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HABARI YA MUFINDI



A quarterly Newsletter designed to inform donors about progress made in the implementation of the Mufindi Highlands Orphanage Project in Mufindi District of Tanzania, East Africa.

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THE PROJECT IS UNDERWAY AND ON TARGET

Mary's February 2006 Site Visit Report

Mary Ellis, a Voting Member of Mufindi Orphans, made a visit to Tanzania in February 2006 to review progress on the Mufindi Highlands Orphanage Project. The purpose of her visit was threefold:

- to tour and review the status of orphanage construction
- to coordinate cash flow—fundraising income vs project expenses
- to clarify international bank transfer details

Mary was impressed by the progress at the orphanage site. Six dormitory sites have been cleared on a beautiful hillside about a half mile, as the crow flies, from both the Fox Farm and Igoda village. The walls of the first dorm were up about 4 feet and the floor plan was already visible.

Each house will cost about \$10,000 to build and will accommodate 12 children in 3 bedrooms. The housemother will have her own room with bathroom. There will be a sitting/dining room with fireplace, a kitchen, a storeroom, 2 toilets stalls, 3 shower stalls and 3 washbasins. There will also be an enclosed play area in front of each house for the safety of the younger children.

After the second dormitory is built, a sound but abandoned farmhouse will be renovated to provide a residence and office for the project matron. Eventually, there are plans to build a nearby small guest house facility for visiting project volunteers.

A candidate for the position of matron, to oversee the startup and health care aspects of the Project, has been contacted. She is a trained Tanzanian nurse who grew up in Mufindi. Her family is well-respected in the area. A maintenance-man candidate has also been



"Halleluiaah", says Geoff Fox, "At last we're underway". Visitors admire progress on the first orphanage building. Feb 2006

identified. Orphanage staff positions will not be filled until after the second dormitory is ready.

Foxes have been able to keep the orphanage construction moving ahead with donations from several sources in UK, including monies donated by friends and relatives at the funerals of Geoff's mother and Vicky's mother, both of whom died in the past year. A separate UK donation of 5000 Pounds was made in 2006, with another promised in 2007. The total UK donations in Pounds translate to about \$24,000.

At the same time, volunteers from the USA-based Mufindi Orphans NGO have been able to raise donations totaling \$17,400 from generous folk all over the USA.

As of 31 March 2006, donations have kept pace with Project spending, and spending has been right on the Project plan for the period. Project staff do not anticipate having to deviate from the original plans put together in mid-2005. This means that we still have a viable Work Plan for coordinating fundraising and Project spending requirements.

While Mary was at the Project site, a foreigner now living in Mufindi donated several boxes of used clothing to be auctioned off to benefit the Project. The auction attracted a large and enthusiastic crowd of local people. Items sold for 10 cents to 3 dollars, yielding a total of about \$200. This is a tidy sum given the fact that the average laborer's monthly income is about \$60 in this rural area. It was refreshing to see local people so anxious to support the Project.



While in Mufindi, Mary presented a Certificate of Directorship to Julius Mdegela from the Mufindi Orphans Board of Directors. Julius is seen here with Geoff and Vicky Fox at the Fox Farm.

Julius is Project Manager for the Mufindi Highlands Orphanage Project and Geoff is Chairman of the Board for both the Project implementation and fundraising organizations. (Igoda Village - Feb 06)

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Mary explained the problems we had encountered while trying to transfer money to Tanzania from the USA. Geoff explained that a Dutch company had recently purchased the Bank from Tanzanian ownership and that all the bank account numbers had been changed. He gave Mary the correct numbers. Another problem solved.

Foxes at present have no internet service in Mufindi, but we hope by the time they go on leave to UK in May, they will. At any rate, they will have email capability while in UK so we can catch up on the latest news while they are there.

Other Mufindi Observations

Igoda Village elders have shown remarkable foresight and responsibility in providing for the welfare of their people. They have arranged to protect several areas of indigenous forest, in proximity to the village, for recreational and educational purposes. They have also planted many acres of fast-growing pine and eucalyptus for future building materials and firewood. These renewable resources will also provide employment for villagers in times to come.

In addition to the Mufindi Highlands Orphanage Project, Igoda villagers have welcomed help from outsiders for other projects that will improve the health and education of their children. While these projects are not directly connected with the orphanage, they could augment many services that the Orphanage Project will provide; and could benefit a larger segment of the Mufindi population at little extra cost.

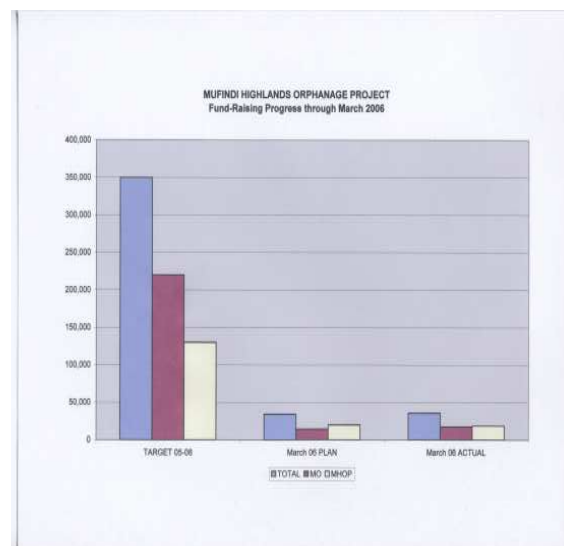
For instance, there is an existing 40 bed medical facility at the nearby Mdabula Mission owned by a Catholic order and designed to serve 16 surrounding villages and many thousands of village people. In the past, the Mission was run by resident Italian priests who had connections to foreign funding sources. The Mission is currently without that foreign connection and is dependent upon what local people can pay for the aspirin and anti-malarials that are available. If this facility could be renovated and have access to minimal funding, much of what the Orphanage Project will do for Igoda Village could be replicated in a much larger segment of Mufindi.

Another promising venture is an effort by volunteers to build secondary schools in several Mufindi villages using funds from American donors, local Tanzanian government, and local villagers.

That's it for this Issue. Hope it gave you a flavor of what's going on in Mufindi.



FUND-RAISING STATUS



Mufindi Orphans fund-raising activities started in July 2005. At end March 2006 donations were very close to Plan with about 10% of targeted funds in hand. But there is a long way to go.



ABOVE: Igoda Village school children passing through the village coffee plantation - Mufindi . February 2006

LEFT: Mufindi women at the clothes auction that raised \$ 200 for the Project. - Igoda Village. Mufindi. February 2006.