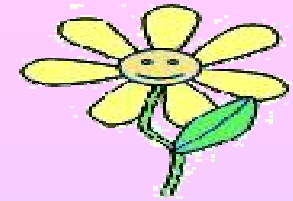


HAPPY HOME



Newsletter March - April 2007

Contents

- **Happiness at Happy Home**

Small changes make a big difference.

- **Children and Household Tasks**

The children are learning how to perform daily household tasks

- **Life at Happy Home: Play Time**

After school hours are fun times for the children (see photos) ...

- **Life at Happy Home: School**

The children received their grades just before the Easter Holiday in school. While the results are about what you might expect for disadvantaged children , the kids love going school and are ready to work harder next term.

- **Family visits**

It is important for the children to keep in touch with their relatives.

More Happiness at Happy Home

Much of the orphanage's furniture needs improvement. By painting old furniture in bright colours, the children contribute to the improvement of their environment. They also seem to enjoy the process.



Doors and tables were painted.
The children chose new colours
for their cupboards



First step: cleaning the cupboards...



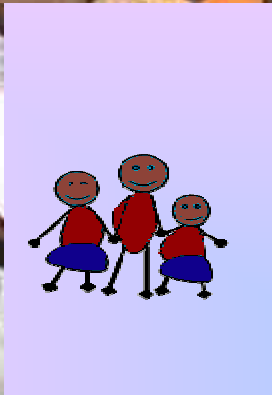
Second step: sanding



Other "happy" activities:



Making bracelets...



...and drawing pictures to hang up in the rooms

Children and Household Tasks

Now that the children are used to their new home, it is time for them to start learning how to help our busy caretakers. One day they will live on their own, so they need to learn daily self-help tasks.



Planting maize



Susan doing the dishes



David Ombwayo cleaning the compound



The eldest girls preparing vegetables





The children also help in serving the food and cleaning their bedrooms.



Evance fetching water

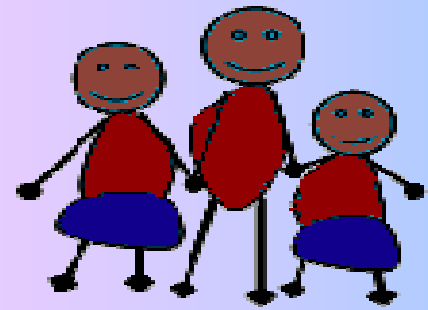


Cleaning the dining room



Evance repairs his school bag

They also learn to take good care of their belongings...



Washing slippers

Life at Happy Home: Play Time



After school hours, and after their chores are completed, the children have time to do what they like most ... playing!
(and who said they need toys???)
They make their own)



Making small houses



Teasing the "watch" dog



Playing in the sand



Ball handling



'Clubhouse meeting'



Football



Collecting flowers



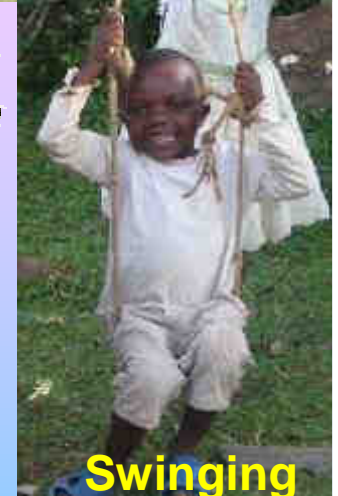
Bicycle riding



Making a Ball

Other common games :

- all ballgames
- making balls and skipping ropes
- singing songs
- collecting frogs
- catching little termites to eat them
- tumbling down the hill
- making instruments to have a walking orchestra

Swinging



Playing with Toy Cars



Ball Games



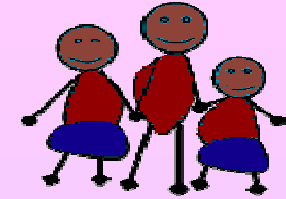
Peeking through the clubhouse window



and sometimes, when they are just too tired or when the sun gets too hot, they simply like to take things easy



Life in Happy Home: School



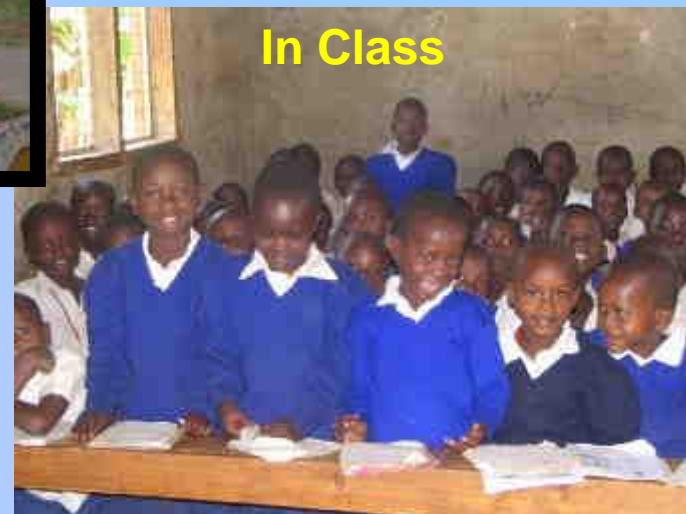
The children's Easter holidays started the first week of April. Everyone was happy that the holidays had started, at least until they had to show their grades to the caretakers... Only a few of the children received good reports.

We expected that the children would need time to adjust to school as only a few had learned good study habits at home and many were far behind their grade level. To remedy this problem, next term Happy Home staff will give the children more guidance and also direct help for those in need.

Despite problems in class, the children are very enthusiastic about going to school and have pledged to work harder.



New School Uniforms



In Class



Family Visits



For the children it is important to keep the contact with their relatives as one day they will leave Happy Home and many will go back to their villages. Many of the children inherited land from their parents and will need the support of their families to become re-established in the community.

The Happy Home social worker periodically visits the children's surviving family members and invites them for monthly visits.

In many cases, however, the first of these visits are not easy. Many of the children go into hiding, thinking that their relatives want to take them back permanently. The social worker explains to the children that their family only coming for a brief visit. Once they understand, the children reconnect with their relatives and are proud to show them around Happy Home.

In addition, during Easter school leave -- which lasts for four weeks -- each of the children is sent to visit with their remaining families for about half the time. Both the children and their relatives proved enthusiastic about the visits and worked hard to make them a success. The most vulnerable families were given food to help them maintain the children during the holiday period.



Active Members of Happy Home



Happy Home would not exist without the support of dedicated volunteers. The following is an overview of volunteer work over the past several months:

- **Belgium**

Our Belgian Volunteers are very active.

- 1) **MEDIA:** We expect to be published soon in the “Nieuwsblad” newspaper. Let’s cross our fingers. Thanks you Mija De Greef.
- 2) **SCHOOL MARATHON:** A school marathon organised by OLV St-Gen-Rode early May raised 1250 € for Happy Home. Thanks to the team.
- 3) **SINT-GENESIUS-RODE** The town of Sint-Genesius Rode provided 4.500 € to cover the second phase of the renovation works. Their generosity will prove a great help in finalising the project. Thank you.
- 4) **CLOTHES transfer re-established:** We have found a new channel to transfer clothes from Belgium to Kenya. Many thanks to Carine and her colleagues from Brussels Airline.
- 5) **STRAPEX** The Strapex company granted us 1500-€ for 2007; this is the second time they have given us a big push. Thank you Robert. The personnel’s association of Strapex Nederland, offered us 1000-€ to support the development of Happy Home. We are very grateful to them.

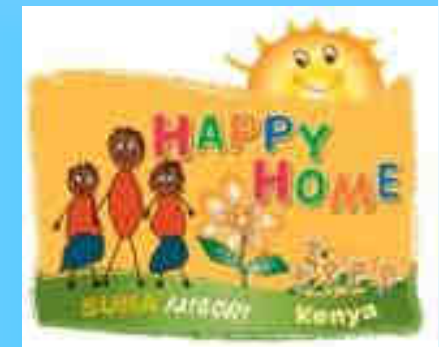
- **Kenya**

- 1) **ICRAF staff** continue giving us clothing for the children.
- 2) **VOLUNTEER:** Liesbet Perdieu is our volunteer for 4 months. The children enjoy playing volleyball with her.



- **USA**

- 1) **FIRST TRANSFER:** Our fundraising office in USA is producing good results. The first transfer of 2610 USD took place recently.
- 2) **MOTHER’S DAY :** The Yoga Haven Club in Galveston Texas organised two special Happy Home event for Mother’s Day, on 11th and 13th of May. Many thanks Kathleen DiNatale and Deborah Conrad.
- 3) **HAPPY HOME T-SHIRTS:** A Happy Home volunteer artist made this nice drawing for us (see right). Soon it might become a Happy Home promotional T-shirt



In name of the children, we thank you all !!!!



Plans for May-June 07



1) RENOVATIONS

As you can see from our website, plans for the renovation are complete !!!!

They were redrawn by an architect, brought to all government departments for approval. Several construction companies were invited to bid on the project.

Work will begin in mid-May !!!!

2) NEW MANAGER and STAFF

As we are growing, it is time to upgrade our staff roster. To that end, a new manager, with qualifications in management, social work and children's issues has been identified and will start work by mid-May. After an initial testing period, we will decide whether or not to make the appointment permanent.

Once the renovations are complete, and more children come to Happy Home, we will also have to review our staff roster and determine how to accommodate the extra work load.

3) NEW CHILDREN

With the completion of construction, our capacity will grow from 25 to 70 beds. A special thank you to our growing list of sponsors who made this possible.

This was the news for March-April 2007.

Many thanks to Liesbet, our volunteer, who made the picture-slides of this newsletter as she now knows the children almost as well as she knows her own brothers and sisters.



Contact information



For more information about Happy Home :

www.HappyHomeKenya.org

Kenya

Isabelle Vandeplas [Isabelle@HappyHomeKenya.org]

Belgium

Christian Vandeplas [Christian@HappyHomeKenya.org]

USA

Ed Sulzberger or Linda Ercole-Musso [esulzberger@houston.rr.com]

Canada

Georges-Edouard Lelièvre-Douyon [dwardo06@hotmail.com]