



Maasai Development Project

Changing Lives in Kenya, One Child at a Time.

March 13, 2024

Dear Friends,

What an adventure Edward and I had in Kenya. To start with, we were able to visit 10 of the new churches that were built last year. In each church the people were very appreciative and wanted to send their thanks to each of you. Attendance and morale is high and there are more with more requests for churches. I am “guestimating” right now of the need for another 20 churches where people are still worshiping under a tree. We have had to put a hold on the requests for now until more money is raised. In one of the churches, I remember visiting about five years ago, and at that time they were praying that God would provide for them a place of worship. I tried to encourage them to keep praying and that God would answer their prayer. They had to wait a few years, but now they are worshiping in their much prayed for church. Thank you, thank you!

Currently we are looking at which areas are still in need of a Pastor’s house, and which areas need latrines built as well. Not all areas are in need, so we want to start with the most needy areas. At the same time we will continue to also raise funds for more churches. Attached is a flyer which shows the cost of the different projects.

While in Kenya, we were approached by a Newspaper Journalist from Japan wanting to write an article on the plight of the Maasai children. They chose MDPEC as the Children’s Home for their article. I sat in on the interviews of not only the children, but we brought in a former circumcision cutter to interview as well. As I listened to her own trauma filled background and how she got into being a cutter, my heart went out to her. As a result of her quitting as a cutter, her husband threw her out, and she is now ostracized from her community. This got me to wondering how we could help her, and knowing that we *must* help her and other ladies that had no means of caring for themselves. Another lady who’s daughter we rescued had been thrown out by her husband because she helped in the rescue of her daughter. In the end, 7 women were identified, desperately needing help. They were called to the Centre and I approached them about forming a Co-op among themselves. MDP would provide a couple of cows or a small herd of goats. Because they are in a Co-op, their sons, brothers, uncles, or even former husbands—if they are still alive, cannot demand they be turned over to them. The Co-op would own them. How I wish you could have seen the faces and expressions of gratitude and excitement from these dear ladies. This will be our pilot program and if this works, we will start another Co-op with a new group of needy or destitute women.

When I got to the Centre, I discovered that our electric fence is no longer working. The solar system and the solar panels need to be replaced. And even though the fence posts had been treated, after 12 years, the termites have destroyed many of the posts. Consequently, we have neighboring cows coming through the fence to graze at our Centre, taking away the grazing areas for our MDPEC cows.

The total cost of the fence is: \$6,655. However, while I was there we had a visitor from a neighboring Safari Camp, Entomoto, donating to MDPEC the Battery needed, the Solar Panel, and the Solar Controller. A total cost of \$560. Then as we did a walkabout, we realized that we still had poles that could still be used for some months to come, that we do not have to replace all the poles at one go, so that took us down to about 85 poles most urgently needed, and that takes our cost down by \$4,480. This makes a total of **\$2,175** for us to get the fence around our 15 acres up and running again. We will then just keep changing out the rest of the poles as needed, a few at a time.

Two girls were rescued while I was at the Centre, both escaping a forced marriage. One of the girls is a total orphan and relatives were planning to marry her off. She is ready for 9th grade and desperately wanted to go to school. She came from a far place, coming through the Game Reserve to the Centre. What is sad is that the girls both did well in their government exam to go to Secondary School, but it seemed useless to the families for them to allow them to follow their dreams. How grateful we are that God has provided a place for them to go, at MDPEC, so that their dreams of an education can become a reality.

The last week before I left, the community gave Edward and I a traditional Maasai wedding. To do so, a Maasai family adopted me as their daughter. Ed had to pay a dowry for me, and present it to my adopted family the day before the ceremony, at which time “my father” called me in and gave me over to Edward. The next morning, I left early to my “fathers” house for his blessings. It would take too long to go into all the details, but we experienced all of the traditions of a Maasai wedding, including receiving 9 goats as a wedding gift. The biggest surprise was, they turned the marriage ceremony into a *community appreciation day* for what MDP has done over the past 20 years. Many of the MDPEC Alumni came to celebrate and provided a wedding cake and a gift of appreciation. Then to my surprise the community women who have been helped in some way by MDP, brought 43 goats to me as a gift. There were many speeches, and to say I was overwhelmed is an understatement. There were over 300 community people that came to celebrate with us. We felt so loved and truly a part of the community where we have struggled in the past, and faced such opposition. To hear even the men say that *all men* should support MDP because it is the only organization that has truly blessed and helped their community without taking anything from it. We give God all the Praise and Glory! I have to also praise God for the supporting staff, the 46 lay pastors, the MDPEC staff, from the cook to the groundman, the guards, the matrons, and housemothers. All contribute to the success of MDP and I am truly grateful for each person. I need also to add the staff that we have in the states as well, Lynette, Maritza and Megan. I could not do any of this without each person’s help and input. This was truly an amazing trip like no other. Thank you to each of you that makes it possible for us to continue the work that God has commissioned us to do.

Until Next Month,

Jan Ashley

Founder/CEO

Maasai Development Project



Left & below: Church members celebrating their newly constructed churches, and saying "Thank-you" to you, our donors.



Above: Mr. & Mrs. Ashley

Right: Community ladies presenting Jan with a herd of goats.

