

## KENYA CONNECTION

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## PRIZE-GIVING DAY

Each year, students, parents, teachers, and members of the community gather together at Akiba School for a celebration ceremony. After the grueling final exams that take place in November and a year of hard work, prize-giving day is a time of rewarding students for their achievements. The event this year on March 10th included a parade, band, choir, skits, poems, a master of ceremonies from a local radio station, and the guest of honor who is a nominee for a position in parliament. It was wonderful to see the whole school come together for this day.

The event started with the scouts parading in and raising the Kenyan flag. Then, the choir sang a few songs for the guests. The choir is a great new addition to Akiba and they sing beautifully.

The entertainment for the day ranged from French songs sung by primary students to a hilarious skit about dating by secondary students. Two science exhibits that were taken to the national level were presented- one was an automatic clothesline and the other an automatic seatbelt indicator to be used on matatus. Mr. Gitao, the chairman of the Board of Governors, gave an encouraging speech to the students telling them that education is power. Bett Tett, the guest of honor, shared some of her political viewpoints and ways that she could help the Westlands Constituency (in which Akiba is included).

The bulk of the ceremony



was the awarding of gifts. Students were recognized for good academic performance as well as achievements in extracurricular activities. It was a long day, but one that was encouraging for the Akiba community. I am positive that one day a doctor and lawyer will come out of this school. Despite the circumstances, we all persevere and work with what God has given us.

-Anne



Above: Philip Gitao presents Best Class award to primary students at Akiba.

## NEWS AND NOTES from L+P

**Light and Power Centre** serves youth in the slums of Gatina. It offers job-training, mentorship, leadership development, and school sponsorship programs. Currently, twelve young men work at the Centre and produce handcrafted paper bags. The Centre also hosts Bible Studies, a Girls' Choir, and a Saturday Program for children in the community.

On March 26th we began a week-long retreat with the staff of Light and Power. We're holding seminars and team-building exercises at a local church, a nearby park, and in the heart of Gatina. We have a variety of gifted guests joining us to help teach, shepherd, and encourage. There are also several new applicants who are hoping to join our team.

Hassan Wako, a recent graduate from Light and Power was selected last month for an officer training program in the Kenyan Army. From a pool of over 800 applicants, Hassan finished first in the training exercises and was the only candidate selected who did not pay a bribe.



Eleven Children go to School. Eight students affiliated with Light and Power received sponsorships from The Falls Church and began attending classes at Akiba School. Three additional workers from Light and Power found sponsors to help them continue their education.

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- Learn more about Kenya Connection
- Get connected! Become involved in Kenya Connection.
- Read prayer updates
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## BUILDING BRIDGES IN A SWAMP

There is a swamp that skirts the edge of Gatina Village. It fills with rain and refuse, and pushes out from the slums to the lowlands of Lavington Estates. The swamp breaks the monotony of red clay and tin huts and hides the ignoble waste of man and beast. It also floods during the heavy rains, swallowing homes and covering the road that runs south from Light and Power Centre.

In recent weeks, workers have hauled dirt and struggled to raise the road and ward off the surging waters. Their labor seems vain. The rainy season now washes most of the soil into a pond, pushing the waves ever higher.

Sometimes ministry in Gatina feels like building bridges in a swamp. There is no firm footing and progress is quickly washed away. Since our last newsletter we've experienced immense difficulties and challenges in Gatina. We've seen strikes, embezzlement, theft, and threats; deception, division, and even death. There are so many obstacles I often wonder whether we're in the right place. Can we really build bridges in a

swamp? God, do you really want us to work in Gatina?



Many in the village have resigned themselves to the harsh realities of slum life. A palpable apathy pervades the slum - the strong reluctance to change or work to improve one's conditions. "What I work for is stolen, what I build is broken, the ones I love are constantly taken away. So why should I work, or build, or love?" Trust is a hard thing here, and hope is uncommon. This is life in the swamp.

In this newsletter we share some stories and struggles from our experiences in the swamp. Amidst the challenges we are strengthened by your prayers, and thank God that "we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged" (Heb. 6:18). -Dave

## SWAMP

*"Swamp" is a poem by East African writer, David Gill. It reflects some of the challenges in work and ministry we've experienced on this continent.*

Dry-season dust tails dogged the cars along the orange tracks when we began to curb the croaking swamp. Stripped schoolboys hacked the ankles of the giant reeds. A song

rose somewhere as the rippling line advanced, disgruntled mostly, swiping with Birmingham bush-knives and curling sickles. Few really grasped the idea that civilized man will not endure a swamp.

Still seeing little sense in what they did, they burnt the grass and dug the crooked drains. White blooms of smoke grew huge above the swamp at dusk and exiled all the frogs' refrains.

Rough places smooth, O make! Use hand and hoe!  
Control the lie of land and guide the flow  
of rain. Be conquerors subduing all:  
my own philosophy runs roughly so.

We cleared the thistles and the reeds, we dug our ditches deep; then came the spearing rain.  
And now the fatalists can smirk and say:  
Look, sir, the grasses have grown tall again.

## WHEN TRUST GOES MISSING

Growing up I was taught certain things- not to lie, cheat, or steal. If I did these things, I would be ridden with guilt and soon confess of the wrong I did. For many in the slum, the mentality is a bit different. Even those who you would never suspect, are tempted to lie and steal in order to survive. I will never know this level of desperation, but I have recently had to confront the reality of deception. As much as we would not like to admit to the fact, corruption and deceit are part of everyday life in Kenya. I wonder every day who I can trust and who might betray me.

At Light and Power Center, we have now handled numerous situations where we have

been deceived. I was recently told by one of the leaders who I placed in high regard, "Be careful Anne, you can't even trust me." Leaders have made up lies to insight the boys to strike, others have done things in the name of Light and Power that are against our vision, and it is yet to be determined who stole over \$1,000 from our bank account by cutting checks from our checkbook.

With all these instances, it is easy to get discouraged and scared. Sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night in fear that something is going to happen at the Center- that more screens and materials will be stolen, that the boys will stop coming to work, that I will be fooled once again. How do you begin to transform minds?

How do you teach someone to be honest?

In Jeremiah 17:9-10 it says, "The human heart is most deceitful and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I know! I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve." I daily remind myself that God is in control and that we must rely on him and not humans. Ultimately, our trust is in the Lord! Please join us in praying for a transformation of people's hearts and minds...for a revival at Light and Power Center.

-Anne

## DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE AND OTHER SATURDAY ADVENTURES



As we have we become more involved at Light and Power, Anne and I have started helping with a Saturday program for the children who live in Gatina. It is pretty funny to watch us walk into the slum; the kids start to follow us. It is a little like the pied piper. Once we get to the Center we usually play a few games with the kids- duck, duck, goose, tag, etc. After we have played a bit we sit them down for story time. We start with a few songs, which are usually led by one of the older kids. Then one of guys who work at the center will read the children a story out of a bible story book. After the story we ask the kids questions about the story and give them a piece of candy. Then it is back to playing games. This has quickly become one of my favorite things we do. It is so fun to see the kids enjoying time together and



just being kids. It is such a great example of joy in poverty. These kids range in appearance, but most are dirty, with clothes torn and falling off them, and so skinny. Many have various infections on their skin- anything from ring worm to unclean cuts. But kids are kids and none of this seems to matter. They are so excited to just have someone to play with and pay attention to them. It is exciting to see that some of the kids come every week. I think it is important for them to see that someone outside of their family cares about them. It has also been wonderful to see some of the guys from the center be so sweet with these children. It is a great way for them to care for their community and be good role models for these little ones.

-Amber



## A TWENTY DOLLAR MEAL

Sunday Anne and I invited one of the boys who works at Light and Power to join us for church and lunch. He had just been accepted into the Kenyan military, which is an extremely hard process, and Anne and I wanted to take him out to celebrate. After church (which I think was a little strange for him, as he is Muslim) we took him to a coffee shop/ restaurant called Dorman's- it is basically the Kenyan equivalent of Cosi. The boy lives in Gatina, which is one of the slum areas in Nairobi. The second we walked into the place he looked really tense and uncomfortable. Then the menus arrived. He looked a little perplexed- the food there is made to cater to European/American taste, there isn't a Kenyan dish on the menu. He was also a little blown away by the prices, and asked Anne and I to just order him the cheapest thing. We told him to order whatever he wanted.

Lunch came and we ate and chatted. He told us that he had never had such a meal. He didn't think he could tell anyone what a

nice place he had eaten in, or how much it cost, because people would think he was crazy for eating in a place like that. It was a really humbling experience. This is a place that we frequent quite often; a place we just stop by and don't even think twice about doing it. In the end, lunch for all three of us cost about \$20. He said that lunch for him in Gatina usually costs about 30 shillings- around 50 cents. It really made me think about how much I take for granted. Honestly most people who live in the slum will never go out to eat at a place like we went with him. We on the other hand, both here and in America, eat at places like this when we just don't feel like cooking. We don't think about the cost, or the waste of money it is to eat out when we have food at home, or the fact that what we spent on lunch that day would feed someone lunch in the slums for over a month.

Anne and I came home and later that night watched the movie "13 going on 30." There is scene where there are a bunch of 13 year olds having a slumber party- wearing crazy

dress up clothes, jumping on the bed, singing to loud music and dancing around. This was also a pretty common sight during my own childhood. Anne turned to me and said, "You know the little girls in Gatina will never get to experience that." She's right, they won't. I don't think any of them have even ever heard of a sleepover. It makes me sad to think of the things that I loved as a child, and love as an adult, that will never be experienced by so many of these people.

Small things like this remind me of just how different life is for these children. It makes me realize how much I take for granted. How my typical worries and hardships barely scratch the surface of the hardships that they consider everyday life here. How they can be content with so little, when I feel like I am missing out when I don't have my \$5 latte from Starbucks.

-Amber

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](http://www.thefallschurch.org)

## KENYA CONNECTION

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

Phone: 011-733527099 (Anne)  
011-736167426 (Amber)  
011-720016536 (Dave)

E-mail: [kenyaconnection@gmail.com](mailto:kenyaconnection@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.kenyaconnection.org](http://www.kenyaconnection.org)

**"Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD  
and delight in his salvation. My whole  
being will exclaim, 'Who is like you, O  
LORD? You rescue the poor from  
those too strong for them, the poor  
and needy from those who rob them.'"**  
- Psalm 35:9-10

## 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
- \* Visit Kenya (Contact us to arrange a short-term trip)

To learn more,

Visit our website: [www.kenyaconnection.org](http://www.kenyaconnection.org)

E-mail us at: [kenyaconnection@gmail.com](mailto:kenyaconnection@gmail.com)



## SLUM ECONOMICS

The average Kenyan lives on less than \$1 a day, that's approximately 70 shillings a day or 2100 ksh/month. How far can a dollar go? Where is the money spent by an average family in the slum in their struggle to survive? Here's a short overview of prices based on experiences in three of the major slums in Nairobi.

**Housing** - A one room tin hut in the slum, without water, electricity, waste removal or basic facilities can cost between 500 and 1000 shillings per month (\$7-\$14). Upper-class Nairobi slum-dwellers may reside in a one room stone house with a communal latrine. At between 2000 and 5000 ksh/month (\$30 - \$70) this is out of reach of most Kenyans.

**Food** - Fresh vegetables and fruit are abundant in the slums and are offered in local markets at very modest prices (between 3 and 10 ksh each for avocados, mangoes, bananas, kales, potatoes, onions, etc.). The typical diet consists of inexpensive foods high in starch: ugali, chapatti, rice, potatoes, etc. The main source of protein in the diet comes from beans, eggs (5 ksh each), or milk (around 20 ksh per serving). Chicken, beef, and goat meat are also available in the slum, but are mainly reserved for special occasions. A typical breakfast of chai or porridge and fried dough mandazis or chapattis costs around 15 ksh or roughly 20 cents. A hearty lunch can be had for 30 shillings.

**Clothing** - Almost all clothing in the slums comes from second hand donations from the United States. The donations arrive in containers at the coast and quickly move through outdoor markets in the slums. A pair of trousers or a kikoy skirt can cost between 70 and 300 shillings (approximately \$1 - \$4). A nice dress shirt averages 150 ksh (\$2). Plastic sandals can be had for less than a dollar, while shoes may cost 200-500 ksh (\$3 - \$7).

**Household Items** - Most of the new household items sold in Kenya are cheap, low quality goods manufactured in China. Products are similar to what one would find in a dollar store in the U.S. and are comparable in cost.

**Education** - Kenya recently instituted free primary education, but public schools are massively overcrowded and understaffed. Secondary schools are limited in number and overpriced for most slum residents (at least several hundred dollars per year). In addition, books, and the mandatory school uniforms are often unaffordable. As a result, many children in the slum never attend school or receive only a primary education.

**Healthcare** - There are many government subsidized clinics and NGOs that offer basic affordable healthcare options to slum residents. These include basic treatments for infectious diseases such as pneumonia, typhoid, and malaria. Also, free or low-cost testing for HIV/AIDS is available. Most drugs are low cost knock-off generics imported from India and easily accessible. Health insurance is not available for those in the slum. As a result, most medical procedures require extensive community fundraisers. Even funerals require fundraisers as most budgets can't afford morgue or burial fees.  
-Dave

## PRAYER UPDATES

Thank you for your support and for your prayers. The encouragement of family, friends, and even strangers who stand alongside us is a great help, and we could not continue without your support. During this season we especially appreciate your prayers for:

- \* Follow up to our week-long training and team-building retreat at Light and Power. Pray for trust, transparency, and personal transformation through encounters with Christ.
- \* For much-needed orders and business growth and development at Light and Power. L+P currently does not receive any donations or financial support and relies exclusively on bag sales to help support dozens of families and a host of outreach activities.
- \* Students at Akiba as they take their final exams this week and head home for the Easter holiday and Term 1 break.
- \* Continued health, safety, and security - especially while traveling. (Praise God that Amber has recovered from her bout with chicken pox).
- \* For peace, refreshment, and encouragement amidst the many physical, spiritual, and emotional challenges of ministry here.