, but such unpredictability makes things exciting, no?

In between her goofy moments, Kate has taught primary, secondary and out-of-school youth students in subjects including: Empowering women and girls, HIV/AIDS, Life Skills, diarrheal disease prevention, nutrition, children's rights, leadership skills, income-generation skills, and permaculture. She has also assisted various communities with grant writing, project implementation and management, and capacity building techniques. Her Ki-Swa kicks tush, and she can scare the pants off of any and all coaster conductors! Just bring 'em on! 500 shillings makes a big difference when you're on a budget! While working with TOBC, Kate will be helping head-up the Home-Based Care and Public Health programs. As she has a B.A. in Communications and Literature, she is hoping to lead some communications projects, including a story-telling project, using Adobe Connect, which will help Olive Branch kids better understand the lives of kids from various schools around America and vice versa. While Kate has lived without electricity for the last 27 months, she feels certain that she will be back to her former electrified self in no time... meaning she won't hyperventilate every time she opens her new laptop, a.k.a. Baby.

In conclusion, Kate aspires to continue the adventure that has been her East African experience and cannot wait to learn, grow and change with the same love for life that she has enjoyed throughout her 26 years on planet Earth. Keep your ears peeled... You'll be hearing more from KTG in no time!



KARIBU KATE
WELCOME TO THE OLIVE BRANCH FOR
CHILDREN

Lucky Strike - The Olive Branch for Children Bowling Extravaganza

THURSDAY OCTOBER 1, 2009

The tickets are available and we are booking lanes. There are 352 bowling tickets available and 74 tickets for those who wish to attend but do not wish to participate in bowling. Doors open at 6:00 pm and bowling times are as follows:

- Lanes 1-22: 7:00 – 8:30 pm

(Note: To avoid many disruptions, a half hour will allotted to giving out prizes, speeches, and a hopefully a LIVE connection to the children in the Mbeya region of Tanzania with Deborah McCracken (founder of the Olive Branch for Children).

- Lanes 1-22: 9:00 – 10:30 pm

After the above times, the lanes will be available for free bowl until 12:00 am (midnight). As Captains or team members, you will be responsible for building a team of 8 people. If more than one team can be built, the children would appreciate it. Please ask your team to create a name for themselves. One team for each time slot will be a winner and awarded prizes.

The cost of the tickets will be \$75.00 per person which includes your bowling lane, shoe rental, appetizers throughout the evening, and unlimited soft drinks. Each tax receipt will be in the amount of

\$37.00. Lucky Strikes Lanes WILL NOT donate free alcoholic drink tickets as previous mentioned as new Management WILL NOT PROMOTE DRINKING AND DRIVING. Sorry Folks!

The evening will also include a Silent Auction.

Please start spreading the word to assemble your teams. Let's make this a successful event.

Ready. Set. Let's bowl!

Lisa Margiotta

(In memory of Jane Blair Wilson: a woman who devoted her life in taking care of others who were less fortunate. She will always be remembered for all the good she did, the lives she touched, the difference she made, and the joy and laughter that touched peoples hearts).

Dear All:

Since its inception in 2005/2006, The Olive Branch for Children has witnessed tremendous growth and many accomplishments. We have completely transformed the Iwambi Orphanage Centre, as well as starting the Olive Branch for Children Zion Home, providing life saving care to children living with HIV/AIDS or who have experienced severe health problems. We operate mobile medical clinics and have helped several villages in their efforts to construct permanent medical facilities, touching thousands of lives. We have trained Montessori Teachers in remote villages and have helped over 19 communities open Montessori Kindergartens. We are now supporting over 100 People Living with HIV/AIDS, providing them with medical care, opportunistic infections medicines, monthly home visits, nutritional supplements and income generating opportunities, not to mention monthly support groups and educational programs. We have started our community education programs. In addition, we are helping villages improve their access to water. We have focused on education and health and have seen drastic changes within the communities where we work.

Without your support, 2009 will see the downsizing of most of our programs - not a great accomplishment, but a sad reality. We have struggled in a difficult environment, on a very small budget, where other organizations are cruising around in Land Cruisers. This organization was built on love and community, but has witnessed a splintering in what once was a small, but strong community that in the end negatively impacts the lives of thousands of deserving people in the Mbeya region of Tanzania. It is very easy to stop funding programs from a distance, when you are not telling people directly that they can no longer attend school, or that we are no longer able to treat their illnesses. We are not a large



organization with an interminable supply of funds that remains afloat through all problems, but are a small organization that can only continue moving forward with your support, commitment and love.

The Olive Branch for Children is unable to provide donors and sponsors with glossy brochures and pretty pictures around every bend. We do not have the staff machine like other organizations. The only service we can provide donors is our product, which is on the ground, grassroots change in the lives of thousands of people.

On October 1st, 2009, Lisa Margiotta and The Olive Branch for Children team are hosting the 2nd Annual Bowling Extravaganza for The Olive Branch for Children and in memory of Jane Blair Wilson. The proceeds of the event will go toward our various programs, including our programs for orphans and vulnerable children and their surviving families and our People Living With HIV/AIDS programming.

I hope that we can come together, once again as a community and bring change and hope to lives of thousands. We can change the world, one person and community at a time and I will continue to believe this, regardless of the economic situation or negativity that pervades everything at the moment.

Let us all be a part of hope and love.

Please contact Lisa Margiotta at margiotta@rogers.com

All the best

DEBORAH

The Olive Branch for Children Concert at the Zion Lutheran Church – October 2009

Since 2006, the Zion Lutheran Church in Maple, a beautiful church with an incredible heart has partnered with us to help sponsor The Olive Branch for Children Zion Home for children living with HIV/AIDS or who have suffered other debilitating illnesses. A church with a regular attendance of 27 parishioners, the Zion Lutheran Church has remarkably shown that it is not in numbers but in dedication that mountains are moved. Over the past three years, these 27 regular parishioners spearheaded by their passionate pastor Linda Douglas have raised over \$30 000 for The Olive Branch for Children Zion Home. They have helped saved the lives of 12 children and this is an amazing feat of love and commitment.

Every year, the Zion Lutheran Church hosts a concert to raise funds for The Olive Branch for Children Zion Home. This concert highlights some of the best, musical talent in the local community and brings some African flavour to Maple.

It is a difficult economic time, but The Olive Branch for Children asks that you help the Zion Lutheran Church continue to prove that hope is alive and well.

For more information please contact Pastor Linda Douglas

PLEASE CONTACT
GINETTE
MCCRACKEN FOR
FURTHER INFORMATION
ABOUT OUR
ANNUAL BOWLING
EXTRAVAGANZA
AND
THE OLIVE BRANCH FOR
CHILDREN CONCERT AND
THE ZION LUTHERAN
CHURCH.

905 264 9385

OR

ginette_mccracken@yahoo.com