

Abigail NEWS

Autumn 2010



Shena's Village

Their belongings were sparse to say the least. The family's clothes were stuffed into a hessian sack and carried on her back. Chairs fell apart as they were folded to be carried, but still Mary could barely contain her excitement as she, with two of her five children, Rachel and Joseph, set out on their way to their new home in Shena's Village.

The opening of Shena's Village was a day of great rejoicing. All the villagers were there to claim the small house and piece of land they had been allocated and could now call 'HOME', knowing that nobody would ever evict them again. It still resembled a builder's yard, however, as finishing had been rushed to make it possible for them to move in while we were there but that didn't curb their enthusiasm and joy.

When we visited them a few days later, the village was already beginning to feel as though it had a soul as each family put its personal mark on their property. Jackson had started erecting a fence around his shamba out of small branches left from the felled trees. Charles was busy making washing posts from some of the larger branches for Margaret to hang out her washing. Amos was drawing water from the well to make

tea to welcome home his mother Esther from hospital following a small operation she had delayed so that she could be at the opening ceremony. She had recovered remarkably quickly, probably because she couldn't wait to get home and settled in. Her old home would hardly have been an incentive to return to!

Nothing, however, could dampen their spirits at owning a place of their own in that idyllic countryside.

A row of three residents had already dug out a small road in front of their houses to form a walkway between their shambas and the little border of earth they had left in front of their houses and edged with small stones ready for planting flowers to make it pretty. Even more attractive were the smiles and the look of pride on their faces as each of them invited us excitedly into their new homes.

Inside, most of the houses looked somewhat less attractive. There we saw the same meagre

furniture that had been transported either on their backs or on a small cart from their old homes. Nothing had changed there. A brand new house in Shena's Village didn't mean more money to buy new furniture. Some families still don't have a chair to sit on or bed to lie in comfortably at night. Even if they do have a bed, most of

their mattresses are lumpy and so thin every broken slat of the base of the bed must dig into their flesh.

Nothing, however, could dampen their spirits at owning a place of their own in that idyllic countryside.

It would be lovely to help give these villagers an extra special first Christmas in their new homes.

Please read our CHRISTMAS GIFT CARD leaflet to find out how you can help do just that.



Margaret's McKenya House

Margaret was so grateful and excited about her new house she had been to the village every day to help the builders. She is a single mother with 3 children. Her husband left her when the youngest child was only three months old, leaving her without support or hope in the world but having infected her with HIV. Two years ago Margaret was ready to give up altogether and was ready to kill her children and then herself when she remembered what her Christian Grandmother had taught her and decided to go and speak to a Pastor.

Margaret had taken her first tentative step towards God, and God does not disappoint!

This proved to be the first step to Margaret's life being turned around. The Pastor introduced her to Anne at New Hope who has since cared for her

and provided basic needs for her and her children until she was given her house and plot in Shena's Village. As a result Margaret realised the goodness of God and His love for her personally and she became a Christian a few months ago.

Each household was prayed for as the families moved into their new home but by the time it was her turn to be blessed in No 12, her children had become bored with the proceedings and had run off to play. Margaret, however, would not allow the Pastors to start praying until her children were with her. While somebody went off to find her children and bring them to the house, Margaret stood in the middle of her new home and began singing loudly and sincerely from the bottom of her heart 'What a Friend we have in Jesus'. It was one of the most moving parts of the day.



Abigail Women's Bible Studies

There are now about 50 ladies around Eldoret doing the Bible Studies Shena prepared for them on JESUS 'GRANDMAS'. These are studies based on the lives of the women found in the genealogy of Jesus and are applied particularly to issues faced by African women. The largest group is a group of 12 Catholic ladies. Only two of them had Bibles because in Kenya they are still not supposed to have Bibles in their own homes!! We bought Bibles for each of them and also for all the others in the other groups who didn't own Bibles. Another pastor from some

distance away in a town on the way to Sudan came to visit us. He had heard about the ladies Bible Studies and requested that the 60 ladies in his congregation be allowed to do them as well!! As though we would refuse! All these ladies are obviously very eager to learn and study for themselves and we pray their lives, as well as their faith, will be enriched as they continue to do these studies.

New groups are being set up all the time and one lady took a set of the study notes with her when she moved to College in Nairobi

and has started a group there. The Bible tapes and flip charts we brought last time are also being widely used for children's evangelism both in Eldoret and at New Hope. We joined the children at Eldoret for their Bible Study lesson in the school field. They all listened very attentively to the tapes and were fascinated by the pictures on the flip charts. They were all eager to answer the questions asked by the teacher at the end of the story. Many other children passing by gathered to listen to the Bible stories and were welcomed to join the children of Seed School.

Apparently they come every week and often women passing by the field stop to listen as well. We have been requested for more sets of tapes and flip charts as well so that this work can also be expanded.

This is all very encouraging.





FARMING GOD'S WAY



It was a very exciting time for the ladies when we brought them over to Nairobi for their training day with Jim Hopkins. Three of them had never been to Nairobi before and that in itself was a great adventure. Passing the Airport they saw aeroplanes at close quarters for the first time in their lives and realised just how big they are. They had only ever seen them high up in the sky before. We spent a great time with Jim as he explained to them the benefits of farming according to the Bible. The ladies were given a set of new high quality tools and a large variety of vegetable seeds to plant. This was to encourage them to diversify and to move away from growing so much maize. They were

especially interested in the seeds of the Moringa Tree, known as the 'MIRACLE TREE' because of its vast range of beneficial qualities including hedging to create terraces and thus improve irrigation, its nutritional importance and medicinal uses. Later we helped them measure their land to define the contours for the moringa hedges, planted some seed beds and saw their new tools put to use. They are also very excited about the plants that will benefit their families and communities medicinally and are working as a team planning how to develop micro-financing ventures using all their new found knowledge! We wish them well.

GUY AND SUSANNA

We had the pleasure of spending two days with our friends from UK. It was great having them and two of their children with us at the Opening Ceremony for Shena's Village. It really made it feel more homely for us having them there. The following week

we met with them in Nairobi at the New Life Homes Trust where they now live having dedicated their lives to caring for abandoned babies there. We wish them God's blessing in the wonderful work they are doing.



Rain, Rain, Rain; Mud, Mud, Mud - And Frogs!



Our visit to Eldoret was fraught with frustrations. Many of the roads were impassable and treacherous due to torrential rain turning the dirt roads into mud ponds. Pushing, pulling and lifting the car out of potholes or ditches we had skidded into might have been fun at times but at other times meant we were unable to visit families and people we were longing to see to find out what, if any, progress they had made since our last visit.

We at least had a reasonably warm house and a comfortable bed to come back to every day. We can't begin to imagine what it must be like for people living in mud houses and having to sleep on the floor in such weather!

Several frogs paid us a visit in our house. We don't know if they had lost their way or just come in for shelter along with the myriads of bugs which also kept us company. We didn't mind too much until we discovered the frogs have a poisonous bite. We were then far more careful about enticing them back to where they belonged!

Our sincere apologies to you if you are one of the sponsors to whom we haven't been able to give an update on your children or families. Daniel did a fantastic job trying to drive us around but we had to consider safety and our days were cut short trying to avoid the morning and evening deluges.



MANNA FROM PURSES!

Have you been saving your 5p's since last Christmas? If so now is the time to open up your piggy banks and send us the value of those 5p's so that we can buy Christmas presents for some of the neediest children. Thank you so much. We have already received about £100 and we know many more of you have been collecting so we are excited to find out how much there is going to be in total.

A BAKERY!

The next exciting project for the Villagers will be the building of a Bakery where they will have steady employment. We hope this will be completed early next spring.

GROUP VISIT

We look forward to taking a group of 12 with us in February 2011. Please remember this in your prayers as you pray for all the other issues in this Newsletter.



Seed School Building

The surveyors plotted out Seed School's portion of land while we were there and so the next stage of the long tedious process has taken place. Daniel is longing for building to begin early next year. He has a very rocky field on his farm and has already employed a 'fundu' to dig up these rocks and smash them into the hardcore that will be used for the foundations of the school and Beccy and Ed

started putting up the perimeter fence while they were there. We could say the work has begun!

The teachers continue to be dedicated to the children and do a fantastic job with the little resources they have in their present dilapidated building but they are all looking forward eagerly to new and better accommodation.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES - Joseph And Dorcas

We visited this very nice family with obvious difficulties for the first time. Joseph seems to be a gifted landscape gardener and has made his own plot very attractive. He does not keep good health, however, and can only work when he is well enough and if he gets a contract when he feels strong enough to fulfil it. He looked very unwell when we saw him. Dorcas is very lame. She had a hip replacement in 1995 but is badly in need of a new one. She is a well educated lady having a degree from Lusaka University and by profession is a teacher but she is unable to work because of her disability and also because she has 5 children.

Their land is on a very steep slope and due to soil erosion their crop of maize was very, very poor. They would be ideal candidates for Farming God's Way and because of the knowledge and skills Joseph already has, would probably pick up the concepts quickly. We hope to be able to help them into the future.



A SPECIAL BIRTHDAY

The staff and children had planned a surprise birthday party for Shena. There were two lovely

cakes which, according to African tradition, Shena had to divide up and feed everybody a mouthful while they sang 'Happy Birthday'. The children were all very excited later as they performed the entertainment they had practised. It was all very humbling as most of these children will never have had a birthday cake of their own. Some don't even know when their birthdays are and don't have mothers who can tell them. Hopefully the joy they had in participating in this birthday party will have made up in a small way.



RESPONSE FORM

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR SHENA'S VILLAGERS – see separate leaflet

I would like to:

- Help a woman like Sally or Lillian to change their lifestyle £ _____
- Donate towards the new Seed School building fund £ _____
- Sponsor a child at Seed School (£18 per month)
- Give a general donation to Abigail Ministries £ _____

(Please make cheques payable to Abigail Ministries)

Name _____

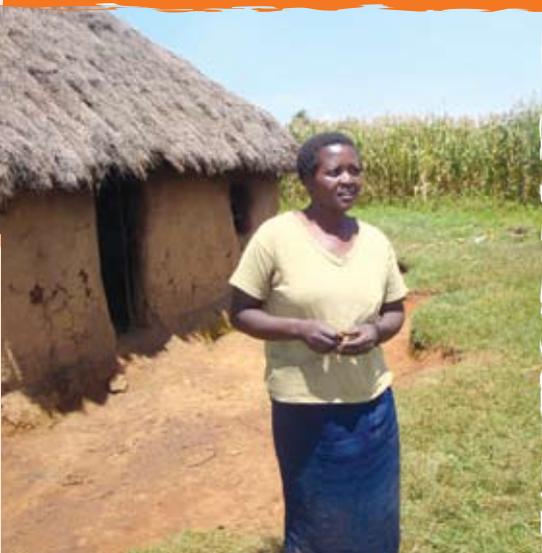
Address _____

Please send me a Gift Aid Form _____

Setting Free The Trapped

We barely recognised MONICAH as the same lady we met in February when we started her off working in a corner of her sister's hairdressing salon. Since then she has used the money we gave her to go on a hairdressing course, set up her own small business and moved into her own premises. She says she was so overwhelmed that somebody who didn't know her could just come from far away and want to help her that she

determined to turn her life around. She has completely left brewing and prostitution behind her and is now going to church. She says she feels very different about herself and can now hold her head up high. She is SO happy and grateful for the help we have been able to give her and there were tears in her eyes as she blessed her sponsors and Abigail Ministries for what they have done for her.



Sally & Lillian

In February we started a Crocheting Group and provided audio Bible tapes for them to listen to while they work. SALLY is a very poor lady who earns a small amount of money by brewing. She also buys milk to sell in Cheptiret but this involves her having to carry 20litres about 2 Km in order to make just a few shillings. Although she doesn't crochet herself Sally joins the ladies in the crocheting group every week because she likes listening to the Bible tapes and has now decided to stop selling liquor on a Sunday because she wants to go to church instead! At the moment she still feels trapped in the brewing business because she has to feed her children but she longs to get out of this lifestyle and if she could be helped to find another way of earning money she would welcome it. When asked what she would like to do she told us she likes keeping chickens and if we could buy her more to add to the 10 she already has, and provide a hut and a run for them she could start a small egg selling business and would gladly give up brewing. £100 could transform her life. **Would you like to help Sally?**

LILLIAN has also joined the Crocheting Group to listen to the Bible tapes although she doesn't crochet either. The Christians in the Group are trying to encourage her to change her lifestyle. Lillian is also a brewer. She is quite a shy lady but surprisingly she openly showed us everything to do with her brewing. A sign of desperation

that she wants help! She has a grindstone in her house where she kneels on the mud floor for two hours at a time to grind enough millet to start the process. She also took us to a little mud hut on her land which was virtually a small private pub and where the smell itself was quite intoxicating. Lillian has 4 children and her husband beats her when he is drunk. We asked if by stopping brewing she would be at risk of more beatings when the liquor wasn't available to her husband but she said 'no' because he doesn't drink her ale! She wants to stop brewing and is going to think about what she would like to do as an alternative and we will try to help her. She has never seriously considered anything else before because she believed she was in a hopeless trap it would never be possible to leave!

Since the new Constitution came in a few weeks ago this form of brewing is illegal in Kenya and if these ladies were caught they could be fined the impossible sum of £25,000 or face 7 years in prison. Even more incentive for them to stop but they need help to start an alternative micro-business. We have seen other ladies lives completely transformed by just a little amount of money by UK standards and we hope we will be able to give Sally and Lillian similar help and see their lives and those of their children's transformed in the near future.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT IN SO MANY WAYS. THIS WORK COULD NOT CONTINUE WITHOUT YOU AND WE THANK GOD FOR ALL OF YOU WHO PARTNER US IN THE WORK OF HELPING THE NEEDY IN KENYA!