

**Give a Child a Future**  
Feeding and educating orphaned  
and destitute children in Africa



**News letter May 2009 from Field Director - Vera Packard**

To all Sponsors and friends of Vision Africa,

Greetings to you all from Vision Africa. We are already almost half way through the year and so much has happened - some good things and some not so good. Kenya remains in a state of great need as the country is still suffering the aftermath of the post election violence of early 2008, added to that has been a period of severe drought, resulting in food shortage and very high prices. The government figures are showing that some 10 million people are facing starvation, but thankfully we have been able to sustain our projects to date.

**Riruta School** Our school continues to maintain a very high academic standard of which we are proud and give a big thanks to our teachers for their dedication and to our sponsors for their faithfulness. We have lost some sponsors during the economic crisis and prices in Kenya have risen beyond the pocket of many people, but despite that, we have kept the school going. Our biggest challenge came recently when the landlord increased our rent considerably. Gerald, the Headmaster, keeps things in good shape and we are grateful for his dedication to and love for the children.

**Riandu Children's Home** This has been a busy time for the home, we have endured a long drought resulting in our bore hole drying up and we lost all our crops in February. However, since that time we have dug a new borehole in a better position and those who are expert in this field tell us that we should never have a water shortage again, with the new hole has been dug over a crack in the rock. Piped community water has been rationed to two days per week which was not enough to fill our tanks. Two very large water tanks have been purchased and put in place so that as soon as the rationing is over we can fill them. We have extended our farm by building a hen run and already have a number of chickens. We have also built a pig sty and now have pigs as well. A bakery has also been created with an oven that will bake 100 loaves of bread at a time and it is anticipated that cakes can also be part of the menu. This will supply the children and there will also be surplus for sale. All of this will help to bring the home to a place whereby they can pay school fees and supplement their income, so a very big thank you to everyone who has made one-off donations to allow these additions to take place and to our sponsors who really do give a child a future. We are glad to report that some children have been restored to the wider family which is the ideal place for them and we are happy to tell you that as we follow them up they are doing well. The children have also been given a new school sweater, made possible by a donation through a Manchester school, and another lady visited Kenya and bought the children new school shoes. We have so much to be thankful for and you have been a big part of it all.

**Nyamwanga School and Feeding Programme.** I managed to visit the school before I left to come home in April. It is very sad that a number of children are dropping out of school due to poverty and many primary school-age girls are becoming pregnant. I wish there was a way that we could help more - some girls are abused and some see it as a way to escape from their situation, whilst others sell themselves for a few shillings or even a few sweets. In the midst of this appalling scene, through your love and support, we are rescuing many - thank you. We continue with our feeding programme although in the month of January teachers went on strike and so this had to be suspended. However things are back in full swing again, and before I left the sponsored children all received a sweater and some of them have new uniforms. We were also able to fence off the Nursery area making it safe for the very small children. I took with me supplies such as reading books, pencils, footballs and some casual sweaters which had been donated. The children look healthy and some grateful parents whose children had received medical help presented me with live chickens. I was glad that Vincent, my co-worker, was with me to help, and he brought them home on the bus!

**Baby Unit, Kandara** We are very grateful for those who have become sponsors of this programme. To date we have rescued 15 babies and small children. The babies would undoubtedly have died if our unit had not been there for them and as for the small children, we cannot begin to imagine what would have happened to them. Several of the babies' mothers died giving birth, usually due to excessive bleeding, and others have simply been abandoned on the roadside. One was found by the river and we have named him Moses. Although we are still in need of sponsors or those who would make donations from time to time, we are happy that we are able to truly give life to these children.

**Kandara Children's Home** This year we were devastated when our major donor pulled out all support for this home, and it left us in crisis. However, we have put in place several income generating programmes which will, we trust, help bring the home to self sustainability. We have rented extra land to grow crops, installed a bakery, added chickens and pigs and formed an ECD (Early Child Development) Unit that we will open to the community and so have some fee paying children. Despite the local efforts, Vision Africa will continue to support the Home for some years, and to this end we have put in place an additional sponsorship programme. Things are going well and thank you for those who have joined that sponsorship programme.

**Lutheran School, Kibera Slums** It is a joy to go there and see the children so happy. Just a year ago it was petrol bombed and in a terrible state, but today, thanks to friends and sponsors, it is better than ever and performing as a school should. We have a daily feeding programme in place and every child has a uniform (which includes a sweater), school shoes, a schoolbag and pencil case. The teachers are delighted with their 'new' school.

We are mindful of a number of our donors who have had to cease sponsorship due to the present economic circumstances facing our country and we thank them for their support over the years and hope for them an answer to their needs as well. To those who continue to give despite reduced circumstances – thank you for your commitment.

Health wise it has been a difficult time for us but we seem to have overcome. I will need an operation to my left eye later this year, having already had several laser treatments on both eyes which have been successful. Kenya is still a country in great need and we thank everyone who has given a child a future through Vision Africa. May your year be a year of great blessing.

*Vera Packard*

Field Director