

SCAW



NEWSLETTER

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A charitable organization founded by Margaret and Murray Dryden

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TANZANIA: August 20 - 28, 2004: 4,000 Bedkits

BY RICHARD HRYNIW
LAKESIDE, ONTARIO

Karibu (care-ee-boo) *Karibu* (Welcome)! With these words we know we have arrived in Tanzania. It has been a two day flight, and we are tired. *Karibu* is music to our ears as we know friends have come to take us to our accommodation and a quick rest, before we need to meet in the afternoon to sort out the final points for the distribution. It is going to be a busy week as we will not be making any breaks in the schedule, but will work every day. This will allow both teams (both Canadian and Tanzanian) to get into a smooth pattern.

Our days start before the sun is up, and after preparing and enjoying a filling breakfast, we head out under the stars and the lights of the traffic. It is not yet 5:00 am, and already it seems that Dar es Salaam is teeming with activity. Everywhere vendors are selling everything and anything they can. Buses are packed to beyond capacity. There is no such thing as a leisurely drive. Drivers really need eyes everywhere; continually scanning traffic, watching for bicycles (laden with bread, or eggs, or charcoal, or bananas, etc.), buses "jumping" out from the curb, pedestrians, pedestrians, and more pedestrians, and all this moving at breakneck speed.

Then there is the communication of the horns that all drivers must understand. Horns are rarely sounded in anger. They are used simply to inform – "Be careful, I am coming up on you to pass", "Please squeeze over to let me in" or, "Oops, you are going the wrong way on a one-way street". But it all moves smoothly. Once out of the core area and on to the highway, one must still watch as the road is shared

by people, bicycles, cars, vans and trucks. It is hard to imagine how they manage to carry the loads they do. Men who have travelled far into the countryside on bikes to purchase 2 or 3 bags of charcoal at \$1/bag are now on their way back to the city with one bag tied to either side of their bike and one across the back – "300 -350 pounds". For this two day trip of back breaking work, they may be fortunate enough to make a profit of \$10-12 dollars. As hard workers they are not alone, as you observe the country, you see many people everywhere, earning less than a living for all their labour.

The sun does not rise gently. Here at the equator it's 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness. By 6:00am it is bright sunshine and by 6:00pm it is dark. As we arrive at our distribution site, we are again greeted with *karibu*. It brings a smile for we know we have been anticipated and we are indeed warmly received. Everyone seems to understand that something special is about to happen. It is not unlike watching a continuous ballet. The actors and scenery changes, but the program remains the same. We start with a search for the "right" location for the shots. The "right" location is NEVER available – it is not flat enough, too many ants, no protection from the searing sun, we are in a public pathway, no place for the bedkits, we are too far from each other, the children will be waiting in the sun, the camera will not read the right light conditions, there is no local background, there might be too much pedestrian traffic through the area. NO! There is never a "right" location. We do the best we can for the really important thing is that the children, who have nothing, are about to receive a gift beyond their dreams. So the

days go by. We are into a routine – early rising, quick meal, pack lunch, into the traffic, bounce over the ruts called roads, take pictures, distribute the bedkits, back into the traffic, eat supper, and get to bed as early as possible. There is no complaining! Everyone on the team knows that every bit of discomfort is totally worth it. We have come for the children and we are not disappointed.

Before we realize it, we are saying with mixed joy and sadness that we are finished – the last picture has been taken and the last bedkit distributed. It is now time to gather both the Canadian and Tanzanian volunteers together as we need to celebrate our success. We Canadians fund the purchase of a Tanzanian feast as a way of saying thank you. Forty people gather the day after the last distribution to share a wonderful local meal and be entertained by some of the Tanzanian volunteers who dance to traditional drums. *Karibu* – we had been welcomed and it was from the bottom of their [Tanzanian] hearts. To you, our donors, we say "*Asante*". Thank you for making it all possible.

BY JOAN HRYNIW
LAKESIDE, ONTARIO

The initial organizing of a SCAW distribution is always filled with "ifs". Just imagine with me, the emotions and the "what ifs" we experience as preparations are made for a trip and those as the trip is consummated. "What if" donations are down, will we have enough for 4,000 bedkits to Tanzania (it ranks in the bottom ten of the poorest countries)? The "if" dissolves as donations come rolling in. What "if" we have problems getting

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D. MURRAY DRYDEN - 1911 - 2004 - AN AMAZING LIFE!

(Tanzania, by Joan Hryniw, Lakeside, Ontario, continued from page 1)

a team together? We need two to four more persons to make up our team. That is, two to four people willing to pay their own way (the flights are expensive), willing to work long hours (frequently getting up at 3:30am and not retiring until 10:00pm), willing to take whatever accommodations we get and willing to eat what we can scrounge up and cook for ourselves (restaurants are few and far between and are also expensive in Dar es Salaam), and willing to carry some canned goods with us as it's easier just to buy bread for our lunches. Success! We have found and met people who see no roadblocks and who are willing to deal with whatever "what ifs" that are likely to occur. We are ready to go!

The flight is long – six-and-a-half-hours to Heathrow, London, England, a six hour break (we take a bus to Windsor and walk around the town, have lunch and then get back to the airport for the eleven-and-a-half-hour night flight to Dar es Salaam).

The "ifs" materialize again. We haven't heard from Mama Wandoa for several days by e mail. "What if" she is ill? – she does have to deal with malarial attacks sometimes, but it has never stopped her before, (she truly is an incredible woman). And her son Alfred, he takes two weeks off work each year just to help! Mama is just fine – she is 'just' lecturing at the University on something to do with AIDS.

More "what ifs"! "What if" our luggage won't fit in the vehicle? We all carried extra used clothing with us to leave with Mama to distribute at her Upendo office – an AIDS care clinic. "What if" she had trouble getting a place for us to stay? A safe hotel is at least \$200.U.S. a night per person! "What if she has had trouble with purchasing the bedkits [contents] and then storing them? The "what ifs" dissolve as Alfred and Richard pile all our cases and then us into the one vehicle, albeit each holding a piece of luggage.

The "what ifs" continue to dissolve as Alfred takes us to a small, but comfortable apartment – it will cost us \$300.00 each for the two week stay. It has everything we need – clean beds, a refrigerator, a four-

burner stove (wow, last year we had only two-burners), fans to cool us down and a good clean bathroom with a shower.

The 2004 bedkits? Yes, three are waiting for us, and they're great, so those "ifs" disappear. New "ifs" arise! "What if" our vehicle or the delivery truck breaks down? "What if" a team member gets sick? "What if" the weather doesn't cooperate? Beautiful sunny days don't help filming, as the sharpness of the sun here just below the Equator erases the children's faces into black ovals.



The first distribution at Dundani goes well. The second trip to Nyani sets off at 4:

00 am. One hour out on the road and we get a call to stop and pick up some axle grease as the delivery truck made it but can't return as the ball bearings have seized on the front wheel! Three hours later, after an adventurous ride in a four-wheel-drive vehicle over a narrow, one lane, rutted path through the countryside, we arrive. We set up and do the distribution. The truck driver erases the "ifs" as he takes apart the wheel, the brakes, etc. and packs the grease into the bearings, and puts it all back together! AN ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE job, using only a few wrenches, a screwdriver, and one jack!

The other "ifs" evaporate or are dealt with. The camera works well, the sun plays tricks with us, but we shift the bedkits around continually. We are so thankful our team members are all well. We can't say the same for the little ones we see; arms in grimy casts, cloudy unseeing eyes, running sores, fever wracked bodies of children with malaria, physically and mentally challenged children – they greet us shyly and with smiles. Some are fearful and jump as the "flash" goes, others look at us in awe, tinged with a bit of fear. The "ifs" evaporate. How thankful we are that all the "what ifs" have disappeared! They are no longer a concern. Our fears and trepidations are left behind, and in their place are the awed and excited visions and voices of the 4,000 children, each with a comfortable mattress to lay on, and a blanket to huddle in as they shiver in the throes of malarial fevers. Each has a spark of hope lit in them that someone cares about "me". Instead of "ifs" we

have 4,000 children who, for once in their small lives, have something brand new, and all their own, thanks to you, the donors. *Asante.*

BY JIM STARK BURLINGTON, ONTARIO

This is my very first trip doing a SCAW distribution, and my first visit to this part of the world, and to a disadvantaged country, Tanzania. Our team of six arrived in Dar es Salaam on the morning of August 20th to a totally different world. There was no doubt that we were in the tropics, yet men were wearing long pants and women long skirts called *Kangas*, and it was a balmy 29 degrees.

I was totally amazed at how hard-working the Tanzanian people were. I saw how they made charcoal and how they transported it. They make a neat pile of cut-up tree branches, about 5'x10', cover it with mud, light one end and let it smoulder for approximately two weeks. Then, when the charcoal is ready, it is put in bags weighing at least 100 lbs. each, load them [anywhere from 2-5 bags each] on their bicycle, then ride uphill and downhill to the outskirts of the city, where their charcoal will be sold. This is just one example of how one family ekes out a living.

The poverty of these people becomes more and more obvious as we go from one school to another to do our daily distributions. Although they are probably arriving in their Sunday-best, their clothes are often dirty and torn, and they have holes in shoes, or no shoes at all. We give out 500 to 600 bedkits each day, making that many children, including their siblings, very happy. Their happiness was displayed by the smiles on their faces as they left our distribution sites. It's important to note that with the poverty facing Tanzania, there would never be only one child sleeping on one mattress, and no matter how many bedkits we gave out, it would never be enough.

All that SCAW did achieve, however, could not have been done without a lady, Mama Wandoa, and her crew of volunteers. I feel fortunate to have been able to participate in such a worthwhile cause, and also lucky to have seen some of Tanzania and

its gentle people.

BY HILDA REINAUER STARK BURLINGTON, ONTARIO

On August 20th this team of six; Richard and Joan (our capable team leaders), Leslie and Jean (sisters) and Jim (my husband) and I, both newcomers to SCAW, arrived in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to begin a distribution of 4,000 bedkits. As we step off the plane, we know we're in the tropics, palm trees, hibiscus bushes in bloom and a nice 29° day is a sure reminder. Alfred, Mama Wandoa's son, greeted us and drove us to our accommodations.

During the evening we got ready for the distributions and also got to meet with Mama Wandoa. She is our contact in Dar, but she also runs a charity called *UPENDO* (LOVE) where she educates and cares for victims of AIDS families.

She works voluntarily for SCAW, gathering up the items that go into the bedkits, which surely must be a year round job. Alfred, her son, lives in Moshi, north, near the Kenea border and has come to help, although this is his vacation time.

Next day, early, we left for our first distribution. As we left the city behind with its dirt and clamour, we entered a country of tranquillity: palm trees, mango trees, villages with tiny huts made of sticks and mud and thatched roofs, and the odd chicken in a clean swept yard was the order of the day.

We arrived at our destination, a school. The children were already gathered up in groups waiting, dressed in their school uniforms—blue skirts or shorts and white shirts. Richard set up his camera, and then we all pitched in setting up the three bedkits. The ones you see in your photos are, in fact, actual bedkits. This year's bedkit includes a foam mattress, sheet, blanket, mosquito net, towel, *Kanga* (skirt), exercise books, pencils and pens, and a cap. Mama and her helpers had already started to dress the children in the colourful T-shirts and were lining them up.

They were all five to twelve years of age, but some looked no more than three or four. Some had distended bellies, sores

on their heads and their legs, and some were painfully shy. I picked some of them up and carried them over to receive their goodies [bedkits]. As they queued up, there was absolutely no pushing, shoving, yelling, or complaining. The odd whisper could be heard, otherwise they waited patiently, only smiling occasionally, and then only with some coaxing. A lot had torn dirty clothing with missing zippers or buttons. The look on their faces could have been anxiety, anticipation or expectation.

We greeted them – *Jumba* (hello), *Johapa* (come) and *Joka* (sit) as we guided them to pose for their pictures. *Chuka* sometimes got a smile, but usually they sat seriously looking at the camera. Then another member of the team took them to receive the rest of their bedkit. Most of them forget to say *a sante san* (thank you), but are smiling now, obviously relieved.

Later we saw them with other village people as they left to go home down the path, disappearing into the jungle, rolled up mattresses on their heads or piled on bicycles.

We left in our vehicle, and met many of them along the way. Now they were smiling and waving to us as we waved back. Today, 600 children would be able to towel off their washed bodies; sleep on a comfortable foam mattress, protected from insects by a net; walk to school in new sandals, cap on head; and have a new book to write in with a new pencil or pen. After school, there is a new T-shirt to wear for play. All this because of the generosity of a donor back in Canada. I will never forget those faces, and I felt fortunate to have had this experience. Thank you!



BY LESLIE FIELDS MANITOWANING, ONTARIO

We're hungry and very, very dusty, but what a great feeling it is to know that there are 600 children just as hot, tired, hungry and very, very dusty dragging home your gift this afternoon. As we drive along the roadway leaving the village, we could spot children as far as our eyes could see along winding paths, literally bouncing from foot to foot as they balanced foam mattresses and precious blue bags filled with these gifts that you

have provided.

There are large billboards along the highway coming back into Dar es Salaam that have only the words *Moja Moja* (one by one) in large red letters. This message seems so appropriate as we come to the end of this distribution. Each "one" plays such an essential role in this SCAW organization, for no "one" is greater or less than the other "one", for without the "ones", there would be: no SCAW, no dreams fulfilled; no leaders like Richard and Joan who go above and beyond the role of leader, mentor and friend; no travelling volunteers who are ready to take a risk and live on the edge through the extremes of laughter and tears, frightened eyes and the most wonderful smiles; no administrative volunteers who devote hours and hours of their time to ensure that this organization lives up to the ideals of Murray Dryden; no Mama Wandoa's who would literally lie down on a mattress on a factory floor for three hours forcing the owner to live up to a production commitment and then so gently and tenderly soothe away a small child's fear; no Alfred and his crew who surely and simply make things happen, smoothly, efficiently – they give the phrase "gentle man" a whole new meaning; no "ones" to contribute individually or collectively the thousands of dollars annually to keep a dream alive, (as we read through the names on the labels we marvel and wonder at the circumstances that have led to a worldwide support for SCAW); no small brown hands to shyly receive a huge foam mattress and a wonderful blue bag, and no murmurs of *asante sana*, thank you!

Saturday morning, August 28th we finished our distribution at Ruvu Station with another 600 bedkits! We had left Dar a little after 4:30am to travel the 90 km. to arrive at the school just before classes began. Obviously distances travelled across the svelt are measured in time rather than kms. Once off of the main road to Morogoro, the passageway shrinks to a sandy, narrow, twisting and turning challenge to the best of rally drivers. We love it! The day was warm and sunny, the school children were fascinated with the set-up process. Moms, dads and grandparents flowed in toward the distribution centre

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Tanzania, by Leslie Fields, Manitowaning, Ontario, continued from page 3)

from along hidden pathways from every direction imaginable. The sea of colour and the murmur of voices seemed to enfold the school, the children and us in its "embrace" of Tanzania. The sun began to challenge our shady spot as the day progressed with group after group of children being arranged for their photographs. But, as has happened every day this week, the clouds quietly rolled in and the bedkits only had to be repositioned four times, this time!

We were done! FOUR THOUSAND bedkits delivered, and now we had an opportunity to visit several homes before we left the village. We were welcomed into these tiny mud-bricked homes with no electricity, or running water, with the dignity and graciousness of women who have done what they can with the resources available to them to make their homes secure and safe nests for their families and friends.

Did the bedkit fit into this picture? Oh my, YES...as I watched two little boys, dark heads together, in a dark corner of a dark and smoky room extract and examine each item from a carefully untied blue plastic bag...I know it did! I could not see faces, for their heads were bent so closely together, but the body language said it all...this is the ONE, the one that really, really counts, and I cried. As the tears flowed down my cheeks one by one, for these children, for the millions more like them, for our own children, the tears became not ones of grief, sorrow or pity, but those of happiness, appreciation, humbleness, remembrance and hope.

Mankind has been given a gift in Mama

Wandoa, and through her, she has given us the privilege of passing your gifts on to the children of Tanzania. From the one at the beginning to the one at the end, an ordinary act of kindness has evolved into an extraordinary act of love. Thank you for allowing me, as one member of this SCAW team, to deliver your gift to one small child... *asante sana* ... I am honoured!

**BY JEAN HUTTON
ST. MARY'S, ONTARIO**

As a travelling volunteer with SCAW, I have found that you do not just visit and work in the country of a distribution, but rather, you experience the country and the people in a profound manner. Africa has often been called the Dark Continent of the world. However, as I have seen, there is much more to this country struggling under the burden of its Third World debt, and the devastating effects of AIDS among children and young adults. Africa is the warm embrace of Mama Wandoa who organizes the distribution of 4,000 bedkits in the poor area of Dar es Salaam, and in the small rural villages of Tanzania. I visited a classroom one morning with Mama. She talked to the children in Swahili, and after she told me what she had said to them – "You deserve an education and you also deserve a better classroom". I could not have agreed more, and with a woman like Mama Wandoa, there can only be hope for a better future for these children.

Tanzania is a mixture of religions and cultures that result in a colourful mosaic of humanity. Women work very hard as they carry out their daily routines – balancing large containers of water or food on their heads as they walk along the side of a dusty road often with a baby slung onto their backs. Men push carts or bicycles loaded with charcoal, bananas, or produce to sell in the city. They will travel hours to sell what they can to survive and feed their families. The children walk miles to school and then home again, often on empty stomachs. However, there is dignity, self-respect and a kind and graceful manner shown by these people who work so hard to earn the basic necessities of life. They do deserve so much more! We cannot in our lifetime hope to see poverty eliminated, but we can help. The

bedkits in Tanzania were well thought out, with a foam mattress, a colourful sheet, sandals, a blanket, mosquito netting, a towel, notebooks, pencils and a *kanga*, – a generous gift for 4,000 children who are definitely happier to-day than they were yesterday; and hopefully, they will become a little healthier with a good night's sleep. A trip of a lifetime! A gift of a lifetime! Thank you, SCAW donors, for making it happen!



**THANK YOU
for your
contribution to this
Tanzania trip**

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Donors and Volunteers!

**NEXT SCHEDULED
DISTRIBUTION TRIPS**

**OCTOBER, 2004
BANGLADESH
6,000 BEDKITS**

**NOVEMBER, 2004
HONDURAS**