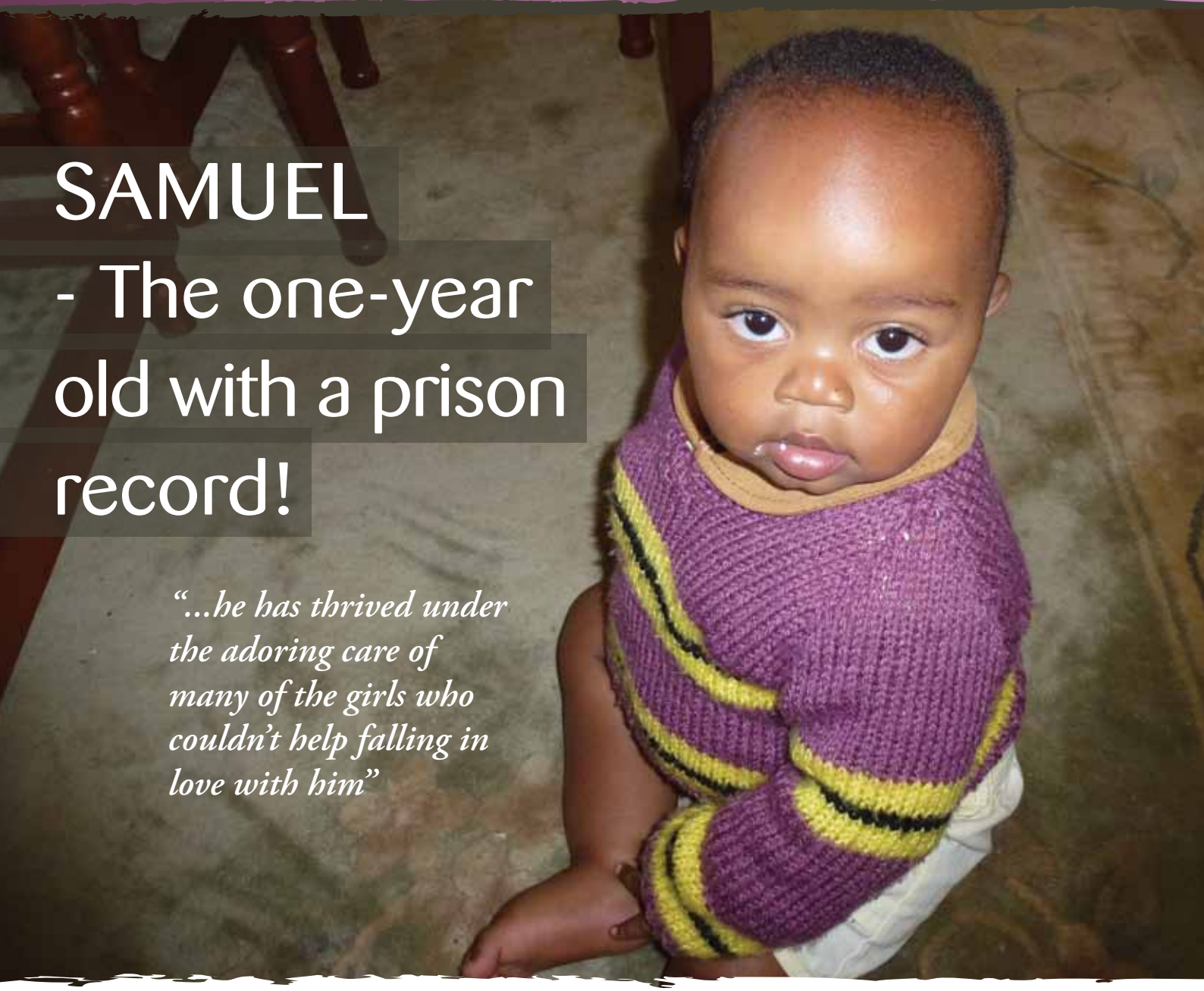
Abigail NEWS
Autumn 2012



SAMUEL - The one-year old with a prison record!

"...he has thrived under the adoring care of many of the girls who couldn't help falling in love with him"

He is an absolutely adorable baby boy of about a year old but it's a miracle he has reached his first birthday! When he was just weeks old, his mother put him in a large bag with a few clothes and took him off to the forest, intending to leave him there to whatever fate awaited him. Fortunately a man tending his cow nearby caught sight of her and went to investigate what was in the bag. When he saw it was a baby, he chased after the mother screaming to alert attention. A crowd from the nearby market place came to see what was happening. The men were very angry and beat her but the women talked to the mother and told her that if she took Samuel home, they would help her with food whenever she needed it. Some weeks later, however, she took him to a swollen river and was about to throw him in when a young man spotted her. He called out to her just in time. She was then reported to the Children's Officer and the police and eventually jailed, sentenced to 3 years in prison, charged with attempted murder. The police took Samuel to his grandmother but they discovered she was poor and sick and also had a very old mother who she had to do everything for. It was impossible for her to look after Samuel as well. The police then took him to the prison in the hope that under supervision, his mother would bond with him. Far from doing this, she was caught one day trying to strangle him with a piece of string! Following this, Samuel was taken to New Hope where he has thrived under the adoring care of many of the girls who couldn't help falling in love with him but especially by one teenage girl who has 'adopted' him as though he were her own child. He is now a very happy, sturdy little toddler. What a history for a ONE YEAR OLD little boy to have!!

Making Good Progress!

ESTHER is Winnie, Dennis and Edwin's Grandmother. The family was in a desperate state when we first met them in February 2011. The children didn't go to school and Esther tied them to posts while she went looking for work. We noticed when we visited them this time that the children were sleeping together huddled in a corner of their mud hut with just a rush 'mat' between them and the earth floor. Esther was doing the same in another corner. Old rags were the only blankets they had to keep them warm. We bought them two mattresses and a blanket each which they were absolutely delighted with and it didn't take any persuasion for any of them to spread out their 'new beds' and try them! These may sound pretty meagre beds to us but it is the best we can do for them as their hut is too small for beds and even the two mattresses will have to be rolled up and stored out of the way during the day. We also bought a box of food for them and we heard the next day that they were so happy Esther had made them chapatis for their supper that night to celebrate, a treat usually reserved for Christmas among the poor.

At the Graduation celebrations for Seed School, we had huge lumps in our throats as we watched Winnie lead out the Graduates and receive her prize for coming first in her class. Later we saw Edwin receive third prize in is class and Dennis came a respectable sixth in his. What a transformation sponsoring has made to these children as well as to Grandma Esther who was very proud to stand beside her Grandchildren as they received their prizes and who now wears a happy smile when she greets us and takes an interest in the children she once neglected to the point of abuse. Thank you to those who saw the plight of these dear little children, sponsored them and gave this whole family hope and a future.

There are still many other children waiting for sponsors to help change their lives.





Mini Graduates!

We have never been to a Graduation Ceremony like that one before! All the Graduates were under 4ft tall and under 10 years of age – some considerably less! But these were not child prodigies. These children were graduating from the pre-school class (Nursery School as we would call it) to Primary School. The mini Graduates all looked adorable in their gowns and elasticated mortarboards. The graduates might have been mini but the ceremony certainly wasn't. Not only was it the Graduation Ceremony, it was also Prize-giving for the whole school, every class teacher giving out prizes, certificates and awards to the children who had come first to tenth in the end of term school exams which had taken place earlier in the week and first to third in the inter-zonal exams which had taken place the week before. Each class entertained us with songs and dances, there was a Boys/Girls Brigade Parade, the obligatory speeches, three cakes to be cut and fed to parents and other guests and by the time all this was completed, 5 hours had passed. The parents and 'Guests' were sitting under an open-sided marquee or in the shade of the school veranda but the poor children were wilting under the sun all the time. Nonetheless they all seemed to have a wonderful time and there were some very proud parents.





Traumatised Children At New Hope

It is becoming more evident as the children who were rescued and brought to New Hope as little ones reach their teen years that their past traumas are now re-emerging and causing emotional and behavioural problems. John, for example was the first (and for a long time the only) boy at New Hope in 2000. He was rescued after being thrown from a car when he was a small toddler on the busy highway a short distance from New Hope. Despite extensive enquiries to try and find out his identity, no trace of his background was ever found. It didn't bother John as he grew up. He was loved, cared for and had lots of 'sisters' and later 'brothers' as well to play with. Things only started changing last year when the time came for him to need a birth certificate or an identity card in order to sit school exams. John began to realise he didn't know who he was, where he came from, which tribe he belonged to (important to a Kenyan), or why he was so cruelly rejected. He has changed from the happy helpful boy he has always been to being a withdrawn teenager who cries a lot. Anne wants to get professional counselling for the present children while they are young so that their traumas are dealt with straightaway and not left to fester and cause problems as they grow up. She has found a Centre in Nairobi where they provide counselling for traumatised children.

Three of the little girls who need help are Ruth, Seraphina and Joyce. These little girls have experienced things no child of their age should. Their experiences range from physical violence, witnessing their mother being murdered, having a father who regularly brought prostitutes home to their one-roomed hut, being sexually abused and serious neglect. As a result Ruth, Seraphina and Joyce show signs of unnatural behaviour. We would like to fund the professional help they need so AM is holding a fund-raising event in November called the 'BIG 5 CRAFT AND ACTIVITY BONANZA'. If it is not possible for you to attend that event but you would like to help fund counselling for these three little girls and others who need it, please indicate on the Response Form. Thank you.

Exloitation of The Vulnerable

Hannah was one of our girls we sponsored through High School. She wasn't the best behaved girl but she was bright enough. We gave her two opportunities to go to High School after she misbehaved the first time and we were pleased when we heard she had succeeded the second time. In between her two attempts we paid for a hairdressing course for her. We were therefore very sad to hear of the experience she has had since the last time saw her. She had signed on at an Agency in Nairobi where she was promised a great opportunity in a wealthy country. She left Kenya excitedly expecting to have a wonderful future. Sadly, she had been deceived. She was to be a virtual slave, unpaid and abused in a country far from home. Thankfully, Hannah is a resourceful girl and eventually she managed to escape with the help of the Kenyan Embassy and is now safely home in Kenya but she reminds us that sadly some of these teenagers are still easily persuaded by the empty promises of unscrupulous people traffickers who take advantage of their vulnerability.

Response Form

- ☐ I would like to sponsor a child (£18 per month)
- ☐ I would like to contribute towards the cost of the borehole £ _____
- ☐ I would like to provide funds for a latrine £ _____
- ☐ I would like to help fund counselling for a traumatised child £ _____
- ☐ I would like to give a general donation £ _____

Name: Tel No:

Address:

Postcode:

(Please make your cheques payable to Abigail Ministries)

☐ I am an eligible tax payer, please Gift Aid my donation.

Thank you to everybody who has supported and encouraged us recently in many ways over what has been a difficult few months.

New Desks For Top Class!

Graduation Day was also a big day for the top class in the school. The children of Newton Farm School in Harrow held a Summer Fair where the children raised lots of money to buy desks for the children at Seed School who had previously been cramped two to a small table with no facilities for storing books. Although we had tried to get these delivered earlier in the week so that delivery wouldn't coincide with all the business of Graduation Day, this wasn't to be.

Because Seed School is rather remote, the firm making the desks didn't know where to deliver them so they asked us to meet them at the Timber Yard in our minibus and lead the way. We were a few minutes late arriving but even so some men were still trying to get the loaded truck to start. It took several attempts for seven men to push the truck up and down the yard for it to finally splutter into life. It still wasn't ready! The truck driver had then to go to a lorry depot to have the tyres pumped up. We waited for half an hour outside on the roadside before going to find out what was happening. We found him just casually chatting to another lorry driver. Finally we were on our way. The driver did very well it has to be said, manoeuvring his truck loaded with thirty desks and chairs up the 3Kms of narrow, winding, rutted, muddy roads to Seed School.

Then of course, African style, there had to be small celebration of thanksgiving for the desks. The children were delighted with them. It's hard to imagine British children being excited about new desks but these children were so excited, after the 5 hour Graduation Ceremony, they rushed back to their classroom and even though they were now officially on the long 'summer'(for them) break, they seated themselves at their new desks and asked for their teacher to come and give them a lesson!

Leah Loves Her Goats

– Leah's goats are thriving – and so is Leah. She is a very happy lady! It was a delight to visit her and to see the relationship she has with her goats. They came running to meet her when they saw her and she proudly showed us the record she has diligently kept of every single thing that has happened to them since the day she received them. While we were there we 'christened' them with their collars and name tags - which they didn't protest about too much! The names Daisy, Bella and Ben were chosen by the children of Newton Farm School who raised the money to buy them. We were amazed to see how big Ben the kid had grown. He was born while we were there in February but is now as big as his mother and already showing signs of having the mischievous temperament of a 'Billy goat', so unlike his very docile mother! Leah hopes to build up a small goat herd and is already talking about then helping other needy families in gratitude for the blessing she has received. We wish her well.

An Appeal For Latrines

Daniel had just been telling us of the need for latrines. The predicament has arisen again over the past few very wet weeks as rain has gushed through the ruts families use for toilets straight down into the river where people wash, and sometimes drink. We were on our way to visit one of the families affected when we passed Victor who waved joyously at us through an alcoholic haze. We didn't realise it was his family home we were heading for and were amazed that he managed to stagger there and arrive at the same time as we did.

Even in his befuddled state, he was able to plead coherently for a latrine, not only for his own family but also for several other families in the community. Several of these families are Daniel and Grace's neighbours who we have told you about before. Although they are permitted to use Daniel and Grace's one this is obviously far from ideal and some have to trudge over several fields to use it. This is why they just use the edge of their own fields. Victor wanted to show us the evidence of the problems they have so we obliged so far but enough was enough and we had to put a polite end to his tour! We have, however, promised to help because Daniel says it is a very great problem both for the people and for their animals. Victor promised Daniel that the families would dig their own pits and where possible they will gather the wood required but they will still need concrete and corrugated sheets. The cost of a decent latrine for each family will cost £120. If you can help with these please indicate on the Response Form. The peoples' health is going to be seriously affected if we don't help them.

Pauline and Kevin

Kevin is in Class 6 at Seed School. He loves playing football and is in the school team. His mother abandoned him and left him living with his disabled Grandmother, Pauline. She is a lovely lady who cares deeply for Kevin but finds life a daily struggle. Her hands, arms and feet are twisted with arthritis and even with the aid of a stick found great difficulty in walking, especially as the stick was too short for her by about 6 inches and bending over all the time caused her severe backache. We bought her a new stick which at least relieved that pain.

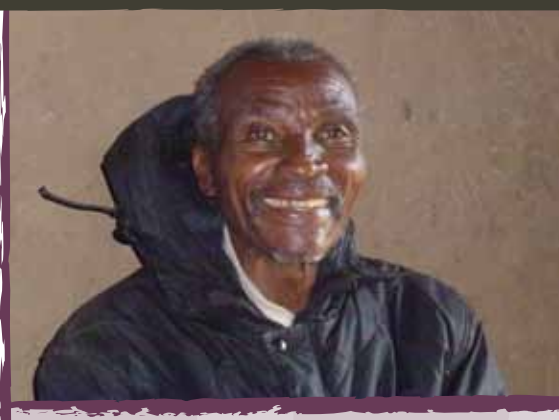
Before being afflicted with arthritis, Pauline had been an accomplished tailoress and owned a shop. Now her beautiful sewing machine lies idle in the corner of her little hut. She would like if her 19 year-old daughter could train to use it but Mercy is pregnant with her second child and doesn't show much interest anyway. Apart from this, Pauline needs her to look after her and the other children. Mercy's first little girl, Naom, was born as a result of rape and the one she expecting now conceived through desperate prostitution! Mercy was unable to go for further ante-natal check-ups following the first one she walked 5 Km to have because the next one would require blood tests and a scan and she couldn't pay the 300Ks (about £2.25p) it would cost. She would also have to walk 9 Km to another clinic for it.

Ten-year-old Kevin is trying to act the man of the family and has started digging a latrine. He has gone down 10ft and will soon be erecting bamboo walls around the hole to a height of about 5 ft. At the moment they have to share a toilet with their neighbour about 100yards away. That's the extent of privacy any of them can expect and Pauline and Mercy are grateful for that.

The family have about 1 acre of land which a neighbour helped them cultivate last year but it was a one-off goodwill gesture. Other neighbours help out quite well. We have been able through Kevin's sponsor to provide money for this year's ploughing and planting.

They have 4 sheep, quite a lot of chickens which they breed rather than collecting eggs and they have a nice little fruit orchard.

They have a nice kitchen with a lovely mud oven but a very inadequate tin containing charcoal as their only source of heating.



Ezekiel

We couldn't help smiling all through our visit to Ezekiel even though he was in urgent need of help. He is an old man with a young wife called Jane and they have four relatively young children. We found Ezekiel alone as Jane had gone to a burial and he was obviously feeling a bit lonely. He lives at the bottom of a hill, in the middle of a field and probably doesn't get much company when Jane goes off to find work and the children are either at school or out playing. Ezekiel suffers with asthma and finds it impossible to trudge up the hill to find somebody to talk to so when we arrived he was delighted and for the next half hour he just talked none-stop. It really was quite amusing because we hadn't a clue what he was saying but he didn't mind one bit! He was just so happy to have someone sit and listen to him. In between breaths we did discover that he had run out of all his medication, his inhaler had run out and he couldn't afford to go to the Hospital 9 Kms away for a check-up. Even then he couldn't afford to buy the necessary medication so there was no point in going anyway! We were very happy to be able to provide all the finances he needed as we had unexpectedly been sent some extra money the night before to use for 'whoever needed it'! God knew Ezekiel needed his medicine and He provided.

Joseph is a happy little boy

as he nestles up to his sponsor. Would you like to put a huge smile on one of the many other children's faces who need a sponsor?
Please fill in the Response Form if you would.

Great To Catch Up With An Old Friend…

Japheth is a young man who I have sponsored for the past 4 years. His family was affected by the atrocious elections of 2007 and he was left in a very sad state. I sponsored him so that he was able to finish high school and I am now supporting him through his university course. His Auntie Abigail (!) took him in to live with her after the troubles and he is now a very happy and successful young man.

Japheth is very thankful for the support I have given and continue to give him and he very much wants to give hope to others as he has been given. He and a friend from his church saw there was a need to take action with the young local men who have descended into a life of alcohol, drugs and robbery. Japheth's friend feels he should educate the young men of the dangers and risks of HIV and AIDS as their current lifestyle will inevitably bring them down the path to these diseases. Japheth himself has always had a passion for sport and felt he could reach these men through the values and camaraderie of football. Japheth sees it as an opportunity to talk with them and protect them from spiralling further into trouble, bringing them back to a point where they feel valued and useful to their community. Japheth has worked hard with the young men and has singlehandedly created them into a strong team. The team are now involved in a tournament to display and feel proud of their skills and they have recently reached the quarter finals with the next round to be played in the very near future. The match was due to be played during our recent trip but the match had to be postponed. They did however manage to arrange a friendly fixture with a local team and Dad and I and even Mum (!) enjoyed the football that they saw, with Auntie Abigail in good voice on the sideline too! Japheth's team has limited resources (virtually all of the players play with no shoes on) and were having to borrow a low quality ball from Plateau Primary School, where they also train and play their matches.

When we met with Japheth we purchased a high quality ball for the team which will enable them to play even better football!

Japheth says nearly all 30 members of the squad are involved with drugs, alcohol and/or robbery but each time they play they are willing to stay and talk afterward, keeping them away from these dangerous and destructive pastimes. Japheth's hard work with the team has been recognised in his application for a grant from the local Community Development Fund (CDF). The team has been granted 10,000KS to help with the organisation of tournaments for the team, for a team kit and for the continuing hard work of Japheth and his friend in restoring a positive balance and feeling of self-worth in the lives of the young men they are seeking to help. It was wonderful to see Japheth again after two years; to see him organising the team and the way the men responded to him. He has become a very confident and polite man with a real heart for helping others and I am very proud of him. Praise the Lord for all the hard work of Japheth and his friend.

Beccy.

Pole! Pole! – Slowly! Slowly!

It has been a slow, frustrating, discouraging year verging on despair at times. Both building projects came to a standstill and Roger spent some difficult weeks in Kenya trying to sort things out. At times we wondered if and when we would see any progress. It was difficult to ascertain where human failings were to blame and where the holdup was genuinely due to the legislations brought in by the new Kenyan Constitution. At last, however, we were encouraged during our October visit to hold some very promising meetings with officials and we are hopeful that the Projects will be completed by early to mid-2013. These Projects include the second block of Seed School, the Abigail Health Care Centre and the Water Project. We just pray now that there will be no unrest during the elections, due to be held in March, which might cause any further delays.

WE ARE STILL A VERY LONG WAY SHORT OF FUNDS FOR THE BOREHOLE. IF YOU CAN HELP BY HOLDING A FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR THIS, WE WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS, REGULAR DONORS AND ALL OF YOU WHO ARRANGE SPECIAL EVENTS OR DEDICATE YOUR OWN SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS TO ABIGAIL MINISTRIES.

Abigail MINISTRIES

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