

Notas

AMISTAD INTERNATIONAL

Annual Report 2020

AMISTAD INTERNATIONAL:

Responding to the Covid-19 Crisis



When the COVID-19 virus began to spread around the world, the programs which Amistad supports were forced to stop their in-person programs including closing all schools. Our partners quickly shifted their priorities to provide emergency assistance to their communities, reaching those families who live day-to-day and have no savings or help from the government.

(Continued on page 22)

INSIDE

Maruge School chosen as conflict-resolution site



Uganda: empowering elderly and handicapped farmers



Haiti Prosthetic and orthotic program re-opens



Kenya: Anti-rape campaign protecting girls

During Covid pandemic, Amistad has been providing masks, hygiene supplies, and food for families around the world.



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We thank the following people for donating their services and time so that our annual report can be published at minimal cost:

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(Notas and website)
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Brand Communications
www.laurensmith.com

Writing and Editing

Tanya Cothran

Amistad International

is a non-profit 501(c)(3) public charity incorporated in California in 1980. Donations deductible as allowed by law.

Amistad International
P. O. Box 9251
Auburn, California 95603
Telephone: (650) 387-0382

To contact Karen Kotoske:
email tomamistad@aol.com

Our website:
www.amistadinternational.org

Facebook: *Amistad International*

What is Amistad International?

Amistad, 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.

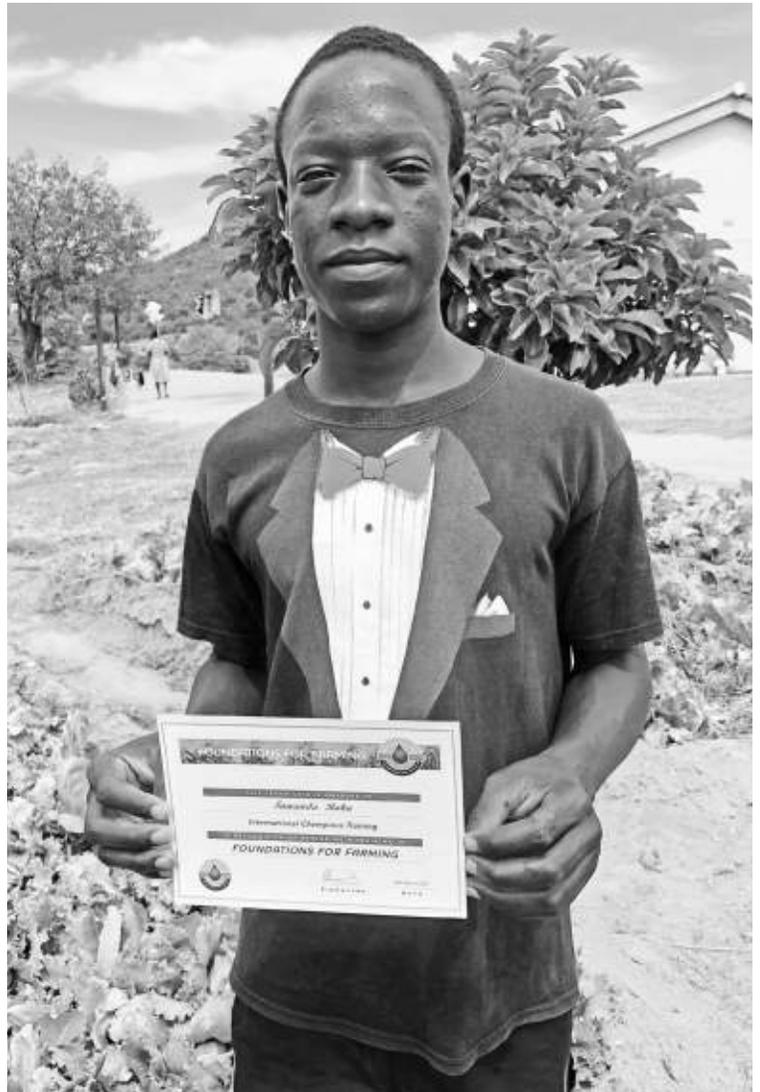
Some of the projects we support include:

- Kuda Vana Children's Home, Zimbabwe, a home for abused, ill, and abandoned children. <https://kudavana.org>
- 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 children with life-threatening illnesses, in Johannesburg, South Africa. www.lambano.org.za
- Buddha's Smile School (BSS): a free primary school for 221 children of beggars, lepers and refugees. Sarnath, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India. Founder and director, Rajan Kaur. www.buddhas-smile-school.org
- Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre, Kenya (G-BIACK): teaching sustainable agriculture, sewing, cookery, fish culture and seed saving. 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
- Haiti: Drs. Scott Nelson and Terry Dietrich's orthopedic surgical program and Tim Cleveland's orthotics/prosthetics clinic at Hopital Adventiste d'Haiti, Port Au Prince, Haiti.

“No One Can Take Away the Knowledge I’ve Gained”

KUDA VANA is not your typical orphanage. Our staff provides whole-person care to each orphaned or abandoned child brought to us by Social Services. Children are raised in a group home setting and given love, nutrition, security, health-care, and education, as well as spiritual and emotional guidance. These important aspects enable them to live more independent, dignified, and enriched lives.

Each child in Kuda Vana’s care is treated like family, with care taken to nurture their individual hopes and dreams as well as help them overcome any unique challenges they may face. One example is Tendai, a 16-year-old boy who suffered from a severe learning disability. When he came to us he was unable to read or even write his name. He was bullied by others and despaired of ever achieving his dream of living independently and becoming an agronomist.



Tendai dreams of becoming a farmer who can supply food to grocery stores.

“I am no longer a laughingstock but instead a pillar of hope!”

Foridelis (Fideh) Ntinyari was only in high school when she got pregnant and was forced to leave both her school and her home. Luckily, her brother generously welcomed Fideh and her baby into his house.

When her daughter was three years-old, Fideh’s breakthrough to a better life came when she joined CIFORD Kenya’s Twarama Vision Young Mothers Group, an organization sponsored by Amistad formed to encourage and support young mothers who had dropped out of school and were facing poverty.

“The young mothers’ group really helped me emotionally,” says Fideh. “I realized that there are many other girls my age who also became pregnant and dropped out of school. We help each other with advice and support each another psychologically.”

After being in the Twarama Group for six months, Fideh was one of 118 girls who attended Amistad-sponsored CIFORD skills training workshops in 2019. There she

focused on training in hairdressing and beauty skills. “I always wanted to take technical courses that would help me support myself and my daughter, but never had the financial support to study hairdressing.”

After her training, Fideh opened a small hairdressing shop. “I thank CIFORD and CIFORD’s partners for touching the lives of young mothers like me. Now I am an employed woman! Despite the challenges that come with a new business, I own my own small salon and am supporting my daughter, my brother, and even my parents. I thank God for receiving this fruit of life.”

Judith Kawira, who is also in the Twarama Group, echoes Fideh’s feeling of pride. “Today, my family is able to depend on my hairdressing business. I am no longer a laughingstock, but instead a pillar of hope.”

Thank you for putting a smile into the hearts of these young women!



Fidah Ntinyari is proud to help support her family with the earnings from her small hair salon in Kenya.

“I’ve Seen How These Boys Have Changed.”

CIFORD Kenya has been hosting girls’ empowerment seminars in Meru for over a decade. These seminars train girls to break the cycle of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and provide an alternative rite of passage for them. However, we realized that it was not enough to empower the girls if we did not also change attitudes among the boys. Sponsored by our donors, CIFORD has now hosted a total of 122 boys; 69 for its first seminar and an additional 53 for its second.

Nicholas Mutethia, a 12-year-old, attended one of CIFORD’s seminars for adolescent males. The five-day workshop included discussions of reproductive health, drugs and substance abuse, and other critical life skills. Another session covered the history and dangers of FGM.

Enlisting boys as allies who understand and support the anti-FGM movement is important, because of the local cultural belief that girls who do not undergo female circumcision will never find husbands. Cultural traditions make it difficult for an ‘uncut’ woman to marry, without the genital mutilation procedure, they are considered ‘unclean.’ Nicholas and the other boys in attendance were taught to someday choose ‘uncut’ girls as their wives.

When we visited Mutethia’s home, his mother, Agnes Ntongai, told us that Mutethia had changed for the better in many ways after undergoing the training from CIFORD Kenya. “Before attending CIFORD Kenya’s program, Mutethia could be stubborn when asked to help with household tasks. He has become more responsible, and now carries out his home chores with a good spirit. The course increased his confidence and made him a much better young man,” says Agnes. “His academic performance has also improved so much that he is among the top ten students in his class. That is something we never saw coming.”

Nicholas’s father also gave praise to CIFORD, saying “We give thanks to CIFORD–Kenya for not only touching the life of my son, but also many other children who live near us. I’ve seen how these boys have changed, just as he has.”

CIFORD Kenya has an avid belief that “You cannot prepare the future for children, but you can prepare the children for the future.” We at CIFORD are determined to change the world by investing in Kenya’s children. Thank you all who have walked this important journey with us.



Nicholas Mutethia, 12, with his parents on graduation day. Nicholas and 121 other boys attended CIFORD’s five day course covering reproductive health, substance abuse and respect for girls and women.

“I am Now a Mother *and* a Devoted Community Health Volunteer.”

Thanks to the wonderful fundraising efforts of Amistad volunteer, Jeanne Liston, Community Initiatives for Rural Development (CIFORD) held another week-long Anti-Female Genital Mutilation Coming of Age Seminar for 101 girls.

Amistad donors have generously funded CIFORD’s anti-FGM seminars for several years, enabling 3,000 young women who have benefitted by graduating from these week-long introductions to new and non-invasive coming-of-age rites. Margaret Ikiara, CIFORD’s Director told us about three typical young women whose lives have been profoundly changed for the better by these seminars.

Doris Kagwiria, 25, explained how CIFORD impacted her life when she was at a vulnerable age.

“CIFORD Kenya gave me a lot as a fifteen-year-old girl. Because of CIFORD’s coming-of-age rites for girls I am now a responsible wife and mother. If I had not gone through the program which taught me education is crucial to my self-confidence and economic survival, it is likely I would have dropped out of school and been forced into an early marriage. I am thrilled to serve my community as CIFORD served me. It is such an honor.”

Eddy Makena attended the CIFORD seminar and alternative rite of passage program in 2013. She is now 22 years old and a primary school teacher in Meru.

“The seminar is still very fresh in my mind. For our graduation we all wore green T-shirts with a message on its back reading, “*Education Not Circumcision.*” I loved that T-shirt a lot. Many people used to stop to read the message, and I was so proud to be an ambassador for it.”

Makena went on to say, “the girls in my village who did not attend the seminar were all circumcised. Several of them dropped out of school and became pregnant because they thought that was their only alternative in life. The course teaches us education gives us opportunity and confidence as women. I thank CIFORD for enabling my life to be what it is today!”

Hellen Nkirote attended the same 2013 CIFORD seminar and is now finishing her collegiate studies at Mt Kenya University.

“In my area lots of girls my age were being forced to undergo female genital mutilation. Margaret Ikiara gave many of us her phone number to use as a resource in case our mothers wanted to force us into FGM. I contacted CIFORD and attended the seminar which made me what I am today: a soon-to-be college graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Food and Beverages. I am so proud of mum Margaret Ikiara, and her friends at CIFORD who made it possible for me to attend the seminar in 2013.”



Hellen Nkirote and Eddy Makena are graduates of CIFORD’s anti FGM seminar. Because of CIFORD’s opportunity and subsequent freedom from circumcision, Eddy was able to become a teacher and Hellen is studying Food Science.

New Lives Opened for Daughters of Sex Workers

In 2005, Amistad sponsored the opening of a home operated by New Light for young daughters of sex workers in Sonagachi, Kolkata's red-light district. The girls, ages 6-18, now live in Soma Home situated in a pleasant middle-class neighborhood. They all attend private school. Because of Soma Home, their lives have been completely transformed. Now these girls have aspirations for their lives.

Some years later, again working with New Light's founder, Urmi Basu, Amistad helped New Light open a second home, Sonar Tori, for young women who 'graduated' from Soma Home when they turned 18. The young women can stay at Sonar Tori until they are 24 years old as long as they are going to school.

Here are the stories of three girls whose lives were changed because of New Light's Soma Home.

Radha Ray

Radha Ray, 8, has a delightful way of bringing joy to those around her, along with an adorable gap-toothed smile that wins hearts. Her biological mother is a prosti-

tute with a drug addiction that often caused her to neglect young Radha. Before she came to New Light, Radha lived in the house of a Sonagachhi brothel keeper, amidst one of Asia's largest and most notorious red-light districts. Instead of going to school, Radha was required to do housework and fetch water from great distances.

When New Light staff found Radha in 2015, she was suffering emotionally and physically. After taking her in, New Life first enrolled her at its New Light Drop-in Centre shelter in the red-light district, where she quickly adapted to her new environment.

After a year at New Light's shelter, Radha came to Soma Home and then was admitted to St. Sebastian's, a private English school, where her progress has continued. Now fully settled into the New Light Soma Girls' Home, she is thriving under the care of Soma staff and has many friends among the other Soma girls.

Madhabi Kar

Madhabi Kar, now 18, was enrolled at New Light's Kalighat shelter when she was only four years old. Her mother had been trafficked into sex work at age 15 and gave birth to Madhabi at a young age. The result was that little Madhabi endured a turbulent childhood.



Fortunately, when Madhabi was six her mother allowed her to move to Soma Home. Madhabi is a bright student and currently is preparing for her 10th grade final examinations. After she graduates from high school, Madhabi dreams of training to become a beautician so that she can help support her mother and also give back to help the new generation of children at New Light.

Ruksana Khatun

In early childhood, Ruksana grew up with her family of seven in their two-room hut in Laxmikanantapur, a small, rural village north of Kolkata. As is common for many rural Indian villagers, neither of Ruksana's parents ever attended school. Ruksana describes her father, Mamad Karim, as a very kind and jovial man who worked hard as a farmer to support his family while his children were young. But sadly, the family's extreme poverty led

Radha, 8, the daughter of a drug-addicted prostitute in Kolkata, now lives at New Light's Soma Home for Girls, and attends St. Sebastian's English school in Kolkata.

them to send Ruksana to Kolkata at age 6 to work. She ended up in an exploitative environment, where thankfully she was found by Urmi Basu, the founder of New Light, who brought her to Soma Home. Ruksana was a good student through elementary and high school and eventually graduated second in her class from the prestigious International Institute of Hotel Management. In December 2019, she began working at a 5-star hotel in Kolkata. Now 20 years old, she believes that without the support of New Light, she would never have been able to have a chance in life.

This year, donor Ann Down provided the funds to keep Soma Home doors open during 2020. Thank you, Ann Down.



In spite of living with the cultural complications of Albinism, Vimbai is highly motivated to succeed in life and looks forward to going to college.

“Why Did You Take Off Your Skin?”

LIVING WITH ALBINISM IN ZIMBABWE

Whether it’s through their speech, dress or physical appearance, “fitting in” and looking more or less like everyone else, is a primary desire for most people. When one is born outside the norm, life can be very cruel. In most African countries, such is the situation for those born with albinism, a genetic condition in which irregular pigmentation genes cause people to be born with white skin and light-colored eyes. Not only are people with albinism easily burned by the sun and prone to skin cancer, but they also stand out for their “abnormal looks.” This is especially true amid Black African populations, in which they are often subjected to severe taunting and other much more grave dangers.

Vimbai, a lovely, confident young woman of 22 with albinism in KVCH, is currently in her last year of high school as part of Kuda Vana’s Youth Transition Program.

Until recently life was deeply painful for Vimbai. Both of her parents passed away when she was young, and she was sent to live with her uncle. Vimbai’s uncle was unable to provide her with either sunscreen or sunglasses, two essential protections for those with albinism. Vongai often burned terribly in the hot Zimbabwean sun, and in addition her uncle did not always treat her well. Finally, when she was around 13 years old, Vimbai ran away and came to Kuda Vana. Once here she was given the medical attention, love, and dignity she deserved. Arrangements were made for her to attend a special school nearby for children with

albinism, which helped immensely in building her self-esteem. Recently, Kuda Vana was able to connect Vongai with the Zimbabwe Albino Association, which has provided her with free lotions, sunscreens, eye exams and glasses.

Despite her new-found confidence, as a person with albinism Vimbai says her life still isn’t easy. “Sometimes people look at me as though I am not human,” Vimbai says with sadness. It is difficult for her to walk along streets where there are too many people, because they are likely to call out “albino, albino,” or rudely ask, “Why did you take off your skin?”

Despite these hardships, Vongai maintains a positive attitude and is highly motivated to succeed in life. She has dreams of going to college and working in the hospitality industry someday. She also has a lovely voice and has even recorded some songs. Vongai takes pride in her appearance and loves to dress stylishly, looking quite “hip” with her sunglasses and blond hair. She is a loyal and true friend to others and enjoys counseling her younger brothers and sisters from Kuda Vana.

We want to thank you, the supporters of Kuda Vana, who have donated so generously over the years so that Vimbai and all of our other children (some with life-threatening issues such as HIV+), are able to mature into adults with dignity and employment skills.

Say *No* And Be Counted

Girls Empowerment in Kenya

After being on hold for six months because of Covid-19, Visionary Women's Centre in western Kenya has restarted their Amistad-funded anti-rape program, *Say No and Be Counted*. Families and community leaders are concerned about a recent increase in teenage pregnancies and so they welcome this program. Local women will lead the six-session workshop, which is designed to teach girls and boys how to protect themselves against sexual assault and how to intervene to save others from attack.

Twenty girls are learning to step into "*My Girl Power*" and twenty boys are attending a parallel workshop to discover, "*The Hero in Me*." Both girls and boys will

learn how to respect and support one another. Lessons cover: gender roles, myths, and norms; setting personal boundaries; standing up to bullies; and, reporting rape and getting support.

One of the workshop leaders, Benter Obonyo, reports that there is great interest from the community in these topics. "Last week we had 19 girls at *Say No and Be Counted*. This week, the number increased to 28 girls! The girls who had attended the first session were excited to share with the new girls about what they had learned. They all begged us to make room for even more of their friends but we told them there is a waiting list. Now mothers are calling and asking us to include their children."



Girls attending the Visionary Women's Centre's anti-rape program "Say No and Be Counted."



Haiti Hospital Opens Prosthetic/Orthotic Clinic

Haiti has been pummeled by disasters for decades. Since 1981, Haiti Adventist Hospital (HAH) has served the people of Haiti through good times and bad. The hospital opened its doors to the victims of the 2010 earthquake. That's when Amistad International began supporting the HAH orthopedic surgery programs founded by Dr. Scott Nelson and volunteers. HAH now has a state-of-the-art orthopedic surgery. The program is currently expanding to include an orthotic and prosthetic (O&P) clinic.

Tim Cleveland, a graduate of Loma Linda University's '15 School of Orthotics and Prosthetics, has opened the O&P program this fall and is now fabricating and fitting a variety of prosthetic and orthotic devices, and will be training nationals to be prosthetic/orthotic technicians.

Annika Cleveland is also a Loma Linda University graduate, School of Nursing, and has a master's in nursing from University of New Mexico, with a specialty in nursing education. She's also an experienced ICU nurse. Annika is setting up a nursing education program at HAH, and also helping the hospital to develop an ICU.

Annika wrote us soon arrival in Haiti.

"Our first few weeks in Haiti have been filled with a variety of activities which included Creole lessons. I have been spending time on the wards, observing the nurses and trying to learn how they do things here as well as building rapport with the nurses.

The majority of the equipment for the new Orthotics and Prosthetics (O&P) clinic will arrive on a container later this year, but in the meantime, Tim has set up a limb fabrication clinic using the materials we were able to bring down in suitcases.

A few days after we arrived, Tim was called to the clinic to see a little girl named Bianca. She had been born with a severe clubfoot. Not having advanced surgical resources, the foot was amputated, and a prosthetic foot was fitted. Unfortunately, Bianca's prosthetic foot had broken, and she was now walking around on the end of the socket. Not only was the situation uncomfortable for her, but also the discrepancy in leg length was going to be causing future gait problems.

While waiting for the shipment of supplies, Tim decided to make Bianca a new foot the old-fashioned way: out of a block of wood! Taking her other foot's measurements, Tim fashioned Bianca a new foot out of a 4"x 4" block of wood. Walking happily out the clinic with her new foot, Bianca's bright smile was Tim's reward. He can hardly wait until the container of orthotic and prosthetic supplies arrives.

Annika Cleveland, R. N.



Annika and Tim Cleveland



Not having yet received the shipment of prosthetic limbs from the US, Prosthetist Tim Cleveland fashioned a foot out of a block of wood for a pleased Bianca.

Amistad Now Helping Elderly and Disabled in Uganda

Kakuuto Development Initiative (KADI) is a community organization in rural, central Uganda helping women to start farming businesses growing soybeans, beans, and cassava. KADI also trains girls in tailoring, embroidery, and mat-making. KADI also has a lending bank which provides small loans at low 2% interest rates. This helps community members purchase seeds, farming equipment, and silos for grain storage. KADI is deeply connected to the community and has an active board of directors made up of local leaders.

Amistad is helping KADI expand its lending capability in order to reach out to disabled and elderly community members who otherwise might not have access to farming loans. With Amistad's support, KADI is now training disabled and elderly farmers to run their farms as small agribusinesses. This includes providing them with high quality seeds, giving them access to affordable storage silos, and transporting farm equipment to them from the city. We will update you as this new program progresses.



Elderly farmers at KADI greeting Tanya Cothran (Amistad Advisory Board member, third from right) with her friend, Barbara Deal (middle right with cane.)

AT KVCH:

A Tiny Boy with Medical Needs

One of the advantages of running a small program, and “doing for a few what we’d like to do for many” is that we can provide each child with the personalized care that we would give to our own children. This has looked different over the years—some children have received specialized tutoring or internship opportunities; others have been given special medical interventions such as dental work or even major surgery when necessary.

One child in our care who is in desperate need of medical intervention is Simbai. He was brought to Kuda Vana as an infant after being found abandoned in a church. From the start, it was clear that Simbai had a variety of medical problems, including severe eczema, breathing problems, an enlarged head and torso and various developmental delays. We have taken him to various doctors but have been given no clear diagnosis or treatment plan. Simbai is now three years old and his condition has worsened considerably. He is finding it difficult and painful to walk or stand, suffers from speech delays and has developed considerable and painful problems male anatomy problems.



KVCH toddler, Simbai, needs specialized medical care.

Your consistent support of Kuda Vana helps us provide the best level of care possible to children like Simbai. We are continuing to search for the best options for Simbai’s needs during a complicated (Covid) time for seeking medical care. Should you wish to help with Simbai’s medical needs, please contact Tara at tara@kudavana.org or 720-515-5148.

Amistad turns 40!





Here's What You've Done

- CIFORD: 101 girls participated in an anti-FGM workshop sponsored by Jeanne Liston and her friends.
- Amistad-sponsored Maruge Elementary School in Kenya was chosen as the site for crucial tribal peace meetings this year. Sebastian Wambugu, school manager, was called by the community to facilitate a peace-making process between the Masaai and Kikuyu tribes' skirmishes over live stock ownership. Wambugu reports there was heavy police and security presence around Maruge during these tense meetings between tribal leaders. The issues of pastoral herding vs farming is an on-going source of many tribal conflicts in Kenya
- Amistad provided a \$3,000 grant so that Kakuuto Development Initiative (KADI) in Uganda can help elderly handicapped farmers secure low-interest loans. The small loans will help purchase seeds, grain silos, and gardening equipment. We are especially grateful to Mary Louise Reiber, DorAnne Donesky, and Chris and Bill McClure for their support.

- A Land Cruiser ambulance has been purchased for Haiti Adventist Hospital. Loma Linda University School of Medicine 2018 grads raised \$31,000 toward the \$44,000 purchase price. Amistad donors, through the Scott and Marnie Nelson fund, supplied an additional \$6,574 for the purchase.
- In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Lonyo elementary school for displaced war-victim refugee children was built by Amistad donors in 2018. The school was closed from March until October because of Covid-19. The new '20-21 enrollment is now 520 pupils, an increase of 140 children over 2019 enrollment. Amistad donors are currently building a headmaster's office and student desks. Funds are urgently needed for this impoverished school.

At G-BIACK:

- This year Grow-biointensive Agriculture Centre/ Kenya (G-BIACK) was able to accomplish much with an Amistad grant in spite of COVID-19. Utilizing the \$16,820 grant Amistad issued to G-BIACK the following was carried out:

G-BIACK co-founder, Peris Nderitu, has expanded their sustainable agriculture program to over 600 farmers in Tanzania.





- In Tanzania, 600 farmers in three separate training centers learned better methods of growing food with the bio-intensive method.
- Beds and bedding purchased for G-BLACK dormitories for farming and sewing students.
- 20 Muslim and Christian women farmers were trained in gardening in Kitui, on the Somali border with Kenya. More trainings are planned for 2021.
- Six orphanages in the area around G-BLACK were trained in gardening so they can grow food for the children. More trainings planned for 2021.
- Food purchased for the Girls Empowerment Program which teaches girls sewing, agriculture and computation. The sewing program was cut short because of COVID. The school will resume on a limited basis when pandemic guidelines allow.
- Over 500 young women have graduated from the G-BLACK sewing school. 160 women have started their own businesses, 175 have been employed by other tailors, 79 have been employed by the Export Processing Zone Authority (EPZ).

Grow Bio-intensive Agriculture Centre/Kenya

With the onset of Covid-19, G-BLACK's co-founder, Peris Nderitu, suddenly had no way to do her invaluable work teaching sustainable agriculture and job skills to girls and women. It was no longer safe for the girl students to live in the dormitories. The only way forward would be to purchase a vehicle in which she could take her teachings to the women and girls in their villages. So, Amistad, together with sister organization, Kilili Self-Help, made the decision to help Peris buy a truck so she can take the G-BLACK lessons to villages.

Peris tried for several months to do her best to communicate with the farmers and girl students by phone and *WhatsApp*. But it was frustrating for everyone. What the farmers and girls needed was Peris' direct teaching about agriculture, job skills and Covid prevention done within Covid-19 safety parameters.



The enrollment at Lonyo Refugee School in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has grown to 520 pupils.

Peris expressed to us how grateful she was for this grant: "So many people are confused about how to protect themselves from Covid-19. Women and girls are vulnerable because of false information and stigma. Before the Covid shut-down I had a lot of new projects funded both by Amistad and other NGO's which included teaching sustainable farming to professional community development workers. But I had no way to reach the work. Now with a truck I can teach even more people than I could before."

Buddha's Smile School director, Rajan Kaur (right,) taking a student's temperature before entering the school. BSS school has also provided food for school families during Covid 19.





We Remember



Beloved BSS bus driver since the school began, Jagdish Pandey, succumbed to Covid-19 this year.

- Janet Stedman Hoffmann remembers the lives her grandparents Joanna and Milton Stedman.
- Doranne Donesky Wolfkill and Audrey Shaffer honor the life of humanitarian pilot Conroy Donesky.
- Karen Kotoske remembers the life of Margaret Allen, a generous friend to Amistad programs for youth education.
- Karen Kotoske honors the caring lives of Raul and Yvonne Miller.
- Joyce Runge honors the memory and life of her dear friend, Joan Walters.
- Mary Louise Reiber, Melanie Reiber Boyd, Scott and Tracy Hanson, and Karen Kotoske honor the life of Steve Reiber.
- Tom Kotoske's life is remembered and honored by Nancy Peterson, Julianne Frizzell, Janet Stedman Hoffmann, Dorothy and Ernie Toppenberg, Bruce Sacco, Dr. Judy Etimadi, John and Linda Stedman, Susie King who wrote, "This gift is made with love in the memory of Tom Kotoske, whose powerful presence, integrity, intellect, devotion, compassion, advice and laughter will forever be treasured."
- Rest in Peace, Jagdish Pandey, the school bus driver for Buddha's Smile School who died of Covid-19. Jagdish was children's beloved driver since the school began.

We Honor

- Dr. Kathryn Hayes honors the 80th birthday of Richard Kannenberg.
- Marnie and Scott Nelson honor the wedding of Brittany and Sam.
- Joyce Runge celebrates her birthday, grateful for another year.
- Duane Wilson honors the 80th birthday of his beloved wife, Gay.



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.



We Say Gracias

—Dear Amistad,

Thank you for sharing this newsletter and the stories of these amazing children and caregivers at Kuda Vana Children’s Home. Our hearts are full with the work you do and yet saddened by the continued tragedy in our world. I appreciate you keeping us updated on how we can most effectively assist you/team doing this great work.

Our prayers are with you all.

Tami Erwin

- We thank the following friends for providing COVID-19 emergency food, soap, masks, and prevention education at our many programs around the world: Ben and Celina Dawson, Melanie and Earl Boyd, Kee Flynn, Ann Down, Don and Wanda Krein, Chris and Bill McClure, Doranne Donesky Wolfkill, Joanie Sanchez, Beth Boram, Merrill Chaus, Joan and Paul Lake, Leslie Perryman.
- Thank you, Ann Down, for supporting both Soma Home (Kolkata, India) and Buddha’s Smile School (Varanasi, India) this year.
- We are grateful to our faithful volunteer of many years, Margo Rees, for her invaluable contributions to the Kuda Vana Children’s Home communications with supporters. Margo sends our regular news to our friends who support KVCH. We all give you a (virtual) hug, Margo.
- Thank you, Dick and Nancy Noble, for providing support for several vital programs at Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre/ Kenya (G-BIACK) during 2020. Thank you also for the funds to purchase beds and bedding for the high school students of Kuda Vana Children’s Home.

- Thank you, Claire Drago, 10, and Jack Drago, 8, for your donation which helped to buy desks and books for the children at Lonyo Christian Refugee Camp School in The Democratic Republic of the Congo. Claire and Jack’s great-grandmother, Mary Louise Reiber, together with Ben and Celina Dawson, built the Lonyo school in 2018-19.
- Thank you, Joanie Sanchez, for your contribution enabling Kuda Vana Children’s Home to purchase library books.
- We are thankful for the faithful, generous donors who support Buddha’s Smile school. Your support of children like Priyanka (in the photo) and hundreds of others who’ve graduated from BSS, has been the best kind of investment in the children’s’ futures. Priyanka was destined for marriage when she was in the 5th grade. Because of BSS intervention, she is now preparing to go to nursing school.
- Thank you donors for enabling Amistad to share with Kilili Self Help Group in the purchase of a vehicle for G-BIACK’s sewing and agriculture school.
- We thank our faithful friends who support Kuda Vana Children’s Home in Zimbabwe. Your generosity is vital to the children’s home.
- Thank you, Ann Down, for your donation supporting the multi-faceted anti-pregnancy program at CIFORD/Kenya for girls unable to attend the safety of school during the COVID-19 crisis while they cannot have the safety of structured school days. The program includes provision of hygiene items for the girls.



Priyanka is heading for nursing school because BSS gave her opportunity to resist the marriage her parents wanted for her when she was in the 5th grade.



(Nobody—Continued from page 1)

Pandemics save the most painful blows for those living on the margins. Tragically, many of our very young students have been forced into unsafe working conditions in order to help their families stay alive. Amistad response is to give grants for purchase of food, medical supplies, and to provide COVID-19 prevention information and personal protective equipment. We continue to pay the teachers in all the schools we support so that they can take lessons and tutoring to those students whom they can reach. In this time of continuing crisis, we are honored to serve these strong and resilient communities.

Buddha's Smile School (India)

BSS was directly affected by Covid 19 when their beloved bus driver since 1993, Jagdish Pandey, died of Covid-19 in September. His son will replace him at the wheel when the school is reopened in 2021. Amistad together with The Netherland's Metta Foundation and Wilde Ganzen Foundation, raised funds to provide food several months for 180 school families (approximately 1,100 people.) School closure meant that children who normally rely on BSS for lunch were at high risk of hunger. Rajan Kaur, BSS Founder/Director told us "These people have no life savings to have food for even a day. Every day for them is a challenge to survive. With food and soap distribution, and information about COVID-19, the unprivileged families have a much better chance to be safe and stay healthy." The

Amistad funds also helped provide for medical needs and personal protective equipment (PPE.) The BSS teachers are going to the children's shanty communities to take assignments and teaching materials, and assign homework, a direct grassroots response to the Covid-19 crisis.

CIFORD Kenya

CIFORD distributed packages of personal hygiene supplies and safety information to vulnerable girls unable to attend school hoping to combat the rise in unwanted pregnancies during the pandemic. Rape and assault significantly surged when the girls did not have the daytime protection of their schools. With funding from Amistad, CIFORD is reaching out to girls, young men, and parents with information on how to protect young girls from sexual assault. Pro bono lawyers are also helping victims, through CIFORD, to bring charges against the men who sexually assault girls.

CIFORD Kenya—Young Mothers Program

Women from CIFORD's Young Mothers skills training group gave back to the community by joining CIFORD's effort to fight COVID-19. With the skills learned from CIFORD, these girls are making masks which they distribute to those most at risk, including female motorbike passengers and women in the marketplaces. CIFORD also bought the raw materials to make liquid soap to distribute to over 500 households.

Rajan Kaur (left) delivering food to needy families of her students.





(Munna—Continued from page 3)



Kenyan girl Emma, 6, wearing a Covid-19 mask she proudly made herself.

Haiti Food Program

During the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteer Marni Nelson raised funds for 200 relief food packages for the employees of Haiti Adventist Hospital. The bags are filled with essential items, such as rice, beans, wheat, oil, pasta, corn, bleach, detergent, and bar soap. Haitian food prices are very high and many employees were forced to take unpaid leave from the hospital, making the relief bags a lifeline for these families.

Kenya’s Maruge & Amri Schools

When schools were ordered closed by the government, teachers at Maruge and Amri Schools devised a plan to allow students to pick up their school work and books. Amistad funds are paying salaries for the teachers. Also, 120 vulnerable families received baskets with much-needed food and soap. One mother told Maruge Director, Sebastian, “You came at the best time, in God’s time! We had nothing to cook in our kitchen and my husband lost his job. We felt troubled that we could not feed our four children who are home with us since the schools closed.”

Kuda Vana Children’s Home

The campus school was closed in spring by government order, reopening in late August. Many of the older KVCH students returned to their campus home when their boarding schools had Covid closures. All schools have now reopened including the KVCH on-campus school.

We are grateful to Amistad donors for providing emergency support for these programs during the pandemic. May all of our world’s children be able to safely return to school in 2021.

Tendai turned out to be a remarkably intelligent young man who excels at inventing things. With time and care from our staff, he recently learned to read. Tendai now takes great pride in his work tending the gardens at Kuda Vana, and has shown he can make anything grow.

FARM STEW, an NGO which provides agricultural training in Zimbabwe, provided Tendai with a scholarship to attend a Foundation for Farming Training in Harare. After two weeks learning about making compost, mulching, and creating high yields from small parcels of land, Tendai earned a certificate in Foundations for Farming.

Tendai says of his experience: “I have always had a great passion for farming and have dreamed of mastering its skills. Now I have learned something I can do when I age out of Kuda Vana at eighteen. I would like to become a big farmer and supply food to larger grocery chains. My tending of Kuda Vana’s Thrive Farming Program is no longer through trial and error! I’ve now learned the correct ways to farm. This certificate means a lot to me. No one can ever take away the knowledge I’ve gained. Thank you very much for Kuda Vana’s support.”

How Can I Help Keep This Vital Outreach Going in 2021?

Funds are urgently needed for the following 2021 programs. We urge you to consider, when 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. \$ _____
- Kenya: Community Initiatives for Rural Development (CIFORD): Job skills training for at-risk teen girls, seeds, women's leadership training. \$ _____
- Kenya: Support of Maruge and Amri Elementary Schools \$ _____
- Mexico: The Conroy F. Donesky Memorial Fund for the Huichol Indian outreach in the Western Sierra Madre mountains. \$ _____
- Kenya: Grow Bio-Intensive Agriculture Centre, Kenya (G-BLACK) teaching sustainable farming and job skills for at-risk young 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. \$ _____
- Haiti: Orthotic and Prosthetic program at Haiti Adventist Hospital, Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Annika and Tim Cleveland, volunteers. \$ _____
- Haiti: Fund for sponsoring childrens' school tuition (Marni Nelson project.) \$ _____
- Visionary Women's Centre/Kenya: Anti-rape classes and women's health. \$ _____
- South Africa: Lambano Sanctuary and Hospice for HIV+ children. \$ _____

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, P.O. Box 9251, Auburn, CA 95603. You may request Amistad's EIN number.

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

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P.O. Box 9251

Auburn, California 95603

Website: www.amistadinternational.org

Email: karen@amistadinternational.org