

## **Dala Development**

### **August 31, 2020**

#### **Greetings All!**

The past several months have been unusual but good with lots of progress. We have some great news of God's provision to share, which we hope encourages you as well.

#### **Education: Great News**

Dala Development's Soi School has recently received loads, LOADS, of new books and teaching resources from the US! A shipping container full of donated new and used books reached Kisumu County in June and about 40 boxes were for Soi. All we had to do was help pay for shipping, and let me tell you, it was a bargain! Over the past three weeks, I (Emily) have been sorting it all, there are elementary textbooks for social studies, health, history, math, and science, plus teacher's instructional books, and six boxes of used books for leisure, plus eight boxes of brand new books for learning and leisure.

Last week we took a day trip to the village where I spent a few hours with the two head teachers, Jane and Jennipher, to discuss and review the newly acquired resources for the school. It was really enjoyable to sit and listen to them as they turned the pages of the various books. Two years ago the Kenyan government implemented a new educational curriculum with new teaching methods. There has been criticism that teachers were insufficiently trained and equipped to meet government expectations. Needless to say, both teachers were excited to see text books and instruction guides that align with this new curriculum!

One huge benefit of the books is the opportunity to keep the children engaged and learning while schools are closed. Recall that the Kenyan school year is January - October, schools have been closed since March and will remain closed for the remainder of the year. For the vast majority of students in Kenya, 2020 is a complete educational loss; nearly all students will repeat their current grade level. We agreed with the teachers that a system of lending will be developed. Libraries don't exist in this part of Kenya, so we are treading on new ground. It will be a great way for the kids to learn stewardship and taking responsibility for communal property while being able to learn independently.

#### **Health: New Ways to Serve**

On a different but equally encouraging note, we recently provided care packages for cancer patients whom we work with. While conducting a needs assessment in July and April, we were very pleased to learn that despite being an at-risk group for COVID-19, many of them had faith and hope in God to carry them through. Many, however, were struggling to access essential basics like food and household items. Sadly some had even stopped seeking care because of fear of infection, lockdown, and for lack of money.

Because of your continued support, for which we are very thankful, we were able to provide 14 cancer patients and their families with food, toiletries, and detergents. We also helped another 5 patients who urgently needed lab-work or pain medication.

#### **Thank You!**

We hope these two stories encourage you. Even during these uncertain times God knows your needs, cares about you and can provide for you just as he has for the students and patients here. As always,

none of this would be possible in the least without the support and encouragement of all of you! Your donations towards education have increased teacher pay, has allowed us to take advantage of opportunities like this book shipment, and to improve the structural integrity of the buildings where children learn. We thank God for the ways he has sustained this ministry for so many years and for meeting the needs of the students and patients we work with.

Several of you have reached out to us to know how we're doing and where we are. Thank you for your concern and for your prayers over our family. We are doing very well here in Kisumu; healthy, safe, and content. Emily continues to homeschool the girls and Dan is working from home 90% of the time. Kenya seems to be managing the COVID situation well compared to other countries and the population, as a whole, has remained in good spirits through all of it. International borders reopened last weekend while curfew, mask wearing, social distancing, and other regulations remain in effect.

We care about you and want to know how you're doing, please feel free to reply and update us on you!

Blessings and Hugs from Kenya,  
The Okalls and the Dala Development Team

Attached is a photo of Jane (left) and Jennipher (right) sitting in the school yard looking at a sampling of books, another is of Brighton, a young patient with her grandmother, with the care packages in yellow bags. And here is a link to a video from the day we sorted books: <https://youtu.be/PePPHtANqOg> (You won't see me, I was behind the camera.)

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