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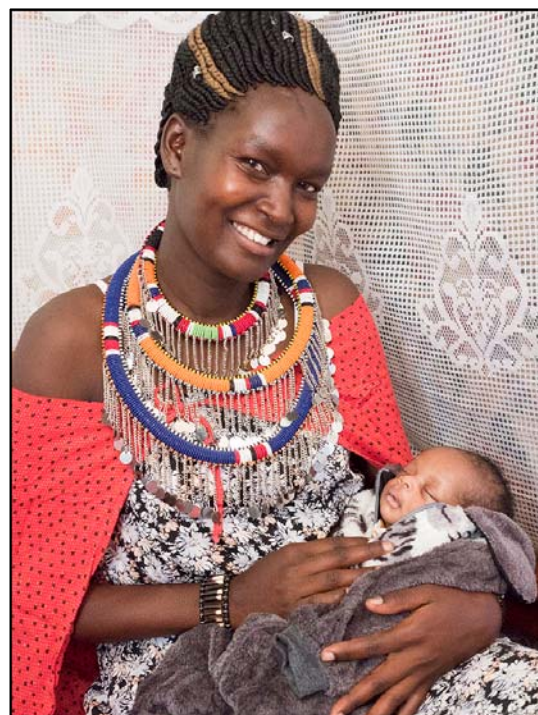
16 December 2015

“CHALK WOULD BE A MIRACLE”



Our October visit to the Mara was full of surprises and causes for celebration. We were delighted to hear that Harrison, our Community Officer, has married one of our former students, Sylvia. She studied at Sosio School and then went on to do some community work at Enkereri School. Apparently as Sylvia is an educated lady this increased her dowry value!! Harrison had to deliver, we believe, five cows to her family! Congratulations to Harrison and Sylvia.

Jacqueline, the former head teacher at Enkereri School has given birth to a beautiful baby boy, who has been given the very unusual Maasai name Richard!



He is the second boy to be named after me, which is very humbling. We were able to visit Jacqueline, Richard and his father at home. Jacqueline will be returning to Enkereri school in the New Year where she has been greatly missed.



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We were able to meet the new head teacher and the school committee at Enkereri. The school goes from strength to strength. The teachers had just returned to school after a lengthy nationwide strike. This caused a delay in parents sending funds for lunch and the school had no monies to buy food. At the school committee meeting we agreed to give Enkereri a float to purchase food in bulk to enable ongoing lunch preparation. When the school first opened it accommodated children from pre-school to year two. They have now progressed up to class six, the highest primary class in Kenya being class eight.

More classrooms are needed and we have agreed to fund a further four classrooms. Ambrose our builder has already started work. We are also having boys' toilets built as well.

As always we visited our sponsored students at the five schools in Narok, a 2½ hour journey on a dirt road from our camp. We have to leave at 6.30am and often do not get back until after 7pm, rather tired to say the least! We are always pleased to arrive at the schools and, after sorting out the school fees, spending time with our students. They really value their sponsors support.

On the right are our pupils at Oloomirani High School in Narok.



At Mara Rianda Primary School we have also agreed to fund the building of new toilets. The existing girls' dormitory has become unsafe as it was poorly built, I must add, not by our builder Ambrose. We have been asked if we can help with a new building and we need further discussions before a decision can be made. We continue to supply books and educational supplies to the school.

On the left Pola is with the girls at St Marys School in Narok. Like all our sponsored pupils they treat Pola as their surrogate mum.



We were very pleased to meet some of our students who had graduated last year and had come to meet us.

The medical centre committee met with me and asked if we can fund the purchase of nebuliser and oxygen equipment. They also repeated their need for a Doppler foetal heart sound monitor. A fence around the perimeter of the medical centre, maternity unit and staff housing has also been requested. This is not only for safety at night for patients and staff but also for security as much valuable equipment and medication is now stored there.



We were very pleased to hear that the Medical Centre has a team of community health volunteers who visit the manyatas (mud villages) educating people on health and hygiene. One of the volunteers is Agnes, who was the first mother to give birth in the maternity unit. We understand that there has been a decrease in the number of deaths of neonates since the increased use of the maternity unit - another wonderful cause for celebration.

In a previous newsletter I mentioned an article seen in a Kenyan national newspaper about a student prepared to sell a kidney in order to pay for school fees for a secondary education, something that is desperately sought by so many. Student sponsorship is life changing.



If you are a UK tax payer a bursary can be funded by a monthly standing order of £30 for four years. With Gift Aid your donations will effectively be the full amount required to fund one child for four years of secondary education. If you are interested in assisting a child in this way please let me know and I can let you have a standing order and Gift Aid form.

Support is always welcome and greatly appreciated. There is always a need for new books, sports equipment and general school supplies as well as assistance with capital projects. Should you wish to give any support please make cheques payable to The Mara Rianda Charitable Trust.

As usual I do apologise if you feel this letter is an intrusion and if you not wish to receive any further letters then please do let me know.

Should you ever wish to come and join us in the Mara to see first-hand the work we are involved in please let me know. September is normally the best time to join us as this is the time of spectacular wildebeest migration.

Whatever your faith or belief, Christmas is a very special time of year. Pola and I are constantly encouraged by your interest and support and this we will never take for granted. May I conclude with Pola's and my personal Christmas greetings and thank you once again for your interest and support, which as I said earlier is life changing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard".

Richard Long
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*And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6 v8 (NIV)*