

KENYA CONNECTION

NOVEMBER, 2006

ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE:

WELCOME TO NAIROBI 1

LIGHT AND POWER MAKES BAGS FOR U.N. 1

UNDERSTANDING NAIROBI'S SLUMS 2

WALKING WITH THE POOR 2

ARRIVAL AT AKIBA 3

THE BLESSING OF THE TOILETS 3

A DAY AT THE FAIR 3

WELCOME TO NAIROBI

There are no perfect beginnings. But we had to start somewhere. In many ways our beginning has been unexpected, filled with challenges as well as happy surprises. Our team landed in Nairobi a little over a month ago. We came as representatives from The Falls Church, with giant duffel bags and hand sanitizer and a desire to serve. We believed God was calling us to leave our homes to serve him. The church supported us, encouraged us, and sent us with a mission to listen, learn, and build relationships in Kenya. It was overwhelming and hard, but we said our good-byes, collected our bags, and left.

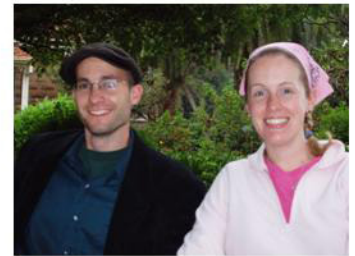
In the past month, there have been miscommunications

and confusions, housing headaches and computer crashes, power outages and water shortages, and even sicknesses and robberies. But we're here, and we're learning and making new friends.

We've been blessed by the warm hospitality of our friends in Kenya. We've spent time at Akiba School, Light and Power Center, Beacon of Hope, TULIP, and the Kibera Card Center. We've also been finding our way around Nairobi. In the process, there have been

half-marathons, charging rhinos, graduation ceremonies and basketball tournaments, chapati pizzas and frosted donuts, exploding art supplies, matatu escapades, national

exams, and executive board room meetings and quiet conversations in the slum. Amidst it all I know that God has begun something new. This is a new world, strange and often troubling but deeply beautiful. ... Welcome to Nairobi.



SEE BACK PAGE FOR SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Learn more about Kenya Connection
- Get connected! Become involved in Kenya Connection.
- Read prayer updates
- Contact us

LIGHT AND POWER MAKES BAGS FOR U.N.

The Light and Power Center has undergone a dramatic transformation during the past year. In the Summer of 2005, two Kenyans learned about Light and Power during a Christian micro-enterprise conference. Tim Omwanza and Willis Asante felt called to get involved and have been helping lead the newly reinvigorated ministry.

Light and power operates

in the Gatina slum of Kawangware and shares its rented plot with wandering goats, cattle, and chickens. The center ministers to a band of street boys and provides food and mentoring as well as educational and job opportunities. The boys design, produce, and sell quality, hand-crafted paper bags. Recently, the United Nations Headquarters in Nairobi or-

dered 10,000 bags from L+P. The boys worked tirelessly to finish the order, and the U.N. was so pleased that their chief vendor has committed to using L+P bags exclusively at the U.N. commissary. As Light and Power grows it will continue to minister to street boys and bring hope to the surrounding community.

UNDERSTANDING NAIROBI'S SLUMS

Nairobi, Kenya has a population of over 3 million and is a major center for international business and tourism. It has been crowned the gateway of Eastern Africa and is the home of Kenya's parliament and chief industries. Despite its commercial successes, the city has the world's most economically diverse population with one of the biggest rich-poor divides in modern history. The city center and affluent suburbs are characterized by economic vitality and sophistication, yet the majority of Nairobi's popula-

tion lives in slums.

Nearly 2 million people live in neighborhoods known for their squalor, crime, disease, and violence. The Falls Church's ministry partners are based in five different slums of Nairobi: Kangemi, Kawangware, Kibera, Korogocho, and Ongota Rongai. Each of these slums vary in their physical infrastructure, tribal makeup, and relative levels of poverty, but they all share several common features. Among the first things noticed by Westerners

are the narrow dirt roads and passageways littered with trash and rubble, the flimsily constructed housing, and the massive overcrowding. In addition, each of these slums struggles with high unemployment rates, inadequate or non-existent sanitation, malnutrition, insecure tenancy, lack of public services, HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse, drug abuse, and alcoholism. Below, Amber shares some of her observations and encounters from walking through slums in Nairobi during the past month.

Below: images from the slums of Nairobi.



WALKING WITH THE POOR

After walking through slums for a month, it is amazing how I can get used to what is going on around me. Walking in a slum is like walking through a city all crammed into one small space. The main roads are filled with hundreds of people, including vendors selling everything from food to jeans. Cars and goats push their way through the crowds, while children run around screaming "how are you?" at the sight of a white person (mzungu). They answer "fine" before I can respond. They are cute, and their greetings welcome, but then I realize they are roaming the streets and not in school. I notice all sorts of the other things that I'll never be able to get used to. I pass a man sniffing glue and getting high, who asks me for

money. Meanwhile, dogs with exposed ribs dig through trash for food and drink from polluted pools of water. A handful of children also dig through the trash and occasionally find something to salvage. I'm passed by a man in a nice suit, and 10 seconds later by a street boy dressed in rags stepping over mud and thousands of discarded plastic bags.

I feel guilty about how I live when I see others in such desperate conditions. All the articles from National Geographic hit me smack in the face - I feel so sad. But then a small child smiles at me and I can't help but smile too. This is the thing about slums that I've come to realize:

Slums are a place of sorrow and joy, of hope and despair,

of beauty and pain. I love them and hate them at the same time. The joy and laughter of people who live here is humbling. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians he tells us, "But God chose the foolish things of this world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of the world and the despised things-and the things that are not- to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him." (1:27-29) Seeing the slums makes this verse ring all the more true. I am thankful for the things God has given me, and am thankful that what I see in front of me humbles me to the point that it is impossible to boast in anything but the Lord.

"Slums are a place of sorrow and joy, of hope and despair, of beauty and pain. I love them and hate them at the same time."



ARRIVAL AT AKIBA

"We see Akiba School towering high as a lighthouse chasing away ignorance and poverty." As part of the school anthem, this verse emphasizes the importance of Akiba's presence in the Kangemi slum. Most students come from broken homes, often living with a relative, and family members struggle to find jobs. Despite the difficult circumstances, students are eager to learn and truly see education as a treasure. Primary students have devotionals each morning and the entire school

gathers for assemblies and Bible teachings on Friday. After school activities include debate club, Christian union, sports, scouts, and abstinence groups.

We are starting to find our place at the school and serving in a variety of ways. Dave teaches much needed computer classes as some students don't even know how to properly insert a disk. Amber has started the creative arts "department" by teaching Art to the primary students. I assist with pri-

mary PE classes, Form 2 (sophomore year) Math, and the sponsorship program. The sponsored children are so grateful and when asked who they would like to meet- they almost all say their sponsor. Prayer requests are for the teachers- that they would feel a part of the Akiba family and become loyal to teaching at the school. Also, we ask for your prayers for Form 4 (seniors) students who are still taking national exams- may they see a future that is full of opportunities.



Anne with her new friend Augustine.



Teacher Daniel encourages students as they prepare for exams.

THE BLESSING OF THE TOILETS

During the past month, Joseph, has been busy. He's the caretaker at Akiba and has worked hard to add several new structures to the school property in Kangemi. Students are now enjoying a new tin-roofed hut complete with bulletin boards and bamboo benches. The hut serves as a study hall and lounge,

and offers classroom space for small gatherings. Form 4 students have been using the hut to prepare for their National Exams as well as to post announcements and gather for conversation during breaks. Anne and other teachers also use the hut to meet with and counsel students. Seventy students are

sponsored by The Falls Church and receive regular counseling opportunities.

In addition to the study hut, Akiba also built three new Asian style toilets. The toilets were welcomed by staff and students alike. We attended a special ceremony to bless the new facilities with water from the River Jordan.



Form 4 students celebrate the new toilets at Akiba.

A DAY AT THE FAIR

As teachers at Akiba School, Amber and I had the opportunity to join grades 1-3 on a field trip to the Nairobi International Trade Fair. Little did we know that Kenyan field trips require expert crowd maneuvering skills and warring off persistent vendors wanting you to pay for the

children to have their faces painted or buy sausages.

We entered into the fair grounds with just about every other school in Kenya- thank goodness for school uniforms. As we toured the displays and rides we attempted to stay linked to the 3 children to our left and

right- a near impossible task. Not surprising that we lost a child in the sea of people and spent most of the day searching for him. We found him after Amber had the brilliant idea of going to the main gate instead of walking around aimlessly. It was an experience we won't forget!



Primary children enjoy face-paint at the Trade Fair.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3) "Heri walio maskini rohani, maana Ufalme wa mbinguni ni waso." (Mathayo 5:3) "Let the little chil-

KENYA CONNECTION

DHL Mailing Address: 3 Sports Road, Apt. 4A Westlands, Nairobi Kenya
Mailing Address for Letters c/o Akiba School P.O. Box 386-00625 Kangemi, Nairobi Kenya

Phone: 011-733527099 (Amber)

011-736167426 (Anne)

011-720016536 (Dave)

E-mail: kenyaconnection@gmail.com

Website: www.kenyaconnection.org

dren come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matthew 19:14) "Waacheni hao watoto waje kwangu, wala msiwazuje; maana Ufalme wa mbinguni ni wa watu walio hama watoto hawa." Mathayo 19:14)

Kenya Connection is an international partnership of Anglican ministries. We serve, support, and encourage Kenyan ministries working in education, health-care, evangelism, and microenterprise development.

Kenya Connection was founded by The Falls Church to connect followers of Christ in mutual friendship and service.

www.thefallschurch.org



HOW TO GET CONNECTED

- * Consider sponsoring a student at the Akiba School
- * Contribute Financially to our Mid-term Missionaries
- * Join the Akiba Team at The Falls Church
- * Pray for our ministry partners and friends in Kenya
- * Purchase cards from Kibera Paper, rugs from Beacon of Hope, and bags from Light and Power (or help us find markets in the U.S. for these quality products)
- * Visit Kenya (The Falls Church is hoping to send several groups this summer and is looking for team leaders and individuals with a desire to serve)

To learn more,

Visit our website: www.kenyaconnection.org

OR

E-mail us at: kenyaconnection@gmail.com

PRAYER UPDATES

We praise God for the support of our families and friends and those at The Falls Church who have helped us make the transition to life in Kenya. Almost everywhere we go, someone comes up to us and says thank you for the help they've received from TFC or others in the U.S. We appreciate your support and hope you will continue to pray.

Please pray for:

- * Willis Asante, a leader at Light and Power as he recovers from Typhoid and Malaria.
- * Students at Akiba as they take their National Exams and year-end exams.
- * Todd McGregor as he leaves Kenya to serve as a Bishop in Madagascar.
- * Sam Owen as he returns from Burundi and travels for national prayer breakfast meetings in Kinshasa.
- * Amber, Anne, and Dave as they continue to adjust to life in Nairobi—especially for health, safety, and new relationships with their ministry partners.