

# Notas

Annual Report 2018



## Convincing Slum Parents that School is Good

It was the first time that Anita had ridden in a vehicle. With her friends by her side, Anita, 12, and several mothers from the Cantonment slum rode on the Buddha's Smile School bus across town. For most of the mothers and their children, it was their first ride in a vehicle. The trip was BSS director, Rajan Kaur's creative idea. She hoped that the enticing promise of a ride in a vehicle might help her convince the mothers to send their laboring children to school. It worked!

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Hope House Nursery at Kuda Vana Children's Home



#### INDIA

The challenge of convincing slum-dwellers to let their children go to school



#### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Water for a remote, war-torn region



#### HAITI

Digital imaging system installed enabling total joint replacements

*Orphan Anita, 12, had never been to school until this year. She had been working as a babysitter for her brother's family. She is now learning to read at BSS, and brings her tiny nephew with her each morning to the school's day care center.*



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Tanya Cothran  
Sandra Mardigian  
Chosom  
Tara Petersen

#### Amistad International

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Amistad International  
1657 Edgewood Drive,  
Palo Alto, California 94303  
Telephone: (650) 328-1737

To contact Karen Kotoske:  
email [tomamistad@aol.com](mailto:tomamistad@aol.com)

Our website:  
[www.amistadinternational.org](http://www.amistadinternational.org)

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# What is Amistad International?

**A**mistad, a word meaning friendship in Spanish, is a public nonprofit 501(c) (3) charity which supports humanitarian, self-help, and educational programs for communities seeking to lift themselves from poverty through education and opportunity.

By supporting local community leadership, Amistad works in partnership with community leaders to help children and adults develop the skills and knowledge necessary for building healthy economically-sustainable communities.

## Some of the projects we support include:

- Kuda Vana Children's Home, Zimbabwe—a home for abused, ill, and abandoned children.
- Community Initiatives for Rural Development (CIFORD) in Kenya—providing agricultural training, water tanks, and a program to train teenage mothers in marketable job skills including sewing, soap making and jewelry making. <http://cifordkenya.org>
- Lambano Sanctuary—homes and hospice for HIV+ infants and young children in Johannesburg, South Africa. [www.lambano.org.za](http://www.lambano.org.za)
- Buddha's Smile School (BSS)—a free primary school for 221 children of beggars, lepers and refugees in Sarnath, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India. Founder and director, Rajan Kaur. [www.buddhas-smile-school.org](http://www.buddhas-smile-school.org)
- Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre, Kenya (G-BIACK)—teaching tailoring and sewing, agriculture, computer, handcrafts and cooking to impoverished teen girls from all over Kenya. [www.g-biack.org](http://www.g-biack.org)
- Kenya—Support for Maruge and Amri elementary schools for impoverished Maasai and Kikuyu children.
- Mexico—A diversified program providing Mexico's Huichol Indian communities with humanitarian aid and job-skill training. In-country director: Dagoberto Cirilo. *E-mail: [amistadgdl@hotmail.com](mailto:amistadgdl@hotmail.com)*
- Haiti—Drs. Scott Nelson and Terry Dietrich's orthopedic surgical program at Hopital Adventiste d'Haiti, Port Au Prince, Haiti.

**Editor's note:** Sponsored by Amistad, Maruge School in Nachu, Kenya is considered a “bridge school,” a place of peace and harmony where children and parents from conflicting tribes—the Maasai and Kikuyu—can meet on neutral ground with the shared goals for education of their children. Maasai student, Annette Senewa, 11, tells us how her school is leading her toward becoming a science teacher instead of a child bride.

# “I have lots of hope for the future.”

Our small village, surrounded by many hills, is called Yallet. An acacia tree marks our village square, and the tree provides shade to us and our livestock and dogs. Everyone knows everyone else in my village.

But our peaceful village isn't peaceful all the time. Sometimes my people fight with our neighbors. Grownups say they are fighting over grazing land, and during these times of conflict we end up losing our animals. This makes us children feel worried. We don't understand the fighting. My mother is always praying for peace.

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*Maruge student and Maasai tribe member, Annette Senewa (left) wants to become a science teacher and not an adolescent bride. Two of her sisters are on the right.*



# Girls Who'd Thought "Life Had Come to an End"

**S**tella Gatriwi is 17 years old and dropped out of school when she was in middle school. She had a baby and was forced to leave school. "I am so depressed," Stella told Margaret Ikiara of CIFORD Kenya. "My baby's father does not want to talk to me, and my family has turned against me. I need to do something to help my child."

Stella is not the only one facing such a dilemma. Sixty girls between the ages of 14 and 20 are part of CIFORD's new Young Mothers Program sponsored by Amistad. These teen mothers are living in deep poverty after being rejected by their families, schools and community. All doors were closed to them. For some, prostitution seemed the only way forward.

The CIFORD Young Mothers Program now brings the girls together for a combination of group support and job skill training. They have formed groups which are learning job skills, leadership skills, child care, nutrition, basic business and bookkeeping skills. Among the job skills are dressmaking, beadwork, and hairdressing. Those who pass the national authority standards vocational testing will be given a certificate.

Lucy Karimi is one of the 20 girls who are learning tailoring and dressmaking. "This is a lifetime opportunity," she says excitedly. "I would not be able to afford vocational training without these classes. Before, I had withdrawn from people. I hid so that no one could see me with my baby. I heard about the Maburua Glorious

young mothers group which is working with CIFORD and their sewing school. I decided to come out and learn to sew. I am no longer alone. There are other girls who are in the same situation and we are learning together."

Amistad provided funds for the purchase of 15 sewing machines. Classes are three days per week with teacher, Irene Makena, a trained vocational teacher and a popular local dressmaker. An added plus for learning in the class is that some of the girls who are lucky to live with their families are learning to repair the worn and torn clothing they bring from home.

Maureen Kauria is 16 years old and had to drop out of the 8th grade when she gave birth to her daughter. She tells us, "This is a God-given opportunity for us girls who thought that my life had come to an end. Thank you, CIFORD and your partners, for making this real for us."

Student Fridah Kamathi has an 18-month old child and no way to buy food for her baby. She tells us, "I had given up in life. I never even saw the need to take a bath, or be clean or be smart. But after coming to classes and interacting with the other girls I now see my need to have a new life."

There is now great interest in the town of Lairangi for CIFORD to open a second school for their young mothers to learn sewing, hair dressing and jewelry making. Amistad hopes to be able to help in possible future expansion.

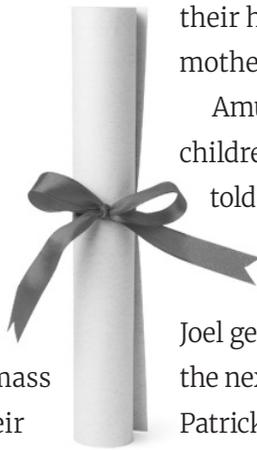
# What Can Happen When Someone Believes in You

Patrick Gachichio's father did not want him attending school. For years, the father had been following a religious cult that believed that the world would end in 2000. "It would be a waste for our children to attend school since the world is going to end before long," he told his family. And so his Nairobi-based children were not allowed to go to school.

Then during tribal conflicts there was a mass migration with many forced to return to their ancestral homelands from slums of Nairobi. Patrick moved with his mother and siblings back to their area, Amri township. His father stayed in Nairobi. Back in the tribal area their new neighbors teased and harassed Patrick and his family because of their religious beliefs.

Patrick's situation changed in 2009 when he met a community pastor, Joel Amutabi, who operates the Amistad-sponsored Amri Elementary School for children unable to school for lack of funds or family support. Amutabi asked Patrick why he wasn't in school, and instead of answering the pastor directly, Patrick invited the pastor to come to his home to talk to his mother.

The Gachichio family of five lived in just one tiny room. They rarely had visitors because of their marginalized status in the community. To welcome the esteemed director of a school into



their home was a great honor for Patrick's mother.

Amutabi asked Patrick's mother why her children were not in school. She cried as she told him about her husband's refusal to let them attend because of their religious beliefs. With compassion and persuasion, Joel gently suggested the children start classes the next day at the free Amri Elementary School. Patrick's mother made the difficult decision to disobey her husband and send her children to Amri.

Once enrolled, Joel noted that the Gachichio children were exceptionally bright. He dedicated himself to helping them stay in school. His commitment was rewarded when Patrick scored extremely well in the national exam that students take after completing the 8th grade.

Patrick's pro-education uncle and some other friends started to recognize that Patrick was a brilliant student who was respected and liked by his teachers. The uncle and his friends put together funds to pay for Patrick's high school education. This year, Patrick is attending Mt. Kenya University and is studying Security and Criminology. Patrick hopes to become a lawyer, following in the steps of his grandfather who was a lawyer. He hopes to provide legal representation to the people in his community.



*Dr. Scott Nelson and his team are able to provide high tech orthopedic procedures at Haiti Adventist Hospital because of the installation of PACS, the new digital imaging system.*

## Haitian Orthopedic Surgery Program Leaps Forward

State-of-the-art digital X-ray technology, known as PACS, is now installed at Haiti Adventist Hospital (HAH) in Port Au Prince, Haiti. This was a crucial step in meeting the goals of making available high quality orthopedic surgeries available to the 10 million impoverished Haitians.

Dr. Scott Nelson, now living in Haiti with his wife Marnie Nelson, is overseeing construction of a new 15,000 sq. ft. outpatient clinic at HAH. He tells us about the new digital equipment.

“Virtually all hospitals in the United States now have such systems which electronically store radiographic images. This technology is to the traditional x-ray what digital cameras are to film cameras.” He explains that X-rays beamed out of any old, new, portable or stationary machine can be beamed through the patient onto the PACS detector and the image shows up on an adjacent computer via Bluetooth. It is then labeled and archived onto the hospital’s new server using an Agfa PACS database program.

With digital X-ray technology, the cost is affordable for nearly all patients regardless of economic status. Thanks to Agfa Healthcare who gave a 70% discount to the mission hospital,

through their connection with Loma Linda University Medical Center PACS’s director Mike Haman, the system was purchased and delivered. Amistad International gave a helping hand in this transaction.

Jere Chrispens, Loma Linda University Assistant Clinical Professor of Informatics, developed a demographic medical database for the new PACS system, the first in Haiti.

This year HAH was also able to launch the first total joint replacement program in Haiti because of the construction of new surgical suites with air filtration systems. Crucial to new high tech hip replacement surgeries is Renovis, a total hip implant company which is donating implants, and to Dr. Mark Mildren, a total joint specialist from Eugene, Oregon, who has been donating his time to help Dr. Scott Nelson establish the new program. We are all deeply grateful to Dr. I. M. Feldkamp III and Mrs. Pam Feldkamp for their crucial and generous support of the PACS equipment purchase.

Several volunteer teams provided high tech surgeries this year thanks to many experienced physicians who volunteered their time. The list includes Dr. Terry Dietrich (Oregon), Drs. Juan Bibiloni and Humberto Guzman (Puerto Rico,) Dr. John Herzenberg and his team from Maryland, Dr. Paul Burton (California,) Dr. William DeMuth (Pennsylvania,) and Dr. Francel Alexis, (Haiti) who is in training as the arthroscopic orthopedic surgeon at HAH and other doctors and auxiliary professionals. We thank everyone who has donated time, and to those who are planning to come to volunteer at HAH with future teams.

# Christian and Muslim Women Together in Struggle for Survival



The agriculture school Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre/Kenya is perhaps one model toward a better world: Muslim and Christian women working together side by side in common cause for their families' survival. These devout Christian and Muslim women live near one another on the border with the war-torn country of Somalia.



Their sons and husbands are often kidnapped or recruited against their will by the Somali terrorist group, al-Shabaab. The boys and men are forced to fight an illegal war in which none of them has a stake. It is up to the women to grow food for survival. Help is now coming in the form of teachers from Amistad-sponsored G-BLACK and The Association of (Catholic) Sisterhoods of Kenya who have been training the women to grow food sustainably along the Tana River in Garissa, along the Kenya-Somali border. But their beginnings have been a challenge.



***G-BLACK co-founder and gardening teacher Peris Nderitu writes us:***

Dear Amistad,

The situation in Garissa on the Somali border is very precarious. It is a very dangerous place both to live and to visit. When co-teacher Mary and I first arrived in Garissa to teach gardening to the women, Muslim men threatened violence against us. Luckily, we have a good relationship with the Catholic nuns who help both Muslims and Christians in Garissa, and they were able to intervene. We were not harmed.

Men in Garissa have a lot of power over the women. Most men are rarely at home, and women are left to do all the work. The young men and boys are forcibly recruited into al-Shabaab (the jihadist fundamentalist group in Somalia which pledges loyalty to al-Qaeda.) There is very little employment for anyone. Ninety percent of the women have not been to school. Out of desperation some of the women resort to prostitution in order to feed their children.

On the bright side, we have found that many of the Christian and Muslim women are very interested in learning to garden for their survival. They want to live in harmony with each other. They cry together

when their friends or neighbors, whether Christian or Muslim, die in the attacks. Together they mourned the 2015 al-Shebab massacre at Garissa University killing 148.

Thanks to Amistad, we have been making the seven-hour bus ride to Garissa to teach gardening to the women, taking along everything necessary to teach. Working together, side by side in harmony, they prepared many organic gardening beds which soon flourished. It is normally very dry in this region, but with buckets they can fetch water from a nearby river. Unfortunately, this spring unprecedented heavy rains came with flooding all over Kenya. In late summer the river washed away the women's gardens, the top soil, and houses. We are traveling again to help them restart their gardens, helping the women to continue their small groups working together on their farms as they cultivate the land together, planting, harvesting and even cooking together. This is strengthening peace and trust amongst them.

We hope that the men will pay attention to the women producing food together in peace. We are grateful to Amistad for the financial support for this greatly-needed program.

Thank you, Amistad friends.

Peris Nderitu

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*Christian and Muslim women peacefully planting community gardens together on the war-torn Kenya-Somali border.*

# Hope House Nursery at Kuda Vana Children's Home

The dark, early morning quiet is pierced by the hungry cry of a tiny baby ready for her breakfast. Already she knows that she can expect her Mama to bring a warm bottle and a snuggle when she needs it. Soon after, she is joined by eight other infants who are also ready to be changed and fed to start their day. No matter their beginnings, each baby knows that they can expect love and care in the newly named Hope House, the nursery at Kuda Vana Children's Home.

Sadly, Kuda Vana is one of only two Children's Homes in the area which welcomes infants. This means that when the KVCH nursery is full, Social Services is forced to leave abandoned or orphaned babies in the hospital, sometimes for months on end, where they do not receive adequate care or attention.

Kuda Vana has an overall capacity for nine infants in our nursery, and they are currently at full capacity. As the babies grow and are toilet-trained, they are transitioned into another Kuda Vana group home which is suited to their personality and needs. This fall, the time came for toddlers Muridali and

Rundai to move to their group homes and join the older children. Many tears were shed by the nursery mamas as the toddlers moved to their new homes. But surrounded by the love of the other children, they've adjusted well to their new homes.

Toddler Muridali used to be the ruling king of the nursery, never sitting still and always the most impatient. His obstinate cry could be recognized across campus. Now he can happily sit still for a 45-minute worship service, quietly watching, singing and listening to stories. It is hard to believe this is the same little boy. It is clear he will be ready for school when he's old enough.

One-year-old Rundai is thriving on the attention and can now be seen toddling across campus, offering her big dimpled smile to everyone she sees. Both of these children now have the ability to grow to their ultimate potential. We thank our sponsors for helping us provide a loving and nurturing environment for the Kuda Vana children.

*Toddler Muridali in the arms of his new big brother, Rindi.*



# A Cinderella Story



*Baby Cinderella with her mama Progress.*

It is hard to imagine anyone harming a child, let alone a mother attempting to kill her own infant. Unfortunately, mental illness and desperation make this an all-too-common occurrence in Zimbabwe.

In September, Kuda Vana became the home of our newest child, a five-month-old baby girl who had endured immense suffering in her short life. Her mother, now in prison, had murdered one of her other children and then tried to kill her new born girl! Thankfully, we still had space for one more baby in our Hope House nursery.

There is always excitement when a new baby arrives. This precious child arrived nameless, and everyone wanted to give this sweet baby girl a name right away. Our wise little Solomon (nicknamed Solie), asked if he could choose her name.

"Cinderella! I want to name her Cinderella!" he exclaimed.

Volunteers Colleen and John Ordelleide thought Solie's idea for a name was wonderful. "We can call her "Cindy," they suggested. Solie's eyes lit up and he ran away to tell the Hope House mamas of his idea for the new baby's name. To Solie's delight, they too agreed with the new baby's name. Kuda Vana now has its very own Cinderella, a child much beloved.

# Hopes Carried Stella to School... and She Was Turned Away

*Margaret Ikiara, Founder and Director of Community Action for Rural Development, Kenya (CIFORD), is a force for good in her rural community near Maua, Kenya. When she drives down the dusty roads in her vehicle, people wave her welcome and call out to her. Even though she hears many stories of hardship, when she heard Stella's story it brought tears to her eyes. Margaret wrote to us...*

“Yesterday in the countryside, I drove passed a young girl and her mother walking along the road. Stella Kambura, age 14, and her mother, Margaret Nchulubi, were leading a goat on a rope along the highway. I stopped to ask them where they were going, since I recognized them and knew they were not close to their home. They told me that they were coming from the open market where they had gone to sell the goat to pay for Stella's school fees. However, they were not able to sell it for a high enough price. And so the goat was returning home with them. And it seemed that Stella would not be able to attend school this year.

Stella has enormous ambition to complete high school and become an educated woman. Yet they needed \$445 for the year's school fees. I could tell that they were both discouraged. Stella's mother, suffering from HIV, looked so tired and ill. Stella's father had recently died of AIDS. I told them to get into my car, with their goat, and I drove them home to their 1/4-acre farm.

A few days later I returned to their small farm, and I was surprised to find Stella dressed in her school uniform! She told me that her hopes had carried her to school that morning. She had dressed, walked to school, and pleaded with the teacher to let her stay. But the teacher would not let her stay if she had no money for fees. Stella was brokenhearted. The teacher had turned her away. I felt all the more determined to help her.

I drove to the Nyambene Girl's Boarding School where Stella wanted so badly to attend. I was able to convince the principal to accept Stella into their (highly-regarded) girls' boarding school. I told her that I would find the \$445 for the year's tuition and that I would provide the bedding and a towel from my own home. I knew some other friends who could give Stella other necessary items. And now, thanks to Amistad's financial support, Stella, a girl with so much potential, is attending school again. Thank you for providing for Stella's tuition this year at Nyambene Girls' Boarding School.”



*Stella Kambura, realizing her hopes of becoming educated, is now attending Nyambene Girl's Boarding School.*



*Farming student Samantha Akoth, from the Kenya-Somali border, is learning to become a farmer and seamstress at G-BLACK. Samantha tell us "I want to use my skills to help other youth."*

# Growing a New Crop of Women Farmers

Two years ago, Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre/Kenya (G-BIACK) launched a new Amistad-sponsored project, the Girls Empowerment Program (GEP) which is a live-in 18 month program for teen girls who have lost parents to AIDS or other causes and are growing up unsupported and in extreme poverty. The first class, with 11 girls, gathered at G-BIACK in August 2016. Presently there are 60 girls in the GEP Program. They are living in a new girls' dorm built by Amistad. During their 18 months of study, they are learning life skills for self-sufficiency and independence, including farming and seed-saving; nutrition and cooking; computer skills; income-generating skills such as sewing and tailoring, beadwork, and baking.

With 60 girls living on campus, expanded facilities were needed, and this year Amistad sponsored the building of a larger dormitory. The new girls' dorm includes two bathrooms with "green" toilets which compost the waste.

Among the girls now living in the new dorm is Samantha Akoth who comes from Garissa County on the Somali/Kenya border. The Garissa people are a mixture of Christians and Muslims whose struggle for peace is as difficult as their struggle for food. Her people have been severely impacted by the al-Shabaab Militia and their bloody and illegal battles. Many of the young men from her community have been coerced by the al-Shabaab Militia to fight.

Samantha tells us, "I want to go back home after my training at G-BIACK and start doing agriculture. I also want to have an organic restaurant where I can sell my food and bread I bake. G-BIACK teaches us baking and cookery skills which will be very useful for me. I want to use my skills to help other youth."

Student Beatrice Wangui tells us, "Most of the people in my community, especially the youth, are unemployed. The soil is there, but they don't know how to produce good food. The main cash crop is tea leaves for export. Many of the children in our community are suffering from malnutrition. I want to teach young mothers how they can supplement the nutrition of the children by growing diverse crops in very small portions of land. I want to teach the women how to repair their kids' school uniforms and make clothes too."

Sarah Njalu, a Maasai girl, is glad she is learning how to grow food. Her people have traditionally been pastoralists, moving their livestock wherever there was grass. This is no longer possible due to land disputes and climate change. It is also no longer possible to rely on meat and milk as their only food.

"I want to teach my people how to till the soil and grow food. I have also learned how to look for new beadwork designs from the computer. I will be able to show my community members, especially the women, how to improve their beadwork designs and fetch better prices in the market."

# Rooms Built for Saving Native Food Seeds

The seed-saving program at Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Center in Kenya was in need of a cellar for food storage and also for space to store indigenous heritage seeds. Sponsored by Amistad, the construction of a large room with a stairway to an underground 'cool temperature' cellar was completed in August.

Saving and planting local heritage seeds with their stronger resilient genes provides greater possibility of healthier crops.

Heritage (non-hybridized) seeds provide a wider genetic variability which can help to lower the chances of future crop failures.



## “Christmas” Comes in May to Girl’s Sewing School

Astonishment and excitement was bubbling at the sewing school at Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre/Kenya (G-BIACK) in May of this year when a 300-pound mountain of carefully-packed boxes of donated sewing supplies arrived from California. The sewing and tailoring students were stunned when they saw what was in the boxes: beautiful fabrics which are unaffordable for the sewing school, and, in any case, unavailable in Kenya. The students are

impoverished rural teen girls taking an 18-month sewing and tailoring class where they learn to make garments, stylish bags and other items which are sought at markets. The girls live at G-BIACK during the course.

Debbie and Chris Seguin, of Sunnyvale, CA, had visited the sewing school while on a trip to Africa and had seen the school’s profound need of fabric and equipment. The girls were learning to sew with paper because the school could not afford to buy fabric. This need deeply touched Debbie, a talented seamstress with a lovely collection of fabrics she had not yet sewn. She decided she could help by sharing her supply, and husband Chris became her willing partner.

In memory of their seamstress mothers, Lorraine Mayo and Helen Sequin, this year Debbie and Chris shipped out the first two of what will be four shipments totaling nearly 3/4 of a ton of fabric and equipment. Collecting fabrics, thread, buttons, sewing books, sewing machine supplies, embroidery floss, upholstery and interior design fabric, and patterns from Debbie’s own collection and from her many friends, they packaged the colorful fabrics, preparing them to be air-shipped from a San Diego cargo service. Just as crucial were those who donated to the mailing fund which included Oracle Corporation who matched funds given by employees. This year, Chris, an Oracle employee, launched a fabric and donation drive at Oracle Corporation. We thank the Seguins and their family and many friends who are helping them with this wonderful project.



*The students at G-BIACK sewing school are now learning to sew with fabric instead of the paper they had been using. This year nearly 3/4 of a ton of fabrics, equipment and sewing machines have been shipped to G-BIACK’s sewing school by Amistad volunteers, Debbie and Chris Seguin.*

*Maasai tribal girls' lives change as they learn computation, farming, sewing, baking and how to start a business.*



## Maasai Girls: Potential, Not Poverty

Female genital mutilation, early marriage, and lack of access to education are huge constraining issues for young Maasai girls and women. The patriarchal Maasai community still maintains the tradition that allows the men to arrange marriages and “sell” their daughters at a young age in exchange for money and livestock. Girls are not given the same opportunities as boys. The families typically only pay for schooling for their sons who might later increase the family’s inheritance through marriage. Women are left to perform all the domestic chores such as cooking, care of the children, and care of livestock. They are not viewed as people with potential but rather as property.

Grow-BioIntensive Agriculture Centre/Kenya (G-BIACK) has been in the frontline to change this situation in the Maasai community, and other traditional communities in Kenya as well. Through the 18-month Girls Empowerment Program (GEP), young Maasai women are now acquiring marketable skills in computer, sewing, farming, handcrafts and bakery which will enable them to sustain themselves independently in the future. The Maasai girl students, who stay in the new dorm (provided by Amistad donors) are realizing their worth and are also developing leadership skills. The Maasai girls hope become a source of inspiration to other girls in their communities.

# Honoring Hope and Helping Another Child Find Love



*Little Rundai with her big sister Rejoice.*

I've been thinking a lot about what I want to do to remember our baby girl, Hope Ann. I will never hold her, but there are babies out there who desperately need to be held and loved. And they are in my sphere of influence.

Kuda Vana Partnership, the organization I work for, exists to empower the most vulnerable children of Zimbabwe to not just survive, but thrive. We now have nine infants in our Kuda Vana Children's Home nursery. These sweet babies were found on the sides of roads, or left in hospitals, or dropped in the bottom of pit toilets.

They deserve to be loved, and they deserve the future that Hope would have had if she had been born. If I could take them home I would, but that's not yet possible in Zimbabwe.

I am asking you to consider a gift in Hope's memory, a gift that will take care of another baby on the other side of the world who DOES have the chance at a full and happy life because they are at Kuda Vana. The size of your gift is no matter. A little or a lot gives a child the opportunity to thrive. The best way to support a baby is to sign up for an easy monthly gift. That makes sure we have what we need for formula, diapers, clothing, future education, etc.

The little girl in the picture is Rundai. She is the reason I ultimately switched jobs to work for Kuda Vana. Abandoned as an infant, she needed heart surgery to correct a defect. Wonderful and generous friends stepped up and within a few weeks she'd had her surgery and miraculously recovered. She is pictured here with her "Mama" in the nursery. She is getting ready to "graduate" to one of our loving Group Homes where she will grow up as part of a family unit.

This is the kind of impact you have just helped make. Thank you so much. It makes my heart feel a little better.

Tara Petersen

**Editor's note:** Tara wrote this after the loss of her unborn daughter Hope Ann.

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## "Mr. Kuda Vana": Flourishing in His Garden

Tendai came to Kuda Vana Children's Home (then called Murwira Children's Home) when he was 3 years old. He endeared those around him with his laughter and bright smile. With so many children to take care of at Murwira Children's Home, Tendai often used to get away with not following through on daily tasks. Now Tendai is 14 years old and, with consistent care and guidance from the staff, he has developed the great qualities of self-discipline and responsibility.

Each day Tendai spends time watering, weeding, planting or harvesting the family garden. He is the eldest brother in his home and the gardening is his responsibility, though sometimes he also gets help from his younger brothers and sisters. Tendai's self-discipline has grown right along with the vegetables, flowers, and herbs. His Mama proudly tells us that he does his work without complaining or delay. Tendai is known in the Kuda Vana family as a kind and thoughtful young man who carries out responsibilities with a bright smile. During the school fun day last year, Tendai was named "Mr. Kuda Vana."



*Tendai is happiest when he is working in the garden growing vegetables and flowers.*



# Here's What You've Done

**Many students who have been supported by you, our donors, are accomplishing much through higher education. Here is a current up-date on five of our hard-working students.**

- Amit Kumar Singh was a beggar boy who started attending Buddha's Smile School, Varanasi, India, in 2003. Amit has now completed his four-year study in electronic communication engineering at Pandian Saraswathi Yadav Engineering College. He is now working for a national corporation in their training program. After a six-month period he will be appointed to an engineering post in Chennai.
- Patrick Gachio Mwangi, a graduate of Amistad-sponsored Amri Elementary School in Kenya, is the first Amri graduate to become a college student. Patrick is studying Security and Criminology.
- Two Buddha's Smile School students, Mamta and Annu, have graduated from a practical nursing course. Mamta will be working in a hospital in Varanasi, India and Annu is continuing her education to become a teacher.
- Josephat Sesi, an orphaned elementary student at Pathfinder Academy in Eldoret, Kenya, stood out as an exceptionally bright student. At the request of school director, Joshua Machinga, Amistad gave Josephat a scholarship to a top college-prep high school where he excelled. Josephat was accepted at Eldoret University in 2015. Sesi is now a high school math and science teacher in Kenya.

## **G-BLACK Trains Orphanage Staff in Growing Gardens**

With the recommendation and help of Amistad friends Dick and Nancy Noble, Amistad is supporting a new program at Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre/Kenya (G-BLACK). This program trains local orphanage staff to grow healthy food while also saving money.

## **Democratic Republic of the Congo: This year Amistad joined other groups in helping to place a badly needed water well in the DRC.**

This year, thousands of refugees left war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo and headed to the town of Assa, DRC. The town of Assa needed a well to provide water for both the locals and the refugees. But it was nearly impossible for well-

drilling equipment to reach Assa due to treacherously muddy road conditions and remoteness of location. The well driller finally made it through the jungle, and then found only impenetrable rock after drilling eight sites. On the ninth drilling he hit a strong source of water! The new well is now providing over 56 gallons per hour.

**In the 2017 issue of Notas we told you about the Mexican Huichol Indian baby, Valentin Serio**, whom we were helping obtain a series of surgeries for his severe cleft palate. You can see in the photo the good results of Valentin's several facial surgeries this year. Valentin can now eat like other toddlers and is a happy little fellow.

## **Lambano Sanctuary, South Africa for HIV+ children**

At Lambano Sanctuary there are now 28 permanent children and youth, ages 11 to 21 years old. They have done well because of good medical care. The eldest are entering adulthood now. The three oldest children are employed! One is working at Supa Quick, one is working in construction, and one is working as a cook in their hospice kitchen. The rest of the children are attending high school.

## **Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre/ Kenya (G-BLACK) accepted 25 new students for their Girls Empowerment Program (GEP) in January.**

GEP is an 18-month course teaching farming, textiles and tailoring, baking and cooking, and computer literacy to rural teen girls who have no way of making a sustainable income. Volunteers Dick and Nancy Noble wrote to us after their second visit to G-BLACK: "We wouldn't believe a project could be run so well if we hadn't seen it for ourselves. We also visited Amistad's Maruge School which is another excellent project."

## **In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Amistad is providing French-language books for health projects.**

It is nearly impossible to mail items to the remote areas of DRC, so we were grateful that Amistad colleague, Neema Banga, could hand-carry the books back to her homeland for distribution.



*In the DRC, Assa town men gathering at the new well which is providing life-saving water for the community and refugees escaping tribal conflicts.*



*Huichol Indian toddler, Valentin Serio with his mother Guadalupe in Tepic, Mexico. After several facial surgeries for cleft palate and lip, Valentin is now able to enjoy his meals like most little boys can.*



# We Say Gracias to These Wonderful People and Organizations



*The children of Kuda Vana Children's Home say thank you for giving them the opportunity to become their best selves.*

*Dear Amistad,*

*Thank so much for supporting the young mothers job skill project at CIFORD/Kenya. We are giving hope to these girls who felt their lives had come to an end. This is a new dawn for many of the young mothers who were desperate and full of despair.*

*Blessings, Margaret Ikiara,*

*Founder/Director  
Community Initiatives for Rural Development*

- We thank Ann Down, Tom Seguin, Chris and Bill McClure for sponsoring this new program for teen mothers.
- Thank you Dick and Nancy Noble, Chris and Bill McClure and Eva Parelius for sponsoring several programs this year at Grow-Biointensive Agriculture Centre/Kenya.
- Thank you Soroptimist International of Glendale, CA for providing funds for the drilling of a water well at the teaching center of Community Initiatives for Rural Development (CIFORD) in Lailuba, Kenya.
- We thank our donors who made it possible for us to provide corn seed for elderly women

farmers in Kenya during the holidays. Many of these elderly farmers are raising their orphaned grandchildren.

- Thank you, Kee and Paul Flynn, for your faithful generous support.
- Thank you, Dr. Peter Nelson, Dr. Scott Nelson, Chad Nelson, and James Haas for making your arduous surgical and dental trip to assist people in Chad, Africa.
- Wanda and Don Krein, we thank you for your many years of supporting Maruge and Amri elementary schools in Kenya. Our hearts are full with gratitude to you.
- Thank you, Ann Down, for the generous compassion you share with Amistad's programs for children and women. Our gratitude to you runs deep.
- Thank you, Tracy and Scott Hanson, for your generous support of Amistad's programs.
- We're so grateful to Dr. Gene Conley who supports the Kuda Vana Orphanage in the memory of his beloved wife, Annette.
- Thank you, Donna Peters, for again providing a wonderful Christmas party for the children of Buddha's Smile School. We also thank Donna for providing an elevator to carry the heavy cooking pots from roof kitchen to the ground floor.
- Thank you, Melanie and Earl Boyd, and MaryLou Reiber, for your many years of support for Amistad's programs.
- Thank you, Dr. I. M. Feldkamp and Mrs. Pam Feldkamp, for sponsoring the new PACS digital imaging equipment for Haiti Adventist Hospital.
- Thank you, Ann Down, Eva Parelius, Chris and Bill McClure, and Linda and Dan Griffin for generously supporting the Young Mothers job development for 60 young women at CIFORD who are now learning sewing, hair dressing and jewelry making.
- Thank you, Celina and Ben Dawson, Tom, William, Cienna and Gracie (quadruplets now



6 years old) for your tremendous support of Kuda Vana Children's Home. The KVCH family sends their joy and thanks to your family.

- A very big thank you to the Erwin Family Foundation for their tremendous assistance for Kuda Vana Children's Home/Zimbabwe.
- Thank you, Jeng and David Cunningham and sons Ezra and Caleb, for providing food for the Buddha's Smile School families who were flooded out by the Varuna River, and also for other BSS children in dire need of food.
- Thank you, Chris and Bill McClure and Carolyn Civatarese, for sponsoring the program for 48 teen girls to attend an anti-FGM leadership conference in Kenya.
- Thank you Tom Seguin, Bill and Chris McClure, for providing the daily hot lunch for the children during Term II at Maruge Elementary School in Kenya.

- Thank you to Una Sicherman, 10, of Brooklyn, NY, who sent \$30 for the children of BSS from money she earned at a bake sale.
- Thank you, John Watkins, Tom Seguin and Chris and Bill McClure, for support to build composting toilets and tile the floor in the new girls dorm at Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre/Kenya.
- Thank you, Richard and Nancy Noble and Maree Noble/Elizabeth Stumpf Memorial Foundation, for providing the funds for Grow Bio-intensive Agriculture Centre/Kenya (G-BLACK) to build their new girls dormitory for the Girls Empowerment Program.
- We thank every donor who shares with Amistad's outreach. Your generosity is changing and saving lives.

Karen Kotoske  
Founder/Executive Director



*When BSS school families homes were flooded by the Varuna river this year, Amistad donors provided food for the hungry families.*

## We Remember

- Gay and Duane Wilson, and Karen Hanson Kotoske honor beloved friends Peggy and Bob Clayville, married for 72 years, together forever.
- DorAnne Donesky Wolfkill, Peter and Suzanne Nelson, Audrey Shaffer, Rich and Yvonne Macias honor the life of Conroy Donesky.
- Clarice and Richard Anderson honor the life of their beloved friend, Mrs. Kaye Doyle, a gentle soul who lit a room with her smile. Kaye Doyle is missed by many.
- Gay and Duane Wilson honor the life of their dear family member, Joe Wagner.
- Selby Frame honors the life of her dear friend Dr. Gina Brief-Elgin who once visited Buddha's Smile School, thereafter keeping the school in her heart.
- Debbie and Chris Seguin, Karen and Tom Kotoske remember their beloved friend. Betty Guthrie. We miss Betty's smiling face, her sense of humor, and her warm-hearted presence in our lives.
- Janet Stedman Hoffmann and her husband James Hoffmann honor the lives of Janet's grand-parents, Joanna and Milton Stedman.

## We Honor

- Debbi Christensen honors the birthday of her treasured friend, Shelley Stockstead.
- Gay and Duane Wilson honor the 60th anniversary of Gene and Judy Kramer, and also for the healing of the Kramers following an auto accident.
- Bruce Moyer honors his loving wife Shirley Moyer.
- Linda and John Stedman honor Janet and James Hoffmann for Christmas.
- Gary and Dee Emmerson celebrate the birthday of Gary's loving mother, Gwen Emmerson.
- Janet and Jim Hoffmann donate in loving memory of Milton and Joanna Stedman.
- Robert and Ginny Latta honor their wonderful son Dr. Alan Latta
- Gay and Duane Wilson, faithful friends of KVCH, thank God for their 60 years of married happiness.
- Joyce Runge celebrates her birthday by helping Kuda Vana Children's Home. Happy birthday, Joyce!



(School is Good—Continued from page 1)

The illiterate mothers and children, with palpable excitement and dressed in their best saris, ascended into the BSS school bus. Arriving at BSS they toured the schoolrooms and bathrooms, mesmerized with the toys, decorations, and the running water. After the tour, they were given snacks. The mothers' hearts were won over. Twenty new students were recruited from the slums to a new life at school.

This special trip on a school bus came after many months of visits to the slum community of Cantonment near the central train station. The Cantonment families work as drain cleaners, street sweepers, and beggars. They are constantly preoccupied with earning enough to feed their hungry families and every able pair of hands must work. At first, the parents were hostile to Rajan during her visits, "Our children don't need to go to school! They need to earn money so we can eat," they spat at her.

However, Rajan's interior compass always points in the direction of children's welfare and education. She did not give up. One child she especially noticed, Anita, who held a small child, and looked so forlorn. An orphan who works as a babysitter and servant to her brother's family, and now, at age 12, she had never been to school. But now Anita is attending BSS and is enrolled in kindergarten. The only way she is allowed by her brother to attend is because she is able to bring her baby nephew with her to BSS's new daycare each morning.

Rajan often has trouble convincing the parents that education is the best way the family can lift themselves from a subsistence level. The parents want their children to work because even a few earned rupees can mean the difference between a meal or hunger that night.

Most of the BSS children's shanties are considered temporary structures: Everyone knows the police could come at any time with their

equipment and raze their flimsy homes. Made from plastic sheets and sticks, they line roadways and garbage recycling areas. Some live in the open under bridges. Families rebuild near where they can earn a few rupees through collecting garbage and metal, cleaning ears (done on the street,) prostitution, or begging. The tension in the slums is explosive, and violence and extortion are common. This year, the police violently tore down two of the communities where the BSS children live, forcing the families to rebuild their houses in other blighted areas. In September, school families who had rebuilt their shanties along the Varuna River suffered once again when their homes were flooded by the rising river.

Working with a new community is an uphill struggle for Rajan Kaur and her teachers. For the first year or two she visits the families regularly and to establish trust. The parents are sometimes rude and even violent towards Rajan. The children who are eventually allowed to come to school are often unfamiliar with the structure of school and classrooms. Amit, one of 30 BSS students from the Chaukaghat community, used to bite and scare other children at school. Now, he is friendly and calm in classes and playtime. BSS is the only place Amit feels he can relax in a safe and caring environment. The teachers are specially trained to work with the unsocialized children.

Many of the BSS Elementary School student graduates are now attending high school and some beyond. One young man just completed his engineering degree, and two young women have completed a practical nursing course. One of them is continuing on to study Education. BSS provides opportunity, safety, daily nutrition, medical care, and dignity. We thank every Amistad donor who supports this noble school.



## Amazon Smile

We are excited to share some great news with you! 0.5% percent of all purchases you make through Amazon.com's special charity website will be given to **Kuda Vana Children's Home** through Amistad International!

When you make a purchase on Amazon and you use this link:

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-2737593>

for your purchases, Amazon will send Amistad .5% of your purchase price. This program also applies to Amazon Prime members. Your Amazon purchases are anonymous to us.



(Hope for the Future—Continued from page 3)

I am the fifth born in a family of eight children. I am 11 years old and in Grade Five. My three older sisters were married off when they were teenagers. Our brother spends his days looking for pasture with our father. Our cows, sheep and goats are our only source of income and our main source of food. At home we eat meat and drink milk and blood from our cows.

I stay close to my mother when I am not in school, and she gives me lots of advice. I go out with her to look for firewood and to graze our animals when my father is away. She encourages me to work really hard at school. She also tells me she is proud of me. My mother never went to school because she got married when she was very young, so sometimes I tell her about what we learn in school. From my mother, I can see that early marriage is not the best solution for a girl's life.

My mother tells me that if stay in school, I can make my own choices for what I want to do in my life. I am proud of my mama because she

knows how to count our goats, cows and sheep, and she knows which ones are missing. She wishes she also knew how to read. My mother's encouragement motivates me to stay in school!

After we eat breakfast, my younger sister Magdaline and I walk an hour to Maruge School. We love our school because we have books, teachers who care for us, and a lunch prepared in big pots by the cook. The other students and I plant flowers and trees to keep our school looking nice. It is hard to do my homework at home at night because our house is dark. We can use a kerosene-wick lamp for light, but the smoke makes my eyes hurt. At school we have a lot of light, and reading is a lot easier! My favorite subject is science, and I hope some day to teach science and help the kids in my community. Today, I have lots of hope for the future.

## Donkey Stolen from Maruge School

Maruge School is high on a hill in a very dry part of Kenya. To get water up to the school for students and the garden, a donkey is hitched to a cart carrying a plastic barrel. One of the school staff guides the donkey to a well in the distant village. In January, director Sebastian Wambugu wrote to Amistad to say that the Maruge School donkey had been stolen!

That same week, a New York Times new article described how donkeys were being stolen from Kenyan villages and taken to slaughterhouses where the hides were rendered for a gelatin they contain which is used in a traditional Chinese medicine. The humble little donkeys' hides are highly valued on the international medicinal market.

We were upset to hear that the Maruge donkey was likely stolen to be sold for slaughter. Amistad sent \$145 for a new donkey, which is now kept under lock and key. This donkey is not only the water carrier, but also their most reliable transport for building supplies and wood.



*The Maruge School donkey is a crucial 'staff member' of the school delivering barrels of water, food and firewood to the Kenyan campus.*

# How Can I Help Keep This Vital Outreach Going in 2019?

Funds are urgently needed for the following 2019 programs. We urge you to consider, if possible, the designation of "Wherever my help is most needed." If you choose a specific program, we will do our best to direct your gift to that program.

## Wherever my help is most needed

- India: Buddha's Smile School, (Varanasi, India), an elementary school for 221 children of beggars, lepers and garbage collectors \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Zimbabwe, Africa: Kuda Vana Children's Home. Funds needed for day-to-day operations. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- South Africa: Lambano Sanctuary and Hospice for HIV+ children. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Kenya: Community Initiatives for Rural Development (CIFORD): Job skills training for at-risk teen girls, seeds, water tanks, women's leadership training. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Kenya: Support of Maruge and Amri Elementary Schools \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Mexico: The Conroy F. Donesky Memorial Fund for the Huichol Indian Community outreach in the Western Sierra Madre mountains. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Kenya: Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre, Kenya (G-BLACK) teaching sustainable farming, sewing, handcrafts and healthful cooking to at-risk teens and HIV+ women. \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Haiti: Drs. Scott Nelson and Terry Dietrich's orthopedic surgery program at Adventist Hospital, Port Au Prince, Haiti. Please specify which doctor's fund. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Your gift is deeply appreciated. Amistad International is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public foundation incorporated in 1980. Donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law and may be sent to: Amistad International, 1657 Edgewood Drive, Palo Alto, CA 94303. You may request Amistad's EIN number.

Here is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Please use it for \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to honor someone's birthday, anniversary, birth, retirement, or life, we will send an acknowledgment letter to the family or individual whom you designate. Please provide the following information.

Honoree's name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
My name \_\_\_\_\_  
My address \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Amistad International

1657 Edgewood Drive  
Palo Alto, California 94303  
Phone: (650) 328-1737  
Web: [www.amistadinternational.org](http://www.amistadinternational.org)  
Email: [karen@amistadinternational.org](mailto:karen@amistadinternational.org)