

Mary Brown

From: "Jerri and Bill Savuto" <savuto@maf.or.ke>
To: "Jerri & Bill Savuto" <savuto@maf.or.ke>
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2009 8:49 AM
Subject: Savuto: Teams and Teams and 'The Unending Story'
 27 June 09

Dear Friends and Family,

“God places us in the world as his fellow workers – agents of transfiguration. We work with God so that injustice is transfigured into justice, so that there will be more compassion and caring, that there will be more laughter and joy, that there will be more togetherness in God’s world.” Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Today at noon our second team leaves Maua and this evening around 5:30pm our 3rd team arrives. Teams are all so different and yet so much the same. The number, the personalities, their interests, their backgrounds are all different which allows each team to have a unique personality and impact. Each team is also the same in many ways. The teams include people that are called by God to serve their neighbors, those people in need, whether they live around the corner or 8000 miles away in Maua, Kenya. They are willing to give up their vacation time to come and work on hospital projects, building an AIDS Orphan Home and generally whatever is required of them. They are connected to each other by the Holy Spirit and to us by their love in action. Our first two teams have been easy going, flexible, hard working, and extremely loving. They give us hope we are not in this work alone and they have continually given us glimpses of God. They also make us laugh, make us cry and especially make us thankful to God for his compassion and eternal love.

Our first team was from Clearlake UMC and Strawbridge UMC in the Houston area and was led by Jordie Chalupnik. They worked on the staff flats, painted part of the outside of the hospital and school of nursing kitchens (using water based paint!!!!), built an Aids Orphan Home, met some of the Giving Hope teens, brought and sorted 11 bags of medical equipment that the hospital desperately needed, and did a VBS for about 200 children. Jess Hausler, a hospital CEO, did a Management Update for our middle management which was excellent. Rev. Harold Travis, assistant pastor at Clearlake UMC, worked very hard on our staff flats and home.



1st Team from Clearlake & Strawbridge UMC



Outside of student's kitchen looking good!

Our second team was from Grace UMC, Sherman, TX and Memorial Drive UMC, Houston, TX with Vicki and Tom Busby as the team leaders. They did the same work as the first team except they painted the inside of the Medical Student kitchen and worked on the hospital stone, security fence. Dr. Betty Cartmell did a Clinical Update for our nurses on How Healthcare Workers deal with Death and Dying.



2nd Team from Grace UMC & Memorial Drive UMC



Staff flats walls going up!!

The second team was the first team to ever come from our home conference, North Texas. We have been so thankful for the incredible number of teams from the Texas Conference and all the work of Kathie Mann and for the teams from New Mexico, Northwest Texas, Central Texas, Oregon, Tennessee, Kansas, Oklahoma, Georgia, Kentucky, Washington, Illinois, and California (please forgive me if I left out a team). Each team has had a tremendous impact on the ability of the hospital to continue its ministry of

healing and its programs and projects that reach into the community. We thank God for each person on every team that has come. We are very thankful to have a team from our home conference. Thanks so much Grace UMC!!!! Pastor Keith Head, Senior Pastor at Grace was our pastor at Plymouth Park UMC. Rev. Marji Bishir works in the North Texas Conference Office and is the Director of VIM, UMCOR, Covenant Relationships and Mission!

During this past week we also had a team visit us on Thursday morning from Grapevine UMC and Salado UMC in Central Texas. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to share our hospital and the Giving Hope program with them. Dr. Ken Diehm has been here before and we are grateful for his willingness to bring the team for a visit. It was a joy to meet Rev. Travis Franklin, Senior Pastor at Salado UMC which is one of our new supporting churches.

On June 16th the Giving Hope program was involved in the "Day of the African Child". Our 1st team had the opportunity to walk with the children to the show grounds, then up and down the streets of Maua picking up trash and finally to the Chief's camp for a program. There were about 600 children that participated from the Giving Hope program. Their T-shirts stated "Africa Fit for Children – See Hope Giving Hope."



A few of the 600 Giving Hope kids & team Walking down the major Maua Road



AIDS Orphan home built by 1st Team

The AIDS Orphan home that the first team built was for Agnes and her 3 boys. Agnes' husband was HIV+ but never told any of his family. He sold their home and land to have money for treatment. After he died Agnes learned that she and the boy's had no land and no home. We praise God for the miracle of this home for this family at this time.

The Never Ending Story

Those of you who have been reading my email for years will remember Juliet. She was found by a couple of team members that did an outreach clinic to Machungulu. She had a large growth on the side of her chest. The couple paid for it to be removed (\$45) saving her life.



Juliet before her surgery, unable to stand up straight



Juliet after the removal of the tumor

The 2nd team this year built a home for Juliet and her mom, brothers and sisters and we dedicated it this past Thursday. Juliet's mom has changed so much since we first met her in 2002. During the house dedication she asked to tell a story. I don't think I have ever heard such honesty. It helped the team and Bill and me to realize what suffering means when the Kenyan's use that term. Often in describing their lives they will state they have suffered but they usually say it with little passion and thus we don't realize what it means. Now I better understand what "suffering" might look like.

Juliet's mother's story: She explained that before Juliet was part of the AIDS Orphan's program, receiving food and help with education, she and her children were literally starving to death. When her husband died she had nothing, not even a real house. She tried to find work but was beaten rather than given work. She finally was able to do wash for families for food but she could not obtain enough for all the family. Slowly she was watching her children die of starvation. The sound of their crying and begging for food was unbearable. She finally decided she would take them down to the small stream near her home and drown them. She believed that would have to be better than watching them die day by day. As she planned the day in which she would drown her children and kill herself, she was told that Maua Methodist Hospital had a program that could help her. She came to the hospital and found Stanley Gitari, her angel. Since that time the hospital replaced the original zinc roof on their tiny first dwelling, helped the community build her a second home, fed the family, paid for education, and now built her a cement home (a wooden house with cement floor rather than a dirt floor is a cement home). As she smiled a smile that seemed it might break her face open, she shared that God, the hospital, the couple who has been helping Juliet for years, and the AIDS Orphans program had not just provided the necessities of life but given her hope and faith and a life of joy and thanksgiving.



Juliet's old home with mom & Juliet & brothers & sisters Juliet in purple prayer shawl & mom in blue

Following this story Juliet shared how she thought she would die as there wasn't even money for food much less surgery for the tumor. From being found in the clinic, having surgery, being fed and educated and now having a cement house, it is further than her mind could ever imagine. God's goodness and His ability to use those who have to help those with nothing is always seen at the AIDS Orphan's house dedication, but with our history with Juliet and her family, well, this had our feet 'happy dancing' and our hearts "soaring like eagles."

Indeed, mission work teams "work with God so that injustice is transfigured into justice, so that there will be more compassion and caring, that there will be more laughter and joy, that there will be more togetherness in God's world."

But stay tuned, this is not the end of the "Never Ending Story" but just a chapter in the lives of the least being touched with God's love by those who have and are determined to share it with God.

In His grip,

Jerri & Bill Savuto

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"It's not so much how busy you are, but why you are busy. The bee is praised. The mosquito is swatted." Mary O'Connor

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