



Reason2Smile Gazette

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In the Oven that is Kenya

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

In the Oven that is Kenya	1
A New School Year	2
Student Spotlight	3
Upcoming Events	3
Give Them a Reason 2 Smile	4



Hello Friends!

Quite literally, I am in the oven of Kenya! While my friends and family in the Eastern US are experiencing negative temperatures, I am experiencing quite the opposite. Kenya is hotter than I remember. I wonder if my memory is failing or if it really is hotter. Things seem to be a little out of whack in the world lately so I suppose either is possible. If the weather could balance itself out, not to mention life in general (the haves and the have nots), things would be much better for everyone. But in the meantime, we must find a way to live with the imbalances and make the most of our situation. So here I am in steamy, hot Kenya... making the best of things!

I arrived here early in the morning on January 21st and will be staying until February 9th. It is my shortest trip to date but I think this length will work well since the school really does run well without my daily input. The administrators (director, secretary, and accountant) always seem to have plenty of work, and teaching eager students keeps the teachers plenty busy. In a sense, I am an intruder in a world that moves smoothly without me. It brings me a bittersweet feeling. It's hard to remember back to the day when there weren't enough teachers for all the classrooms and volunteers stayed busy keeping eager minds active. The movement towards more of a sustainable environment, at least in terms of employees, is definitely a positive thing for the school and for that I am grateful.

The moments that bring me the most joy are the ones when I catch a student's eye and he/she lights up like a Christmas tree. When they greet me with handshakes and hugs. When they share with me the adventures of their day. These kids are full of joy and love, through and through. What a blessing to be a part of this school.

I hope you are all well! Remember to experience the joy in each moment!

Smiles,
Keela

A New School Year at Jambo Jipya



Form 1 and Form 2 students in class.

A new school year is in full swing at Jambo Jipya School. The students, teachers, and administrators are working as hard as ever to ensure a safe, happy, healthy, and productive learning environment. By 7am the students are working hard in class and some of the older students even arrive at 6:30am. They have eight different classes during the day (with a couple breaks intermittent for porridge and lunch), ending with specials (PE, debate, or clubs). Around 5:30pm the day students start

heading home while the boarders (students who live at the school) have a ½ hour break before a two-hour study hall begins. There certainly is a lot of time spent in the classroom, and no one ever seems to complain. It's no wonder the children in Kenya seem to be extremely bright!

With the start of a new school year comes the need for a new classroom as the oldest students advance to a class that didn't exist the year prior. This year the highest level of study at Jambo Jipya School is Form 2 (10th grade). Christine (the founder and director of the school) is overseeing the most recent building project – three new classrooms, an office, and two toilets. Due to a legal dispute with squatters living on the large plot of land owned by the school, these building projects have taken place along the rear of the current site. They will serve as the Form 1, Form 2, and next year – Form 3 classrooms. One classroom (made of plywood) was built to house the Standard 8 exams in November. That classroom is currently used for the Form 1 and Form 2 students. The remaining classrooms are scheduled to be completed when the official high school year starts in February.



New classrooms being built.



Children keep us all young.

Growth and development is happening everywhere at Jambo Jipya School – from the physical buildings to the children. After a year of being away from Kenya, executive director Keela Dates has returned to her larger and more mature “brothers and sisters.” It seems that everyone has grown at least a foot and the boys’ voices seem to have dropped an octave. The maturity level is greatly increased, although there are still the young children (2-7 years old) who help to keep the place feeling youthful. Smiles are brighter and laughter is more joyful than ever. Life is good at Jambo Jipya School!

Student Spotlight



Rita (Christine) is one of the oldest girls at Jambo Jipya School. She is 17 years old and currently attends 7th grade. Rita is an orphan whose parents died HIV positive. In July 2008, after being passed around from family member to family member (all who struggle financially and couldn't properly care for her), Rita was registered with the Kenyan Child Services Department and placed at Jambo Jipya The Future Child Orphanage. She has been living there ever since. Rita is a wonderful help around the school. She helps with the cooking, cleaning, and caring for the younger children. She has become very comfortable at Jambo Jipya and can often be found laughing and singing. Rita has a beautiful smile and she shares it often but due to the fact that she is older, this gorgeous girl doesn't easily get support from donors. If you are interested in ensuring that this hardworking, kind girl receives the support she deserves, please consider sponsoring her for \$15 per month. Thank you!

Upcoming Events

In March we will be having the continuation of our music evening in support for Reason2Smile and Jambo Jipya School. Those of you who live in upstate New York may remember the "Concert for Jambo Jipya" that we've had at Saranac Lake High School for the last couple years. This year we are changing the venue to the **Lake Placid Center for the Arts** and calling it "**Reason2Smile Arts Night.**" The event will take place at **7pm on Saturday March 5th (doors open at 6pm)** and will include performances by the TopCats (the all male acapella group from UVM), the Saranac Lake HS choir and possibly other local singing groups, as well as drumming and dancing by Somabeats and Waluba Drum group. Keela will also be presenting photos and music from Jambo Jipya School and will have Kenyan goods for sale (before, during, and following the concert). Local students will have artwork on exhibit in the gallery from Wednesday March 2nd until Saturday March 5th, with the art available for purchase starting at 6pm on the evening of the March 5th event. Tickets will be available on the evening of the event: general admission \$8 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. We hope you will join us for an evening of fun in support for needy children!



Give Them a Reason 2 Smile!

Tax deductible donations can be made by giving online via the website: www.reason2smile.org or by making a check payable to "Reason2Smile Inc" and sending it to:

Reason2Smile Inc.
151 Hillcrest Ave.
Lake Placid, NY 12946

For any questions or further information please contact Keela at: keela@reason2smile.org

Thank you for your continued encouragement and support!

