



# Reason2Smile Gazette

MARCH 2010

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## From the Director



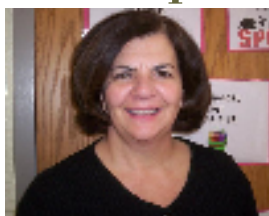
Well, it's the start of another month! As we're all getting ready to transition from winter to spring, Reason2Smile is going through a bit of a transition as well. You may have noticed that the Reason2Smile website is currently a bit outdated. Please bear with us as PR director, Jason Oakman, and I work to shift us into a new web design. We're hoping this one will be more accessible and easier to navigate as new developments are constantly unfolding here and in Kenya. We welcome your feedback on this new site as it becomes available, hopefully within the next week.

We're also working on board development as we look to add a couple new members and thank those who have graciously served with us during this first year.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and take note of our big upcoming event as well as our call to action through monthly giving. Please know that things at Jambo Jipya School are going well and that Christine (the director) sends her love and appreciation to all of you!

Smiles,  
Keela Dates

## Participating in a Beautiful Adventure



Keela is the daughter of a friend and colleague of mine. Keela completed her degree and her mom told me about her adventure to Kenya. It was an adventure! An adventure that took a lot of courage. After getting to know Keela, I've learned it is not courage that drives her; it is her heart and her compassion for people. I followed this new path through emails. I learned so much about a country, its culture, and its children, through the many stories - some heartbreaking. When Keela decided to help this school, I began to donate and it has been the greatest experience. My husband and I are part of the growing of a school, the education of many children and the giving of a home to many children who were orphans. A school that has gone from mud huts, to cement buildings, to the purchase of land for future growth. The increase of children we are now helping has gone from 20 to over 300. A real education that they would never have received because of the situation in Kenya. My husband and I said we could give up a dinner out. We began to give monthly. It is not hard to do. We also felt being part of this experience has made us grow as people. You look at your needs differently. We do not miss eating out. That little half hour reward is nothing compared to the feeling my husband and I have for giving to such a beautiful adventure.

Rita Griffin  
Reason2Smile board member and monthly donor

# Second Annual Jambo Jipya Concert



When: Saturday March 6<sup>th</sup> at 7pm (Marketplace open at 6pm)  
Where: Saranac Lake High School Auditorium  
Why: To support Jambo Jipya School in Mtwapa, Kenya  
Cost: \$5 adults, \$3 students/seniors, \$15 family

As those who attended last year will recall, the Jambo Jipya Concert is an impressive night full of energy and talent. This year's concert is sure to be the same! The concert will feature three acapella groups: The Swinging 'Gates and the Colgate 13 from Colgate University, as well as The TopCats from the University of Vermont.

Saranac Lake will be well represented by the SLHS Jazz Band and the Men's and Women's Ensembles. Rounding out the first half of the night will be the percussive beats of Waluba Drumming and dancing by the members of Somabeats. The second half of the performance will showcase the three college acapella groups.

There will be many opportunities for you to support Jambo Jipya School, which Keela will update you on during the evening. The Marketplace will be open at 6pm for an hour before the concert, as well as during intermission. There will be Kenyan wire toys and jewelry available for purchase as well as original artwork by local artist Nip Rogers and SLHS art classes. There will be a silent auction for a handmade quilt and rounding out the Marketplace offerings will be the well-known Jambo Jipya Totes, made from recycled upholstery and wool fabrics.

This will be an entertaining event for people of all ages! We hope you'll come and join us in support of a good cause!

**Thank you to Gail Meyer and her "crew" for all their efforts to make this night a sure success!**

# Student Spotlight



As those of you who have been following Keela’s experiences at Jambo Jipya School may recall, in February 2008 a little three and a half year old named Reagan joined the Jambo Jipya family. It was then that Reagan and his two older brothers were found living in a goat pen with no shelter and barely any clothing or food. Two years later we are happy to announce that quiet, shy little Reagan has blossomed into a bright, happy, and energetic little boy!

Reagan just started the third level of Kindergarten this year and speaks English nearly as fluently as his third grade “brothers and sisters.” He almost always has a smile on his face and his laugh is infectious. His cartwheels and flips make us believe he may be representing Kenya in gymnastics someday. He loves to sing and can be found reciting every song (from rap to Christian) that his older “brothers and sisters” listen to.

Reagan loves to cuddle and always seems to be in tune with the needs of others. With the arrival of a new little guy (Bravin), Reagan is no longer the youngest at the school. He and Bravin love to play together and Reagan has certainly taken on the role of big “brother.”

New volunteers quickly take to Reagan because of his outgoing personality. Within moments of meeting them he will take their hand and show them all around his “home.” Keela has had many in-depth conversations with Reagan and she will never forget the one they had in May 2009 when she was leaving Jambo Jipya after an eight week long visit.



Reagan with his little “brother,” Bravin.



“Teacha Keela?”

“Yes Reagan?”

“When we go to the airport, me I am going to sneak into your bag. When you get in America you will open your bag and me, I will jump out. You will say, ‘Reagan! What are you doing here?’ and me I will say, ‘Me, I am go with you America!’”

Reagan’s face lit up as he proclaimed the last part, his arms spread wide as he pretended to jump out of Keela’s bag. The look of pure joy and excitement will be etched in Keela’s mind for eternity.

Yes, Reagan will steal your heart. The wonderful thing is that he won’t take it, but instead he will fill it until you feel it might just burst with love and a feeling of true blessing for having met one of God’s greatest treasures.

**Left:** Reagan with one of his big “brothers,” Victor.

## A Call to Action



Five of the beautiful teenage girls who live at Jambo Jipya all dressed up in their new clothes with their hair nicely braided as a Christmas treat!

We really need your help to ensure that 300+ children in Mtwapa, Kenya receive two meals a day as well as an education, and that 40 of those children have a safe, happy, and healthy place to live. Before we dive into any kind of building and development projects, the school needs to be able to function from month to month. This includes \$5,000 worth of food, salaries, and maintenance costs. This is where you come in....

Reason2Smile would like to challenge you to begin giving a monthly donation rather than an annual donation. A sure monthly donation (of any amount) from you, our trusted support group, would ease our worries about whether Reagan and his classmates will receive the food and health care they need this month. If 300 people (that's about all of you on this email list) would commit to giving \$15 per month, we would be able to nearly meet our monthly running costs and funds raised at other events could go towards our development projects.

Please keep your eye out for a pledge card coming to you in the mail. However, we may not have your mailing address so if you are interested in being actively involved in ensuring the future of these children, please email Keela at [keela@reason2smile.org](mailto:keela@reason2smile.org) and she will work with you on the best way to do this.

Thank you very much for your continued encouragement and support. We greatly appreciate your consideration for being involved in our monthly support group. You are the people who make this project possible! You are truly giving these children a reason to continue smiling!