

## ***The KAASO April 2007 Update***

### ***Visiting Day at KAASO***

Each boarding school holds a Visiting Day each term in which relatives of each of the children visit, often bringing great amounts of food to share, including a special treat of soda pop for the child they're visiting. In addition, a general meeting is held for the parents with guest dignitaries and teachers to discuss what is happening at the school. The entire school goes into a flurry of preparation in advance, wanting every nook and cranny clean, projects finished, and the children having earned good marks to impress their families. Usually Dominic advertises Visiting Day at great distances through the radio. As radio advertisements cost money however, Dominic uses a clever trick to announce the date on the radio. Because travel can be difficult and costly for many, and the radio a prime means of communication, stations allow you to call in personal greetings which are then broadcast on air between station reports, music, and paid advertisements. To save money, instead of paying for an advertisement, Dominic calls in a "personal greeting" to all the parents, friends, and family of the children of KAASO thanking them for coming on the upcoming Visiting Day and letting them know how he looks forward to seeing them on [this] date. It saves money, gets the word spread, and Dominic always enjoys the little subterfuge! Here are some reports on what happened on Visiting Day at KAASO:

From Ryon's recent update: Visiting day! The children were quite happy to have their friends and family come and visit them. Dominic combined visiting day with his graduation party, and it was really quite grand. All in all, it was a fantastic day.

From an e-mail Director Dominic sent on Monday, March 12 to past volunteers: Am happy to inform you that yesterday was my graduation ceremony and Visiting Day at KAASO. In fact so many parents came to visit their children and to witness my graduation, they brought a lot of gifts for us; it was a very fantastic day and how I wished you were there. Now am a graduate from Uganda Martyr's University in Education. And Rose also celebrated her Diploma in Primary Education. Our new sun oven from The Rotary Club of Florida US and Muyenga was blessed by Rev Fr Fisher.

Thank you so much for your support and prayers.  
Dominic

And from a conversation I had with Headmistress Rose: The celebration was no nice! There were many people celebrating and the children enjoyed the day!

### ***The Weather***

The rainy season has begun in the Rakai District. If you have visited during times of drought you know how devastating the lack of rain can be, so it is wonderful to see the rains come as expected. People have begun planting their vegetables- a time of hope and expectation for a good future.

The people of KAASO have begun planting as well. The children have already been out planting maize (corn). A primary staple of their diet, posho, is made from corn meal. They've also had teams of children with assistance from some teachers working at the banana plantation. As of two weeks ago the nursery bed had many cabbages that were not quite ready for transplant, but as of this writing likely are ready to be transferred to the farms.

### ***Pig Project Status***

A Rotary Club sponsored the Pig Project at KAASO and it's been in existence for a couple years now. It provides piglets for some of the people of the village. They raise the pigs and sell them, in addition to having a breeding pair so they have a continuous supply. KAASO has kept the maintenance of the project via an adjacent piggery housing tens of pigs (including piglets). By selling piglets and small pigs, KAASO managed to raise 400,000 US\$. They used this money to buy the land near the piggery, behind one of the boy's dormitories to "extend" the school. Here's a bit more from Ryon about it: Dominic bought more land around the piggery. I am not sure exactly what he is going to do with it, but KAASO is continuing it's expansion. If we're not careful, all of Kabira will belong to KAASO!

### ***Donations***

As you know from the previous newsletter and from the Handbook, Dominic has long been requesting sporting team outfits, shoes, equipment, etc., and Kate Hammond, a volunteer from Australia, has answered the call! Here's an update from an e-mail a number of weeks ago in March:

I've managed to raise the money to ship the boxes of football boots and other sporting equipment to you. People have been very generous. I'll be sending 2 boxes containing football boots (about 27 pairs), footballs and netballs (5 of

each), hand pumps, sports socks, sports T-shirts (enough for a football team) as well as some other sporting equipment. I hope the girls and boys at KAASO enjoy it all!

I'm absolutely certain everyone at KAASO will enjoy these donations! Thanks go out to Kate and to all those who helped to support her in this effort!

Rose gave me a quick update on the pencil sharpeners that Kerryn from New Zealand brought with her. Although I'm sure Kerryn and Sam know the results, I thought I would pass it on for everyone else. They were put on the tables in classrooms (the classrooms generally have a larger desk at the front for the Teachers) and continue to work well. The pencils that are of poor quality break though when these strong sharpeners are used. However, they much enjoy using them for the pencils that are higher quality and are pleased with this donation! Thanks should be passed on to Kerryn!

## ***New Latrines***

The current large pit latrines used by the children (the "pupils") are almost completely full and new ones are desperately needed. KAASO continues to accept new students at every chance and this greatly impacts the facilities. When I spoke to Dominic about the latrines about 2 weeks ago, he had it as his goal to complete the latrines during this Easter holiday. However Ryon has placed the date further out. At any rate, the need is recognized and work continues steadily. If they're not done this holiday, they'll be completed the next! Perhaps some of the future volunteers will be working on these same latrines (if they so desire!). Here's the update from Ryon: The new latrines are still being built slowly but surely. It is taking a long time, but that is probably because it is all manual labor. Ideally, the holes (there are two) will be 40 feet deep and it takes a while to dig holes that are that deep. The estimation for completion is sometime in June or July.

## ***Building Construction***

One constant at KAASO: there's always a new building being erected! As Ryon mentioned in his latest update: Construction has started on a new building that will include a nursery classroom and a new office. It's still in the early stages, but Dominic says it should be finished by the time second term starts in May.

This new building, meant to house the nursery class which is now using the space sponsored by a Rotary Club meant for housing the Community Library, already has its foundation completed and should go up fairly quickly. For now the Community Library continues to be the smaller area to the back of the current Administrative Office. The children do use the library, but it is far too small. Once the new nursery building is complete, the library will move into their designated building and will be open for the community. That will be an exciting time! I'm certain the Volunteers will be able to contribute much towards organizing the nursery and the Community Library. In addition, to have such a large space available with learning resources for the entire community, it means many programs could begin that were difficult in the past for educating and inspiring community members. Dedicated volunteers have started micro-lending and business programs, women's empowerment and support groups, health education projects, etc, at other projects in Uganda for example and a large communal space with computers and educational materials in the village of Kabira would be a fertile place for such developments! The volunteers at KAASO are an amazing group and I imagine amazing things will continue to come from them!

The next priority after the new nursery building is the classrooms for Primary 1, Primary 2, and Primary 3. These have long been partially built. Currently the building walls and roof are complete. It still needs windows, doors, and a floor, but these finishing touches should not take too long, assuming other building projects don't take precedence.

## ***A Class Activity***

About a week ago I was able to reach Rose on her cell phone but couldn't speak too long with her; the children of one class were having a great day, having divided into groups of about 15 each with different activities for some fun and Rose was leading one of the groups when I called! Volunteer Kim was reading to a group, Volunteer Ryon was playing a game, Headmistress Rose was playing different games with balls outdoors, and Teacher Ben was leading a small group which involved having a small piece of cloth for the children's eyes. I never could figure out what Ben was doing with his group, but from the laughter and screams of delight in the background, it was a wonderful time for all!

## ***The People of KAASO***

Everyone at KAASO seems well. Rose has had a hoarse voice for some time but does not feel ill otherwise. Prima looks "so smart" in the baby clothing one of the past volunteers sent. Kim Vogel, one of the current volunteers, has considered adopting a young girl abandoned by her mother. Adoption from Uganda can be a long and difficult process, but rewarding for those that do. It is not too rare for people from developed countries to be offered children or for people to find a way to place children in your path, but adoption is not always as easy as one may hope when a special child enters your heart. Especially in a clear case of abandonment you would hope it would be easier but

Uganda, and other Sub-Saharan countries, need to protect themselves from practices such as child slavery and abduction. Kim continues to research the possibilities and, as speaks to her giving and compassionate nature, continues to help the children she encounters. The dramatic change seen in a few weeks with the health and temperament of this young girl have inspired everyone at KAASO and the community is quite grateful to Kim for all that she is doing for her, and for the other children she has personally intervened to change their lives so dramatically. I've copied Ryon's update on Kim below. Ryon is leaving towards the end of April/beginning of May and everyone will be quite upset I'm certain! He will have been there for almost 9 months and is considered such an important part of every-day life. I'm certain they will feel a large gap when he leaves. In addition to the leaving being difficult after a long time, coming home you can experience a reverse cultural adjustment; getting used to a life back home when the majority of the people do not understand what you experienced or how profoundly it changed you can be even more difficult. It can leave some people upset or saddened by the loss of the community they experienced. Others can be inspired to work hard at returning or doing their best to support those "left behind". And for some it is a mix of confusing emotions- happy at returning, sad at leaving, and every emotion in between. As with almost any adjustment time and attitude can affect it greatly and all of us wish Ryon well in his upcoming journey back to his family in the US.

Ryon's update on Kim: Kim has been busy. She keeps finding children at the doctor that need help, so she brings them back to the school to do what she can. So far, she has four. I've been glad to help her where I could, and it's been great to see the progress these kids have made.

### ***Future Volunteers***

Paul and Mallory of Canada are set to come in mid-May and everyone is already quite excited! Paul has his Bachelor's in Math and is now studying International Studies and Languages and Mallory is an experienced sports coach and foreign language instructor. They will be a great addition and help to the people of KAASO. Some sad/happy news: Noah and Angie from America, who were scheduled to come in Mid-May have had to cancel. Noah has gotten a job transfer requiring them to move their home and start elsewhere this summer. It's a sad loss for KAASO and I know Angie and Noah are upset about not being able to come. KAASO's staff and administrators were very much looking forward to their visit, but everyone understands. Of course, they're always much welcomed at KAASO should the chance come up for them again! Towards the beginning of June, Sue, an experienced nurse, consultant and manager from Australia, will be arriving, and others are scheduled towards the end of June. Much excitement being generated about the new visitors and volunteers!

As always, let me know if you have any questions, concerns, additions, comments, or if I can be of any help!  
Thank you all for your support of KAASO!  
Emma Young, Volunteer Coordinator