

SCAW

NEWSLETTER



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A charitable registered Canadian organization founded by Margaret and Murray Dryden April (1), 2005

KENYA: March 14 - 20, 2005: 3,000 Bedkits

**BY KEN GRAHAM
HILLSBURGH, ONTARIO**

Was this, my 13th distribution, different from all the others? Yes!

First of all our travelling team of Duncan Macgregor (3rd distribution), Judy Snobelen (2nd trip), Jeff McDougall (2nd trip), Gail Gowanlock (1st trip), and I had never worked together before. It is absolutely amazing how five people can come together, virtually as strangers, and work so well in such a short time. I believe it is because we all have the same desire to achieve the SCAW objective of helping needy children have a chance to develop and grow. Getting good nights' sleep and by knowing that someone cares about their plight and is willing to help, gives them an incentive to aim towards a better way of life than is found in the slums of a city like Nairobi, Kenya.

Secondly, this was difficult because it was the first time for a SCAW distribution in Kenya, therefore we were working with a club which had no previous experience in organizing a distribution. This of course caused some confusion, delays and anxious moments — When will the bedkits arrive? We have been at the site for over an hour and still no bedkits! However the end result was that all 3,000 children did receive their bedkits which were so generously donated by you.

Thirdly, this trip was very different as it was my first trip to Africa, and their customs were not what I might have anticipated. The



Kenyan children are very black-skinned being from that part of Africa known as "Black Africa".

Fourthly, I personally had many emotions on this distribution which I can't adequately describe. Approximately 250 children received bedkits in memory of my wife, Ann, who passed on to glory this past January 19th. Ann had requested that donations be made to SCAW in lieu of flowers. As I took pictures or handed the bedkits to badly handicapped, orphaned or just plain very needy children, I felt the love and compassion Ann had for children being delivered with each and every bedkit. What a privilege it was for me to give these children hope on behalf of a wonderful and caring woman!

Kenya Bedkit

Mattress
Bed sheet
Pillow and cover
Blanket
Mosquito net
Shorts
T shirt
Flip flops
Towel
School bag

Travelling volunteers do more than just distribute bedkits on behalf of you, the donors. We also have the privilege of telling the story of Sleeping Children Around the World to groups here at home. Children to whom we speak learn about geography, other cultures, the joy of helping others and hearing about situations in which others find themselves. We also get to meet many caring people here in churches, and service clubs, or ordinary individuals who want to do their part in creating a better world. And, we have a good time while we are in the participating countries with our (SCAW) partner groups.

On this trip all our team members chose to take a three day safari following the distribution, and we went to the huge Masai Mara wild game reserve and saw many animals in their natural habitat. They included lions, elephants, leopards, zebras, hyenas, hippopotami, giraffes, water buffalos, and many more. Of course, these opportunities take second place to giving the bedkits to the children. Without love and caring by people like you, I don't believe Sleeping Children Around the World could have the impact on children's lives that it has. Perhaps some of the poems that were recited to us by children at distribution sites say more about their situation than I can. Here are three of them:

INNOCENT ORPHANS

By teacher Ezekiel Otworu

Innocent orphans we have become
through a harsh reality of life
we have accepted
because we can't avoid it.
Sorrow, pain and bitterness
we have gone through.
Hopeless, empty and bleak
we thought will be our future.
Diversity, our best teacher
has taught us and showed us
the two sides of life.
Happiness and bitterness,
The true meaning of life.
Kind friends, we are very grateful
that you chose to help us
in this challenging journey
towards our distant destiny.

AFTER

By teacher Mary Muthini,
Stara Rescue Centre

After AIDS killed our parents,
Relatives took and sold our
properties.

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MURRAY'S DREAM 1,000,000 BEDKITS - TO DATE 761,850!

(Kenya by Ken Graham, Hillsburgh, Ontario, continued from page 1)

They physically abused us,
And denied us our rights.
Finally we started roaming aimlessly
Far and near the neighbourhood,
Looking for food, because
Hunger was our big problem.
Later it became unbearable,
And now on the crossroads,
We remember our dear parents,
With their kind and lovely care.
Luckily you have come to rescue us
and we are very grateful.
May God Bless you always.

**A poem from
hearing impaired children**

I am a child of God
God created me special
I can see,
I can smell,
I can walk,
I can think and feel,
But I cannot hear,
That is why I am God's special child.
Thank you.

Thank you, donors, for caring about those less fortunate.

**BY JEFF MCDUGALL
KETTLEBY, ONTARIO**

I stooped down to pick up a small, dangerous-looking piece of metal as the camera was being set up, but stopped myself. As I looked around I realized that this part of the slums, and the area where we were taking pictures and distributing bedkits, stood on top of a garbage dump. To pick up all of the things dangerous to the children here would have been an impossible task. I shrugged my shoulders – this was yet another aspect of Kenya I had discovered. Kenya straddles the equator, has diverse geography dominated by the volcanic action of the Great Rift Valley, and with a population of 31 million people, is a land of stark contrasts. Kenya is both the economic engine of central-eastern Africa and the home, in Nairobi the capital, of the largest slums in all Africa – Kibera.

Nairobi is a very modern and cosmopolitan city, established scarcely more than 100 years ago. On the other hand, Kenya is



home to several smaller nomadic tribes such as the Masai people, who try to live their traditional lives despite the modern activity constantly in view. Kenya is known worldwide for its fantastic wildlife, and the wide open spaces of the national parks are an amazing sight to see. These parks are only a few hours' drive from the crowded and dusty slums of Nairobi, which house about a million people. Looking around the streets of Nairobi, the people seem a perfect picture of robust health, but the HIV/AIDS crisis is overwhelming, and the topic came up in almost every conversation that we had with the teachers and workers we met at the various distribution sites.

Finally, although Kenya is gaining a reputation for its soaring crime rate, the incredible compassion we saw time and again of Kenyans giving of their time and meager resources was heart-breaking. So I didn't pick up the piece of metal, and I didn't clean up the garbage dump, but I did play a part in delivering 3,000 bedkits to some of the world's 'most needy' children that I had ever seen. No, this is not a solution to all of Kenya's problems, but for 3,000 children, it was a great start.

**BY JUDY SNOBELEN
RIPLEY, ONTARIO**

Our team have just finished SCAW's very first distribution to Kenya. 3,000 bedkits went to children in the slums of Nairobi. This distribution was both successful and challenging.

Having travelled previously with SCAW, it amazes me to see the "Children of the World". Regardless of whether they are in Canada or India or Africa, they all love to sing, dance, laugh and smile, whenever they are being greeted by friendly faces, and these children are no different. However, these Kenyan children are truly desperate. Many of them spend their nights sleeping on cardboard. Their homes are shanties made of tin, sticks, mud, and plastic.

We gave out 351 bedkits at Stara Children's Rescue and School. The children sang a song telling us that they have a choice to be happy or bitter about the difficult lives they

are living. It was a privilege to embrace them on behalf of you, the donors, as I gave out their bedkits, knowing that they would be sleeping on a mattress for the first time – I couldn't help but think of my grandchildren, Brooke, Annie, Kate and Cole, who sleep in comfy beds every night. This school is grateful for a lady from the Netherlands who pays their teachers' salaries of \$50 each month, and the World Food Program, which regularly donates beans and maize to feed them lunch and supper.

There are 1,000+ students at Toi Primary School in the Kibera slums of Nairobi. We gave out 535 bedkits to their younger students. I talked to a beautiful, bright 11-year-old girl, Sharon Aninyi Duma, who was in grade five. She wore the green and white gingham school uniform and her hair was pulled back in tiny braids close to her head. Her dark eyes sparkled as she told me that her mother is a tailor who does beautiful sewing. She has two brothers, Anoid, 15 and Joch, 22 and a sister Lorraine, 17. There is no father in her family. She munched on her lunch of maize and beans and smiled shyly when I asked her about her future plans. She wants to attend secondary school and then become a doctor. It was a pleasure to talk to her, and hopefully, with some help, she will fulfill her dreams. She left for a minute and then came back to proudly introduce me to her brother Anoid. I took their picture, gave them a hug and shed some tears. What is their future?

We saw a rusty sign that said "Good Samaritan Home", but there was hardly a street for our van to turn into. Instead, it is



Sharon Aninyi Duma

a garbage trail – ghetto conditions. We walked in through narrow iron gates that were locked behind us. We were greeted by 57 very excited, bright-eyed children who live and go to school there. A teacher and I went to help dress the children in a crowded classroom. I unpacked new clothes – yellow, orange, green and blue. Everyone was squealing and screaming with delight and grabbing for their clothes. Kids' hands were everywhere, and we passed out the clothes as fast as we could. They dressed quickly, and in their new outfits they became a rainbow, topped off with smiling faces radiating pure joy. These kids are all abandoned, abused or AIDS orphans.

I carried a tiny girl who is HIV positive and was receiving medication. I wondered how long she would live.

We had brought Christmas to these children, and we left them very, very happy.

This has been another tremendous adventure, and it has been a privilege to work overseas on behalf of SCAW.

BY GAIL GOWANLOCK WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

What a remarkable experience! First, to see the vision of Margaret and Murray Dryden in action, then, to participate with volunteers from Canada and Kenya in putting into practice that dream of giving hope to children. The need in Kenya is overwhelming, as the slums areas crowd in close to modern Nairobi.

So many impressions pass through a person's mind – the devastating effect of AIDS on children who are often left parentless and homeless, or the abject poverty which leaves some children without food, shelter and education. You, the sponsor may wonder what a bedkit can do for these children. Well, it gives hope and comfort and shows that someone cares. You provide the bedkits but the children also give, as they present their photograph in return.

It was amazing to see the teachers provide such love and dedication as they seek to educate these impoverished children.

There is a great contrast between the type and quality of education experienced by these children, compared with that known to most of us. Though their lot in life is so difficult, they play together, listen to their teachers and make a life with what their parent or parents provide. But, with the prevalence of AIDS, their safety with family may disappear very quickly.

My report at this time is a somewhat surface response for it will only be later, after thoroughly pondering this unbelievable experience, that deeper impressions will emerge. This first trip with SCAW has enabled me to see the effect this program has on children, their parents and their teachers. This opportunity is especially significant because my mother was raised in the same Manitoban community as Murray Dryden. In fact, she taught him as a young boy at a country school house. My parents supported Sleeping Children in the early years and I know they would be most pleased with my involvement.

Thank you to Ken, our esteemed leader, and the team of Duncan, Jeff and Judy for an unforgettable experience.

BY DUNCAN MACGREGOR ETOBICOKE, ONTARIO

Prior to being a SCAW travelling volunteer, I never imagined that I would ever visit Africa. When the opportunity came to help distribute bedkits in Kenya on behalf of SCAW donors, I jumped at it (after getting the OK from my wife, Susan, of course)! Having experienced two previous distributions in India (Mumbai and Kolkata), I wondered how the trip to Kenya would differ. 3,000 bedkits and a multitude of memories later, here is one person's view of Kenya.

Kenya is a country of contrasts: rich but poor; lush but dirty; churches everywhere but crime prevalent; men without jobs but women overworked; an educated workforce but a lack of jobs for the educated; everything can be purchased in Kenya but few have enough money to buy anything; children go to school in uniforms but most of the uniforms are tattered; the majority of the people in Nairobi live in the slums but come out of the slums

Happiness is ... the joy of happy children!



daily to work; and Nairobi is a modern city with high rise buildings, but it also has a slums area that extends right through the centre of the city for seven kilometres. I could go on and on about the contrasts in this beautiful country, but one thing is for certain – there is no doubt that the need for bedkits in Kenya is huge!

During our distributions in and around Nairobi, it became very evident to our team that we were rubbing shoulders with some very exceptional women who were devoting their lives to children. There was Mama Mercy who had set up the Good Samaritan Home, where she was taking in babies left abandoned on the streets (another Mother Theresa). She not only took them in, but slept with them every night in her slums orphanage. She even had some land connected to the orphanage (and right in the slums) where they raised pigs, goats, and cattle to help them be self-sufficient. Then there was a woman who gave birth to a mentally-challenged child and ended up setting up a centre for mentally and physically handicapped children in the Karabanghi Catholic Church located in the slums area.

About 30 mothers danced the team into the centre where the children were waiting for us – how could they display so much joy and happiness in their singing and dancing when they were burdened with so much? And, then there was the Stara Rescue Centre which was a project begun by three women with their own funds. The centre started as a school and refuge area for children who had lost one or both parents due to AIDS. The group of three expanded to eight, but AIDS took three out of the picture. Now they are again down to three who try to provide education and some nourishment

(continued on page 4)

(Kenya by Duncan MacGregor, Eboticoke, Ontario, continued from page 3)

for over 350 kids! These were only some of the women that we met who shared whatever they have to help raise and enrich the lives of some very unfortunate children in and around Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya. We are thankful that we had the opportunity to meet these Saints – they inspired our team to deal with the challenging issues that we faced during this first distribution to Kenya.

Along with paying tribute to the women that we met and admired, we also would like to pay tribute to a group of young people who helped us immensely with the distribution of bedkits in Kenya. Our overseas volunteers group was the Rotary Club of Nairobi. Besides procuring and sorting the bedkit items, and readying them for our team to present to children on your behalf, they also supplied us with a group of up-and-coming Rotarians called “Rotaractors”. These young men and women were mostly college students who gave up their time to live out the Rotary motto of “Service Above Self”. These young people helped us with crowd control and, since they could communicate with the children in their own language (Swahili), they were instrumental in our team being able to successfully take pictures and hand over 3,000 bedkits to 3,000 needy Kenyan children. In one particular instance, our team was moving on to another distribution site within the slums area of Nairobi and, since they didn’t know the way, they, the Roaractors, were going to follow us. Unfortunately, they made a wrong turn and we lost them. Since there are very few road signs in the slums we felt certain that we would not see them again that day, however as we began to hand out the bedkits, who

should appear at the gate – you guessed it – our Rotaractor friends! We still don’t know how they were able to track us down! They could have very easily given up and headed back to college for the balance of the day. We salute this fine group of Kenyan young people who got down and dirty with us. They were another inspiration to us.

Since this was SCAW’s first distribution in Kenya, our team (Ken, Judy, Jeff, Gail, and I) was happy to be a part of our history-in-the-making. We are thankful for the opportunity to distribute these bedkits to 3,000 needy children on behalf of you, our donors. We say “THANKS” for your support. As a donor, you have created the opportunity for all of us to come together to make a difference in the lives of 3,000 Kenyan children. Like the children of Kenya, the Saints of Nairobi, and our Rotoractor friends, our donors continue to inspire us.

SCAW IN 2005 - YES, WE'RE ON THE WEB!

As a donor you only receive printed newsletters of the distribution your donation covered. Now, through the magic of the Internet, you may read as many different newsletters as you wish. Just go to www.scaw.org

Please remember that SCAW does not maintain mailing lists, nor do we ask you for further donations. We leave that entirely up to you. We would be most grateful, however, on behalf of the world’s little hurting children, if you would share the SCAW story with your friends and family.

We are very excited about our website! Thanks to the talents of our webmaster, Milton

THANKS to the following for their contributions to this Kenya trip:

Anonymous donors for providing a myriad of gifts

Black’s Photography (Humbertown Plaza) for donating 50% of our film & photofinishing

The Printing House (Gordie Leong, 5120 Dundas St W, Toronto) for printing this newsletter

Kay Kelly, Harry Keating, and Maurice Kowanetz for publishing this newsletter

Milton van der Veen for maintaining SCAW's web site

Donors and volunteers for their continuing support!

van der Veen, we now have a fully operational, always up-to-date, source of information about everything going on at SCAW. If you haven’t checked it out yet, please do so. You can access and print out our Information Brochure and order forms, and view many trip newsletters, including photos, which are available at the click of your mouse. You can also donate online now!

We are interested in your feedback.

NEXT SCHEDULED DISTRIBUTION TRIPS

May/June, 2005
UGANDA - 5,000 BEDKITS

July, 2005
SRI LANKA - 5,000 BEDKITS

Yellow, orange, green and blue - in their new outfits they became as a rainbow!



SCAW’S GOAL - 1,000,000 BEDKITS BY 2010!