

# Marimanti News

Issue 14

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Greetings once again from Marimanti. Usually as I write my April newsletter we are enjoying relatively cool weather and heavy rain---but not this year. As I write the sun is blazing down, the land is scorched and the crops lie withered in the fields. The November rains failed and now the March/April rains have failed also. As a result the people of Tharaka are facing the months ahead with the prospect of little or no food.

The government has decided to buy the cows from the farmers before they die, due to the lack of fodder. The Dept of livestock is now giving the meat to the elderly, children and the disabled. We were thankful to receive one of these cows a few weeks ago --- the children ate very heartily that weekend!

Although the people are extremely downhearted at the moment, they have a real faith that God will see them through this period of severe drought. Often I hear them say, 'Where there is no way, God will make a way.' Their faith that God will provide is very humbling.

## New Children

The new children who came in January settled in very quickly and are now very much at home with us. Let me introduce you to a few of them.



This is Dorcas. When Dorcas was born and the family realised she was deaf, the father chased the mother from the home for giving birth to a handicapped child. The mother returned to her parents' home with Dorcas and her sister. Now she is trying to bring up her two children by working on neighbouring farms.



This is Mary. She has no family. Her parents are both dead and her church raised the money to bring her to school. In the holidays she stays with a guardian. On visiting day when no one came to visit her, it was encouraging to see the other children share with Mary the food which their parents had brought.



This is Amos. Amos comes from a very poor but very caring family. His father was delighted to find a school where his son could be educated. They have a very small shamba (farm) but the father works hard to provide for his family.



This is Newton. Newton's mother was also chased from the family home by her in-laws, when Newton's father died. Now she is struggling alone to bring up Newton and two other children.

Most of our children have difficult home backgrounds but they enjoy school and are highly motivated. They are very keen to learn and to do well in their exams so that one day they will get a job and (to quote them) 'be able to buy lots of food to eat'!! They are really a joy to teach.

## **Building Project**

When we come back to school after the Easter holidays we plan to start cooking in our own kitchen. We have employed three cooks, thanks to some emergency funding from the government. Thanks also to support from home we have been able to install three economy jikos.



These economy jikos use very little firewood and hopefully they will also emit very little smoke. The children are delighted that they will no longer have to carry food from the neighbouring primary boarding school.

As we are now accountable to the government for the administration of the school we have had to put up a small administration block with offices and a staff room.



The builders are now at the roof so we are hoping that this building will be finished by June.

We are very thankful to God for the wonderful way in which He has provided for the needs of the deaf children here in Tharaka. As a thank offering we are hoping to put up a small church in the school grounds. At first I intended it just to be a school chapel for our school and the neighbouring primary boarding school. However members of the local

community have asked that we make it a little bigger so that they can worship there also as it is a long walk to the churches in Marimanti, especially in the strong heat of Tharaka. We are trusting God to make all this possible so I am getting some plans drawn up and hopefully we shall go forward from there.

## **School Development**



Two weeks ago our first Board of Governors was inaugurated. The Board is made up of members of the local community and people interested in children with special needs. We are very pleased to have the President of the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) in Kenya on the Board so we hope that the school will be able to move forward under his guidance.

Although school takes up a lot of my time it is lovely, especially at weekends, to visit people within the community. Over the years I have got to know and become friends with quite a few of the local people. Last week it was lovely to celebrate the birth of Abraham and Eloise's baby son---I attended their wedding last April.



Although the weather and the living conditions here are very harsh, the people are very welcoming and always ready to share the little they have.

The months ahead look bleak for the people of Tharaka but as we are reminded at this Easter time, we serve a risen Christ and He will find a way where there is no way.

Every blessing and I wish you all the joy and hope of that first resurrection morning. **Helen**