

# Here in Kenya 2009

30<sup>th</sup> March 2009

I've now been here for three weeks. I've just returned to the home where I usually stay after a week at the children's home as Ashlea (who has just finished her HSC in Australia) settles into life here in Kenya. It is lovely to have her here. The house parents and children are really enjoying her. Ashlea will be with us until end April. After this time others will be preparing to visit.



Ashlea helping out with the hair.



There was a fence and line of established trees and bushes here.

We have begun work on the land in order to prepare for the building process. Unfortunately we have had a bit of a set-back. As what sometimes happens here in Kenya. People want land and if there seems to be a way to get it then some will take advantage of others. The old man who sold us land also recently sold a piece of land adjacent to ours. When the old man moved away and the new owners didn't move in, an older lady with a number of sons, teenage plus, started to take over the land. She said she had bought it more than 30 years ago. Although the old man has lived on the land all his life. Once the old lady and sons started demolishing and clearing the land adjacent to ours she then began to come down the hill to take our land as well. They had cut the fence in several places. Word was sent to Jackson, who oversees the orphanage here in Kenya, that these people were destroying our boundary fence. He quickly went with police and had the lady and her

husband (I think) arrested. They negotiated a time to meet and discuss the issues. The people were released and told not to touch our property further. However in the night they returned and cut down about twenty well established trees that lined the boundary. One of our friends went to the property and found a young boy who had been paid to remove the stumps. So a photo was taken and reports made to the police. The meeting that was negotiated took place. Things look in our favour. We have done everything as is needed here before purchasing land. On Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> March there will be a meeting on the land with a govt. surveyor who will look at the maps and paper work and verify where the boundaries are and who owns what. We are trusting that it will be in our favour. (2<sup>nd</sup> April. Not appearing in our favour but no final ruling made as yet. Bribery and false documents have been made.)

The last few days I have been spending some time with the women of one of the churches. It has been a nice change as I am usually just with the men trying to sort out money and building things. The ladies were lovely, very welcoming and happy for a visitor amongst them. I became the guest speaker. I'm sure they think we westerners have it all together and have the answers for everything. In time they'll learn that this is not so. Anyway, we can learn together and encourage one another as we are able. The church service yesterday was pretty amazing. Lots of singing, clapping, dancing and making of noise. The people are very happy and thankful for the little they have. It is a pleasure to be amongst them.

Even just standing in town you can see how hard it is for some of them to try and make a living. Yesterday as I waited for some friends in a store, I stood outside and watched the people passing. Young guys on bicycles trying to give someone a lift for 10 or 20 shillings (20-40 cents), an old man walking slowly along with several bottles (what looked like shampoo) and possibly some combs trying to sell something, a young boy (I was told he had a home) asking for money and hiding behind pot plants hoping that I would see him and the store security wouldn't. It is harsh and sadly life for many here in Kenya.

If we can make a difference in the lives of those whom we are given in this project we will be impacting such a tiny section of Kenya but potentially touching the lives of many as we support whom we can so that they can grow and then support others.

A man who is working for Habitat for Humanity came to visit with us the other day. We were asking about his organisation and how they may be able to help us with our project. He shared with us that he had been brought up in one of the slums in Nairobi. A Canadian man began a project in the slums introducing the children to sports. They then supported them with school fees and helped get them college scholarships. He was one of 11 children in his family. He now sees it as his responsibility to help others who are in need of support. I hope that the children coming through Robins Nest also grow with the same attitude.

I was doing some sewing the other day. Behind me was Peace playing with the stuffed toys, riding the water containers as if they were on a bus.

There was a lot of talking going on but unfortunately it was in Swahili so I was unsure of what she was telling the toys, what she was doing or where she was going. I turned every now and then to see what she was up to. I think at one point the bus (Matatu) transformed to a Boda Boda (bicycle) as the animals were reduced to one and Peace's legs were really pedalling. Children are children everywhere in the world. How nice it is to see them when they are confident and comfortable in their surrounds. I love watching children in play. Those here in Kenya need to be somewhat more imaginative.



Carrying plants from our land.

3<sup>rd</sup> April

We went to visit our land yesterday with all the children as they are now on holidays. The people claiming the land have built a fence blocking the main entrance. However, we can still enter from another direction. They continue to break the law! Frustrating! We decided to remove the new plants so that we could save as much as possible before someone's cows eat them. We didn't have much to carry them in so we scoured the land for bits of plastic bags, large leaves, etc. An old lady close by gave us an old plastic basin. Joy and Susan were carrying the basin together. They started to lift it up so I asked whose head it was going on.

Joy quickly answered, "Susan's". I had a piece of material that I was going to make into a skirt. It became the wrapping for plants on Leah's head (left) while my small backpack carried the plants on Melodies head (right). Improvisation and flexibility are so very important here.

For weekly snippets go to <http://jes1402.blogspot.com>

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Thanks for your interest, love & support

# Jan



Approx. \$5 aud with some rice (\$5 aud) or ugali  
These vegies may last two meals for 6-8 people.



Ashlea playing with the children at school.