

Marimanti News

**Helen Moorehead, Mission Partner, Kenya,
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Kamatungu Primary

Greetings once again from Marimanti!

When I last wrote to you, I was teaching in Kamatungu Primary School and trying to supervise the building of the classroom for the deaf. I continued working there until the beginning of July and it was lovely getting to know the pupils and staff, and sharing with them in school activities such as music festivals, sports day etc. I suppose the highlight of the school year was Prize Day in June. The Chief Education Officer was the guest of honour so a cow was slaughtered for the meal afterwards. The ceremony was due to start at 9am. It eventually started at 1.30pm (Chief Guest was late!!) and ended at 6.15pm. We were all sitting for 10 hours in the heat with nothing to eat and only a few bottles of water!! The speeches seemed to go on forever. However, the ceremony really livened up towards the end. Everyone (including me!) received presents for their good work. The school committee awarded themselves presents at KS 450 whereas teachers, auxiliary staff etc only got presents worth KS 150. There was an outcry from the parents and quite a battle of words ensued, which ended with the parents walking away in anger and then having to be persuaded to return (I think the smell of the roasting cow was too hard to resist!). All very different from a prize day at home!

New Classroom for the Deaf

On the 1st July we admitted children to the first classroom for the deaf in Tharaka District!!!

While the classroom was being built we had many parents come seeking admission for their children. I had hoped that these children would be able to board at Kamatungu Primary. However, I soon learnt that there were no housemothers in the dormitories at Kamatungu -



only a teacher who lived on the compound. This being the case, I could not admit small primary age children, as they would need a lot of care and attention. I decided to start with 4 older boys who were sitting at home but who could look after themselves - and to start the construction of 2 dormitories (with rooms for housemothers) as quickly as possible!!! Below from left are Peter, Henry, Aaron and Pineas.

The work with the four boys has been challenging but very rewarding. When they came they did not even know that they had names - as they had never heard anyone call their name. However since they started to learn and gain understanding, there has been no stopping them. They even asked me to come back at night and teach them! When the parents arrived to collect the boys at the end of term they could not believe that such children were actually reading words and adding numbers. One parent asked if it was magic and another left the classroom in tears.

At the time of writing, the construction of the second



classroom and a toilet is almost complete. The construction of the dormitories is due to start in 2 weeks time and the Department of Education has appointed two teachers of the deaf to the school, starting the first of September. So we are all walking in faith! These teachers will work in Kamatungu Primary (as I did) until the dormitories are completed and we can admit the children who are now waiting at home.

Some Sunday schools have asked me if there is any way in which they can help. It would be really great if a Sunday school could raise the money for a bed, a mattress and a sheet for a deaf child. I will need 62 beds!!!! Mr. Tim Dunwoody at MMS Ireland has kindly agreed to co-ordinate the project so if anyone is interested please do contact him (telephone number 02890320078).

Weekends in Marimanti

The school day starts at 8am and ends at 4pm so I look forward to the weekends and catching up on housework. Everything takes so much longer than it did at home as we have to do most things



by hand.

My neighbour and I usually wash our clothes together at the shared tap between our two houses. I am fortunate to have very good neighbours and they have taught me a lot about how to survive in Tharaka. On a Friday evening, we usually meet together for a time of praise and fellowship, with a lot of African singing and dancing.

Every other weekend I go up to Meru for water and supplies and on those weekends I stay over and take the Sunday school for the deaf at Kaaga. It is lovely to be able to keep in contact with the children there and also it helps me maintain a degree of fluency in the Kenyan sign language, as the sign language of the children in Marimanti is still quite basic.

Visitors

Very few white people ever visit



Marimanti so it caused quite a bit of excitement when 'Helen Makena' had two visitors from Ireland, namely Mr. Jim Bloomer and Mr. David Blevins! It was lovely to see them and catch up on all the news from home.

Above we are visiting the home of a deaf blind boy whose education is being sponsored by some friends in Ireland. On the Sunday, David took the morning service in Marimanti Methodist church and his message was a real blessing to the whole congregation.

School finished on the 2nd August and I am now on holiday until the first of September. It will be with some apprehension that I return to Tharaka as September is the hottest month here, with temperatures rising to over 40 degrees. Then in mid October the long rains start and Marimanti becomes cut off for a few months - so I will have to make sure I have plenty of reading material!!!

Give Thanks

- For completion of first two classrooms and toilet
- For good health and safety on the roads
- For good neighbours

Please Pray

- For good health to cope with climatic conditions in Tharaka during the next few months
- For Peter, Aaron, Henry and Pineas and their families
- For peace in the country during the general elections in December
- That God will be glorified in everything that is undertaken in Marimanti