

# Marimanti News

Issue 15

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Greetings once again from Marimanti. As we come to the end of our second term we have much to thank God for. It has been a challenging term as we have watched prices soar and people struggle to provide food for their families. For example, in our area a measure of maize which cost 8 shillings six months ago now costs 40 shillings. The money, which the government gave us to buy food for the school, ran out two months ago but thanks to the kindness of friends at home we have been able to continue to the end of term. The local government has also promised to send relief food (six sacks of maize) during the holidays which will be a great help to us next term. The rains are due in November and if all goes well people should be harvesting in February.

However, some people have realized that depending on relief food is not the long term solution to the drought related problems in Tharaka. The Italian government is helping to sponsor an irrigation scheme along the Kathita River. We have been offered the opportunity to buy a share in this project, as have other farmers along the river. Many are taking out loans and if all goes well the main pipe will be laid in a few months. Then we shall have to dig a trench from the main pipe to the school (about 200 yards) and put down underground pipes. The initial outlay will be high but the long term benefits to the school should more than justify the expenditure. The children are already planning what crops we shall grow!! Top of the list are carrots as many of the children suffer from night blindness due to vitamin deficiency. We shall also try kale, tomatoes, cowpeas, bananas and maybe even a few Irish potatoes!

## **Building Project**

Because of the high cost of living in Tharaka at the moment I considered stopping the building project -at least until the end of the drought.

However so many of the builders depend on the work to provide food for their families and even the families of their brothers and sisters, that I decided we should continue.

The toilets are now complete and as I write the men are painting the inside doors of the new administration block. Hopefully after the drought we shall be able to furnish it.



**New toilets**



Work is also starting on the school chapel and we hope to proceed with that as we get money. At present our children have very little contact with other school children or with the people of the area. I am hoping that through activities in the church our children will be integrated into and also become accepted by the local community. I am also hoping that the Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church will appoint a

youth pastor to the church, who will minister to all the school children in the area. Let us see how things progress!!

## School News

In July we were privileged to have a visit from Mrs. Rosemary Gardiner and her husband Paul. Rosemary is in charge of the Sensory Impairment Service in the Southern Board. She gave our teachers some very valuable training in audiology as well as fitting all our children with hearing aids. The new batteries for the solar chargers also arrived a few days before Rosemary's visit so the children will be able to recharge their hearing aid batteries without having to buy new ones---which none of them could afford.



Rosemary's husband is an optician but while he was with us he did some great work as a painter. The builders had painted the dining room windows before the putty was dry so all the paint was peeling off. It looked very bad. However when Paul was finished we had windows to be proud of!



On the Saturday that Rosemary and Paul were with us, we went to visit the family of a little boy in class 2, Eric Mugambi. He lives quite far from the school and the journey to his home proved quite challenging! Although the family was suffering from the drought, like so many other families, the children were all well cared for and they seemed genuinely happy to see Eric---we had brought him with us. We also saw baby Helen! The father and mother had decided to call their 15<sup>th</sup> child after me---I guess they had run out of family names by the time they reached number 15!!!



This visit was very different from one I made earlier this week with a social worker from our area. We went to visit a little boy named Pilot, whom neighbours had told us was deaf.



When we met the father he said the boy had not spoken since he was born although he had beaten him hard. When we explained that the boy could not speak because he had never **heard** anyone speak, he just laughed and said, 'My wife has given birth to a waste. What good will he ever be?' We hope to admit Pilot in January and prove the father wrong! Please pray that the Tharaka community will begin to see that these deaf children are part of God's kingdom and that they are as valuable to Him as every other child.

Thank you all most sincerely for all your support in prayer and giving, especially at this difficult time---we appreciate it so much.

Love and prayers **Helen**