

Thanks so much to the LCC church family for your prayers and support of our mission's trip to Happy Life Children's Home in Roysambu, Kenya. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you briefly about our experience and the work that God is doing there.

We arrived in Kenya three days after our departure due to a weather delay. I instantly became overwhelmed by the smell of body odor coupled with the suffocating invasion of my personal space and the stares of people as we passed. We were strangers in a foreign land. Grateful to see a smiling face holding a sign with our names, we grabbed our luggage and made our way through the crowded gate.

The trip from the airport to the home took about 45 minutes. I spent every second of those 45 minutes praying for our safe arrival. The unpaved roads lacked signs and streetlights and were littered by people, animals and vehicles playing chicken with us. Thankful to arrive without incident, we settled into our rooms and tried to get some sleep. Rest did not come easy to me and I questioned what I was doing there. I was ready to return home.

We met with Rosemary, the office manager, in the morning and she gave us a tour of the home and explained our responsibility during our stay. She informed us that each morning following breakfast, we should report to the Babies room to feed and change them. We would then go to the Toddlers room and repeat the process. Once the children were fed and changed, we would take them to the play room and stay with them until lunch. Play time allowed the house-mothers the opportunity to change the bedding on the cribs. The older children would often join us during playtime. After all the children (about 50) ate lunch and were laid down for their nap, we were free for the remainder of the day.

It was touching to watch the house-mothers care for the babies and know them all by name. I didn't think that I would ever be able to differentiate them or remember their names. In time, the babies became unique and special to us as we developed a bond with them. Hearing about the circumstances that brought them to the home melted your heart. These babies were beautiful and precious, yet were discarded as trash by their parents. I couldn't help but think of II Timothy 3:1-3, which describes the last days and the perilous times that come when men will "lack natural affection". How much more could you lack natural affection than to throw away your baby to seek your own selfish desires? I was comforted by Mark 10:14, knowing that the Kingdom of Heaven is made up of such as these. God has a perfect plan and will for their lives. They are not trash. They are royalty. They make up the kingdom of heaven.

I came to Happy Life with the desire to show these children the love of God, but instead, they ministered God's love to me. They reminded me of the overwhelming love of God. Just as the house-mothers knew each of those babies by name, God knows us by name. When others reject or discard us, he still loves us. Our past does not matter to him. He loves us so much that while we were still sinners, he died for us. This love has the power to transform and change you. I can't explain what happened or how it occurred but those children affected me and I will forever be changed by the privilege of knowing them and being blessed with the opportunity to care for them. As difficult as it was to go to that foreign land, I found it even more difficult to leave.

There is an opportunity for each of us to be a part of this ministry that God is blessing. The most important thing that you can do is to pray. Pray for the children, pray for the workers and directors, pray for the volunteers. This entire experience gave me a better appreciation of the power that we can access through prayer. I witnessed modern day miracles simply through fervent prayer.

The home also has great financial needs, particularly the need for a commercial washer and dryer. Currently, all of the clothing is washed by hand and hung to dry. The cost to replace the broken washing machine and purchase a dryer is about \$2,000.00 US. I've made it my personal goal to be able to provide them with the funds to purchase this equipment, but I can't do it without your support.

Financial support is also needed for the expansion of the home. The purpose of Happy Life Children's Home is to be a revolving door for abandoned babies to transition into their new homes through adoption. Unfortunately, the adoption process can be quite lengthy and expensive so many are not able to receive a new home. Happy Life purchased land not far from its current location in Juja. Their vision is to build ten homes on the land that would house 10 children with one house-mother in a family unit. The probability of adoption decreases as the children age and these buildings would provide those left behind with the opportunity to be a part of a family. Construction of the main building is underway. The ultimate goal would be to have the property be self-sustaining. A greenhouse and farm animals are already in place as a step toward this goal. I spoke with the Kenyan director and he shared with me the overwhelming feeling of taking on such a big project that is beyond human ability. He knows that God called them to do this work and will provide them with the capacity to see it through.

Finally, you can volunteer your time and services. Perhaps you are not able to commit to traveling abroad to volunteer directly at the home, but you can volunteer your time and resources for fundraising and by raising awareness of the need. Please contact me to see how you can be a blessing and be blessed in the process. I am available via email at Rachel.gail@comcast.net. I look forward to being able to share more with you directly in the near future.

Sincerely,

Rachel Gail