

# SASA

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

*every child deserves an opportunity.*

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THANK YOU  
LEARNING KISWAHILI LESSON 7

## A PERSONAL STORY FROM ONE OF OUR SPONSORS

Lynda Dean became one of our family of sponsors in 2010. She and her husband Chris have recently returned to Byron Bay after a holiday in Kenya, much of the time spent with LEAF directors Paul & Eva who were also visiting Kenya. Whilst there, she visited the Mbagathi Rudolf Steiner School to meet with Diana, the child she is sponsoring. Here is Lynda's story ....



*Photo of Lynda and her husband Chris with Diana*

### MEETING DIANA

We walked into the terminal at Nairobi airport to be met by the biggest set of smiles I have ever seen. Eva had brought a carload of our African Leaf sweethearts to meet us, along with Ole Mombasa, our Masai bus Driver.

So finally we met Diana, shyly clinging to Eva's hand, her brother Kiki, with Christine, Brian, Eugene and Junior. We stopped on the way back to school to get simcards for our phones and were able to give the

kids their first ride on an escalator. Over the next few days of visiting the school and taking the kids out we began to get to know them and the shyness fell away. Diana proudly showed me her bedroom, her classroom and her place in the dining room. By the end of our visit she was climbing onto my lap without reservation and giving us plenty of cuddles.

We watched Diana soar higher than the sky on the swings at school, and felt so much potential in the spirit and courage of her powerful presence, tiny as she is.

Paul and Eva were the best guides we could have and after shopping for cartloads of supplies, they took us to the Saints of Hope

Day Care Centre in the Kawangware Slum, where 50 preschoolers are cared for, fed and taught every day. I will never forget the shrieks of glee and the riot of fun produced by filling the school and yard with rainbow bubbles.

Many people have asked me for the highlight of our trip to Kenya, where we saw rhinos mating, hot air ballooned over the wildebeest migration and sailed into the sunset at Lamu, but I have no hesitation that my best moment was meeting Diana and having her slip her tiny hand into mine.

# TWENDENI SAFARI

Following a mailer we sent out early this year asking for fundraising ideas, we received a response from one of our regular supporters, Wendy Edlund, who offered to donate money towards Saints of Hope Children's Centre which LEAF supports in the slums of Nairobi. As these children have never seen any of their country's remarkable wild animals, we asked Wendy if she would like to pay for a day's outing at a safari park. Wendy agreed.

On 9th May 2011, LEAF director Susan Perrow was there to be part of the special day out. Here is her report on the day.



## TWENDENI SAFARI, TWENDENI PAMOJA LETS GO ON SAFARI, LET'S ALL GO TOGETHER!

This was the song that was repeatedly sung by the happy children and staff (and 4 parents) of SOH as we walked around the 2 km 'safari walk' on the edge of the Nairobi National Park. What a privilege for me to be part of this momentous event. Not one of the participants (either children or adults) had ever been on such an excursion before, so this was a first time for them to experience African animals in nature.

The photos tell a thousand stories ([see http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.165933290134849.42053.100001545376098&l=357e9fd464](http://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.165933290134849.42053.100001545376098&l=357e9fd464)) Two cheetah came up so close the children could put their hands on the glass windows and touch their faces; lions rolled and played like pussy cats on the grass one metre from us; and even the leopard, that usually hides in the daytime, came down from his tree and strutted up and down the fence.

The safari walk, as well as wandering through grass lands and forest, has a long board walk section that stretches above the trees and down to the river. It was exciting for the children just to run up and down this boardwalk, and also for them to see the river, which was in flood, rushing down the valley.

The highlights, apart from the closeness to all the big cats, was watching a hyena going to the toilet in the middle of his pond; a male ostrich attempting to peck little fingers through the fence; a crocodile suddenly waking up and snapping his head in our direction; a huge fat wrinkly rhino munching grass; a large male baboon jumping up onto the fence and peeling and eating a banana in front of the children; and then, on returning to the bus, finding that a baboon had come inside and stolen the drivers lunch, and was eating it in the trees near the car park (a highlight for the children, not

the driver!).

We also spent time wandering through a one-room museum built especially for children, with skulls to pick up and examine, different skins to touch and stroke, and stuffed elephants feet (as big as coffee tables).

We finished the first round of the 'safari walk' after two and a half hours, then everyone wanted to go round a second time. By the time the children reached the bus to travel back to the school it was 2.30. They hadn't had a meal (apart from some poppers and biscuits) since 8.00 that morning but there wasn't one complaint of 'I'm hungry, I'm thirsty, I'm tired'. Quite remarkable considering the average age in the kindergarten is 4.5 years. It seems that they were feeding off the experience instead!

A huge thank-you to Wendy Edlund from Australia who gave \$300 to make this event possible!



Leaf Kids July 2011 (Sheila &amp; Lucky Moses missing)

# A HAPPY VISIT

Paul and Eva have just returned from their visit to Kenya. Here is Eva's account of their time spent with the children.

We arrived at the Steiner School in the afternoon and it felt like coming home. Everyone was happy to see us and the children came up to shake our hands or embrace us. They took us around and proudly showed us their new dining area which looks fantastic. Everything looked beautiful: the gardens, the trees and the playground, and especially all the lively kids bouncing around.

Over the next four weeks we were kept very busy. Wherever we had to go, we made sure we had a car full of children. Errands we had to run were fun with the kids. They didn't mind getting stuck in traffic jams; they laughed and sang in the car, forever happy just to be out and about and to be part of the general chaos of Nairobi. Some "kuku" (chicken) and sodas in one of the new super markets that have sprung up everywhere forms the highlight of any trip, happily riding the electric escalators as a special treat

afterwards. It is so easy and delightful to put a smile on these lovely faces!

A highlight for Paul and I was to experience Lynda and Christopher Deans joy around the children. Their sponsored child Diana took to them like a duck to water and the other children were not far behind. The Deans, Paul and I decided to throw a party for the boarders, staff and house dads and mums at the Steiner School before their departure. We ordered a ton of "kuku" (or so it seemed), stacks of cases of sodas, cakes, and set up some music and also organized a group of drummers. All the kids helped to set up the tables and decorate them with flowers, to blow up balloons and the tiny kids peeled and chopped up half a kilo of garlic to marinate the chicken. Everyone had a ball: no matter what size ... everyone here is born with a gift to dance and a spirit to celebrate and to rejoice in an overflow of kuku!

As always it was great just to spend time with the kids, playing board games, playing music and dancing, or drawing pictures and writing letters. The kids are fantastic and so enjoyable and loveable. The new additions Brightlight and Winnie took no time to be part of the family and the latter in particular is a real character. She does not speak a word of English (yet) but has no shyness to sit on your lap and perfectly communicates her intentions with comical facial gestures while chatting away in Kiswahili.

We also visited our beloved eldest, Sheila at her new school in Nakuru, about four hours drive from Nairobi. She had no idea about our visit and threw herself into our arms when called from her classroom (which brought tears to my eyes). It is a very remote school she is attending, and rather poor in facilities, a fact that made us aware how very unusually beautiful and outstanding 'our' Steiner school is. We will attempt to find Sheila another school closer to Nairobi. She really misses the kids and house parents from Steiner school. Luckily she has made friends with a Ugandan girl 2 years older than herself, who has taken her under her wing.

We love the kids. The farewell is made a bit easier by the fact that we shall return to them.

Our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the children's sponsors and supporters.



Children arriving at Saints of Hope Children Centre

## GIVER OF HOPE APPEAL

Another response from our mailer asking for fundraising ideas resulted in the African LEAF Giver of Hope Appeal. This most notable supporter's recommendation came from Dave Dane of Byron Bay, who suggested that a small direct contribution of say \$10 a week from a large number of African Leaf supporters would be a far more effective way to raise our necessary working funds – than through the more conventional charity event fundraising activity we have used in the past.

In an email sent to all our supporters, we appealed for people to become African LEAF 'Givers of Hope' by committing to make small, regular monthly payments of \$40 (less than \$10 a week) to help us to continue our work in Kenya, especially at the Saints of Hope Day Care Centre in the huge Kawangware Slum on the outskirts of Nairobi.

The fact is that over the past couple of years since the Global Financial Crisis, contributions to our public collection tins have decreased considerably and it has been more difficult to raise funds from special events such as concerts and trivia nights - which also involve enormous amounts of time and energy to organize.

We really need your help to enable the financial assistance we have been giving to Saints of Hope over the past four years to

continue. It is now attended by over 50 pre-school age children a day and enables single parent families and relatives of orphaned children living in the slum to leave them in a safe, caring environment so they can work to earn a living.

Our grateful thanks to those who have already responded to this appeal and become African LEAF Givers of Hope. But more are still needed.

Full details of the appeal can be found under the Latest News section on our website [www.africanleaf.org.au](http://www.africanleaf.org.au). Or if you would like another copy of the appeal email sent to you (perhaps to forward on to family or friends) please email [admin@africanleaf.org.au](mailto:admin@africanleaf.org.au) with the Subject Header 'Giver of Hope' and we'll be happy to send you one.



My name is Ndinda. I am a Kenyan citizen from the eastern part of the country in a place called Machakos. I am 'Kamba' by tribe.

I joined the Mbagathi Rudolf Steiner School in 2005. I, together with four of my colleagues (Agnes, Pamela, Karanja and Didier) run the boarding houses, both boys

## NDINDA SAYS THANK YOU

We recently received a report from one of the boarding parents at the Rudolf Steiner Mbagathi School where our sponsored children board ....

and girls. I am in the girls boarding. We have a total of 44 girls at the moment since some completed their Class Nine last year and have left to join high school.

I really enjoy working with the children. We have lots of activities like drawing, painting, hand work, storytelling, going for walks in the evening. Our school is near the National Park so we get to see lots of animals like giraffes, buffalos, gazelles and many more. Once in a while we have outings when we take the children for swimming and to different places.

Being a parent myself, I would like to say that working here has really changed my

attitude towards parenting. I have learnt that every child is unique in his or her own way. It gives me much joy to see them grow right from kindergarten all the way to Class Nine. To be in the boarding where a child comes running to you after a long day – what else could you want!

A total of 16 children at the moment are sponsored by African Leaf and I really enjoy the support AL has given to our school. Thank you John and Susan, Paul and Eva, Craig and the rest! We are all one big happy family!

Photo: Steiner School House Parents. Ndinda is on the right

### LESSON 7 LEARNING KISWAHILI

**pika pika** motor bike  
**borda borda** motor bike  
**tinga tinga** tractor

**haraka haraka** hurry  
**chenga chenga** crumbs  
**beba beba** carry

**chembe chembe** grain  
**pati pati** slippers  
**magi magi** thin soup

**cutty cutty** middle  
**cutta cutta** 'unknown' meat  
**pole pole** slowly