

# SASA

Sasa means **NOW** or **WHAT'S UP** in Kiswahili

*every child deserves an opportunity.*

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Eva with Annet, Ketty & Faulat at Ololo

## PAUL & EVA CATCH UP WITH THE KIDS

It was eighteen long months since we had seen the children and Paul and I were very excited to be back in Kenya. We had managed to rent a house only 4 kms down the road from the school and went there every day for the two weeks of our stay. The kids came up to us, with big broad smiles, a little bit shy at first but that did not last long. They all looked so happy, running around, playing, bouncing up and down, brimming with life and joy ... exuberant is the word!

Of all the girls Faith, Ketty and Annet have changed the most: they have grown into beautiful teenagers. Patrick has come out of his shell a lot and seems confident and happy and Lincoln also has grown up a lot and has gained self-esteem which is wonderful to see. Two of the older boys, Kevin and Brian have moved on to High School and Kiki is the eldest of the boys now at Steiner who has taken up the role of looking after the younger children. It is really nice to see how all of the African Leaf children have a strong bond and look upon themselves as a family within the Steiner School family. Our tribe of youngsters, Brightlight, Christine, Diana, Winnie, Eugene, Junior and Purity are having a fun time: after lunch they have all afternoon to play and they love it and don't have a worry in the world in that beautiful school.

So dear sponsors right here I want to thank you from my heart that you are making it possible for these gorgeous children to be able to be just that. If you could see them in their element at play, your heart would be brimming with joy!

While we were there Paul and I took the kids out several times. Not far from the school there is a place called Buffalo Den where one can eat and drink and also play

on a jumping castle! The kids absolutely loved it! Lynda Dean, one of the African Leaf directors and sponsor of Diana, asked us to take the kids out for dinner and they wanted to have it there. We ordered a lot of food which could not be eaten in one session. But never mind, after bouncing around on the castle and chasing two unsuspecting half tame bunnies there was just enough room to cram it all in. The kids absolutely love chicken and their tummies were as tight as drums! Thank you Lynda, the kids had so much fun. We also gave them gifts: books, balls, bangles, bubbles, crayons, and skipping ropes. When we went to school the next day we were really impressed as they were sharing all these things with the other kids.

Paul and I also went up country to Nakuru to visit three of the African Leaf high school children. Unfortunately the Steiner school finishes after year nine so as soon as the children leave there, life becomes a lot harder and it is very difficult for the kids to adjust. Sheila is going well now after the initial upheaval of a totally new life at a new school. See Susan Perrow's story about Sheila's brother Brian's experience at high school. Kevin also did not like his initial school and he has now been placed in an alternative school in Nairobi.

Our task of finding proper schools for the high school kids is made more complex because each school accepts students on the basis of their final school results and we have not been able to place the kids in one school where they would have each other's support.

Our eldest African leaf girl, Faulat is an absolute gem. She has already done almost 2 years at high school and we caught up with her at Ololo, a beautiful tourist resort being built by her sponsors Craig and Joanna at the edge of the Nairobi National Park. She stays there during the school holidays. After we had spent the morning with her and Annet, Ketty and Craig's wife Joanna, Faulat sent us this message: "On behalf of all the leaf kids: thanks a lot for making a difference in our lives you mean much to us and we love you very much and will miss you, Faulat." That really touched us.

So to all of you, don't forget that you are making a big difference in the life of a child and it is a wonderful thing to do!

With much gratitude and love to all of our African leaf supporters.

Eva



Susan Perrow with Alice on the farm in 2009



Brian looking very happy – he now has a new school and a new home!!!

## AT HOME WITH ALICE BY SUSAN PERROW

I first met Alice Wekesa in 2004 when I was teaching at a school in Nairobi. We had an instant connection and I always felt privileged to be her colleague. She was a 'natural' teacher - great rapport with the children and parents, very enthusiastic about her program, and always showing genuine concern for the children in her care.

John and I got to know her three children and her husband Evans, and we followed their struggles and hard work in saving up to buy their dream plot of land in Ngong, just on the outskirts of Nairobi.

Alice and Evans slowly (room by room) built a home on this plot and turned it into a mini farm with a cow, some goats, chooks and vege gardens. We would enjoy the occasional visit – especially Alice's home cooking! Little did we know back then that Alice's farm would one day become a home for some of our African Leaf children.

Which brings me to share some important news ... when we began looking for options for holiday care for some of our high school children, I thought of Alice and gave her a call. Alice and her family already knew some of our AL children as their own children had attended a few years at the Steiner School. The response was a resounding 'YES, but we will just need some extra mattresses and bedding!' So from July this year Sheila and Brian, and Purity and Ketty, have enjoyed a nourishing and enjoyable farm stay on Alice's and Evan's farm.

And the news keeps getting better. Brian had been very unhappy in his high school up near Nakuru, and during the last holidays Evans organized for him to have an interview at a new Swedish funded school, only 10 minutes from their home. Brian passed the interview and on 3rd September, after being fitted out with a new school uniform, Brian commenced at Kenswed Academy. [www.facebook.com/KenswedAcademy](http://www.facebook.com/KenswedAcademy) It is a day school and from now on he will be staying full time with Alice and her family at Wekesa Farm ('Wekesa' means harvest).

## INTRODUCING PURITY



Purity is the younger sister of Ketty who is sponsored by Paul and Eva. The unexpected death of their mother earlier this year left Purity in a vulnerable position at home, subject to violence. It was decided to bring her into the LEAF family. Purity has taken to the Steiner School like a duck to the water. She loves it and feels right at home with her sister and new friends beside her. Paul and Eva brought back a letter from her when they returned from Kenya in July.

So far no sponsor has been found. If you are interested in sponsoring her, either on your own or with friends, please contact [admin@africanleaf.org.au](mailto:admin@africanleaf.org.au)

Purity taken July 2013 (top). Purity's letter (above).



The front row kids in the photos are Masai children. The youngest of them is only 3 years old staying with the borders and going to the Steiner kindergarten. The older kids look after these youngsters with great affection and commitment.

# KNITTING FOR THE LOVE OF CHILDREN

One of our sponsors, Angela Burke has a contact with a bunch of women in Brisbane who get together knitting beautiful jumpers, shawls, ponchos and beanies for the kids. They supplied us with two big bags that Paul and Eva took along on their trip to Kenya.

Much of the knitware was for babies and so those items were passed on to church groups to distribute to the wider community near our Steiner School. The photo below shows some of the remaining knitwear being worn by boarders at the Steiner school.

It was winter in Kenya when the jumpers were delivered and the kids loved them!

## UPCOMING INFORMATION NIGHT

We will be holding an information night from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm on Wednesday 23rd October at the home of LEAF director Lynda Dean and her husband Chris, 26 Kingsley Street, Byron Bay.

Please join us for drinks and snacks before the information sharing begins.

If you would like to attend please contact [admin@africanleaf.org.au](mailto:admin@africanleaf.org.au) to register.

## FUNDRAISING UPDATE

### TRIVIA NIGHT SUCCESS

For the second year in a row, it was full house at the Trivia Night Fundraiser held on Friday 6th September at the Byron Bay Golf Club. 20 teams of 8 tested their trivia knowledge on what was a fun-filled night, raising \$3,700. Our thanks to all those who attended and helped to make the evening such a success

Our thanks also go once again to MC extraordinaire Mick O'Regan, Alison Mackay our wonderful Quiz Mistress and to all the volunteers who helped on the night.

We are grateful to Byron Bay Golf Club and all those businesses and individuals who donated prizes: Balcony Bar & Restaurant, Belongil Bistro, Buddha Gardens Day Spa, Byron Bay Coffee Company, Byron Bay Handimarket, Fishhead Restaurant Byron Bay, Gary & Sue Charles at Cocomangas, Crystal Castle, Lynda & Christopher Dean, Harvest Cafe Newrybar, Cheryl Hazelwood, Mokha Cafe, Orient Express, Palace Cinema, Pighthouse Flicks, Plastic Surgery Hub, Red Ginger, Geoffrey & Renate Tenta at Northern Lights and Lorena Uechtritz.

### MELBOURNE CUP LUNCH FUNDRAISER

For the fourth year running, for the benefit of the African LEAF children, we are teaming up with the deck at Byron restaurant in the beautiful setting of the Byron Bay Golf Club to host the 2013 Melbourne Cup Lunch. Festivities begin at 12.00 noon on Tuesday 5th November.

Tickets are \$85 per person for a delicious 2 course meal and a complimentary drink on arrival. The event will include a fabulous fashion show featuring local designers including Satya James and Anna Middleton. There will be raffles, sweeps and prizes for best-dressed man and woman and best hat.

After the race, the Feramones will provide live music to top off a great day

Seating is limited so get in early. Bookings close 1st November. You can book tables of up to 10 people – or if you have a smaller group, you can be allocated a table with another group.

Phone Susan on 0423 033 213 or email on [admin@africanleaf.org.au](mailto:admin@africanleaf.org.au).

**A SHORT HISTORY OF KENYA**  
 A commentary on the  
 Nairobi Westgate Tragedy  
 BY JOHN ADAM



As I write, the horrific catastrophe is still unwinding at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi. It seems a bit trite to ignore the problems facing Kenya and Kenyans at this time.

Frantic phone calls from Susan and I established that none of 'our' children or their teachers were at Westgate Mall on that fateful day - all are safe and well. So, while watching Al Jazeera's direct feed from Nairobi while smoke poured from the Mall and shots continued to ring out, I read the following article, one of many, but it sums up the situation well.

Nanjala Nyabola is a Kenyan writer and political analyst currently attending Harvard Law School as a graduate student. Following are excerpts from an article written by him in the aftermath of the attack.

The visitor to Kenya sees Kenyans - of all races and ethnicities - living, working and indulging in capitalist excess together. The reality of middle-class life in Kenya is often a point of confusion.

I urge you to keep that image in mind because over the next few days there will be pages and pages of conflicting, contradictory and inflammatory messaging, particularly coming from newspapers and websites that want to cover as many angles as possible for what is possibly another "woe is Africa" story. I may not know everything about this situation, but I do know three things that should help deal with the misinformation.

**Kenya is not on the verge of implosion**

There are many problems facing Kenya at the moment. Our deputy president is seeking an adjournment on his trial at the International Criminal Court to return to Kenya and help deal with the crisis. Struggles over land in Tana River and other parts of the country have killed many more than this hostage situation, and still persist, unresolved. Violence against women and

inequality are driving the society apart. Quite frankly, we're still recovering from the post-election violence in 2008.

Once the specificity of the incident is subsumed in the urgency of the "global war on terror", our governments will waive responsibility and suspend our rights in the name of security, compounding the intensity of the tragedy. We should watch out for this.

However, beneath all the chaos are the stories that don't sell newspapers or generate clicks per minute; stories that confirm that Kenyans continue to pull together in moments of crisis to help each other stumble along. Listen for the stories of people who waited five hours to donate blood at various hospitals and crisis centres throughout the city. Look out for photographs of police who arrived in uniform at the centres to do the same. Read about the immense wave of money contributed that slowed mobile money transfer systems. Watch for stories of emergency workers who have kept vigil alongside the officers working to end the standoff in Westgate. We Kenyans fight a lot, but like all brothers and sisters, when need arises, we band together.

**This attack isn't necessarily about the US, Europe, Iraq or Afghanistan**

The Westgate Mall wasn't necessarily targeted as some kind of proxy for the US or European interests. An argument is being made that because the mall was popular with expats, then by default, this is an attack on Western interests. Nairobians know that of all the malls in Kenya "popular with expats", Westgate was probably a distant second or third. It is however, popular with Kenyans like me, who reject the cruelty of al-Shabab in Somalia, but also question US security policy in Africa. It's not necessarily about religion either. Westgate, in many ways, was emblematic of the multiculturalism that makes Kenya extraordinary - look at the list of victims so far released; listen to

the appeals for unity and from where they come. Terrorists may be simple, but their victims often aren't.

Remember that Kenya has been instrumental in a mission to drive al-Shabab out of Somalia as part of the AMISOM (African Union Mission In Somalia) contingent. Our army periodically conducts missions across and along the troubled border. There were more Kenyans in that shopping mall than there were foreigners; relaxing, working, window-shopping.

Remember this, because the tragedy in Nairobi should not be conflated with a discussion about the situation in other parts of the world. Nor should it be used as an excuse for the Kenyan government to forget the many other on-going crises within the country. Once the specificity of the incident is subsumed in the urgency of the "global war on terror", our governments will waive responsibility and suspend our rights in the name of security, compounding the intensity of the tragedy. We should watch out for this.

One final thing I do know is that Kenya isn't exceptional because it is some bastion of peace - that narrative has long since been undermined - yet this attack is not Kenya. We are fascinating as a society because of our ability to pull together when all hope is apparently lost - that's Kenya. There are many things that we get wrong, routinely and to devastating effect, but in moments like this where similarly positioned societies have crumbled, we have consistently emerged shaken, but stronger. We temporarily forget the things that divide us and somehow remember that we are all created equal, to give love and to be loved. Our national motto is "Harambee" - let us pull together - and we do; again, and again, and again. And the result is a thing of beauty. And that beauty? That's Kenya.

**LESSON 9**  
**LEARNING KISWAHILI**  
**CHAKULA** Food

**Matunda** Fruit  
**Mayai** Egg  
**Kuku** Chicken

**Bata** Duck  
**Mkate** Bread  
**Samaki** Fish

**Tende** Dates  
**Maji** Water