

The Baobab Home

Babies at Long Last



Glory holding Dee, Justis holding Hadija, Mwanahamisi smiling and Jumanne being silly

Hadija is 8 months old and is from a small village outside of Bagamoyo. Her mother died several months ago of cholera. Her father is a very poor fisherman who makes about \$1.10 per day, plus some fish. He is 35 years old and Hadija is his first child. He loves her very much. He has no family in the area and put Hadija in the care of her maternal grandmother, who does not have the time or money to care for her. Hadija lost about 4 pounds in a month. The health department worker researching the cholera outbreak told us about Hadija. She was in our care the next day. Scared at first, she has totally adapted and loves all the good food and love she gets at Baobab. She has fattened up, is learning to walk and thriving!

And in mid February a baby girl was found by police in a field just outside of Dar es Salaam. We think that she is about three months old now. Devota Brian Mbuyu, aka "Baby Dee" is now doing fine and is well loved by Baobab staff and neighbors. Dee was named in honor of two people very dear to Baobab, Dee Hahn Rollins and Brian Martin. We wanted to follow the custom of having a man's name as a second name. Her third name is the word for Baobab in Swahili. Ms. Brooke Montgomery, the preeminent lawyer in the field of children's rights and adoption in Tanzania, is helping us to find parents for Dee.

The girls are getting a lot of love and visitors! Volunteers Martha and Gemma took the girls swim-

ming just before they left. Friends from TRG Pam and Graeme came to visit and now Maria from the UK is at Baobab full time helping to look after them.

Believe it or not, we still struggle with social services for more children. We are in a different district than the city of Dar es Salaam where the worst cases and most abandoned children are. In Bagamoyo orphaned children typically have family. Children get taken in and often neglected, or malnourished and stay 'under the radar' until they are very sick. Taking them from family when there are parents alive is very difficult and not always as straightforward as it would seem.

Glory and Dada Tina

We are very lucky to have two exceptionally loving, hard working "mamas" for the Baobab babies. Glory is from the Moshi area of Tanzania and is of the Chagga tribe. She spent two years working at the Upendo Orphanage and Training Center. She was then chosen to study there and completed a two year program

in childcare. After graduation she was asked to stay on for another 2 years. Now she is the lead caregiver for Baobab. Karibu sana Glory! Dada Tina (Sister Christina) comes from the cold part of Tanzania (yes, there is one) called Iringa. She is Mkwawa by tribe. She has three children and also helps to care for the orphaned children

of her brother. She too lost her parents at a very young age. She was working as the housekeeper for Baobab, but was promoted because she works so hard and cares so much. The Bong'wa kids also help so much to ensure that the baobab babies grow up surrounded by love.

MUBA IS GOING TO THE UK!!

Mbaraka (Muba) Jummanne was born with a small benign tumor near his ear. His mother tried to have it removed when he was a baby, but when they didn't use anesthesia for the biopsy she gave up. Over the years it has grown into a disfiguring mass. Like most children would be, he is self-conscious about it and gets teased. Facing the World, a UK charity that does AMAZING life altering work (www.facingtheworld.net) has agreed to help Muba, all expenses paid!! It is a tricky operation. They will reduce the mass first using injections, until it is safe enough to be removed surgically. If the nerves are at risk, Muba will just undergo the reduction by injection. Meanwhile he will attend school IN the hospital, be hosted by a Tanzanian family and have his horizons broadened immeasurably. Couldn't happen to a nicer kid.



Mbaraka (Muba) Jummanne

Mama Duck

We call her Mama Bata because she came to us for help in getting started again raising ducks. Before she became ill from HIV, she had (a gaggle, pride, herd?) of 70 ducks. We built a new duck house and some new ducks. Unfortunately, income generation was

not enough to help her as it was discovered that Mama Bata also has tuberculosis. She is now in the TB ward at the hospital. Glory and Dada Tina cook nutritious porridge for her every day and send it down. We have found someone here in Bagamoyo who will help

her with more nutritional support. Mama Bata has four children who are looked after by neighbors. We support one of them in secondary school. The ducks eat cooking scraps from Baobab each day. We are hopeful that Mama Bata will get better in a few months time.

Getting Kids in School

One of the most dreaded things to be in Tanzanian culture is “kula kulala” which means “eating and sleeping”. It signifies having a lack of purpose in life. It also typically implies a lack of education. We try all the time to avoid this condition by getting kids in school. If a child is working on the streets we probe to see what his interest is in getting back to school. We find children in all sorts of ways. Even children bring their friends to us to help. January was our busiest month ever. We got dozens of children into primary and a few into secondary school, who would otherwise not have studied. Thank you for enabling us to say “yes” to so many!! Pictured right are Jalal now in secondary school but still with an unpaid balance of \$50, and Happy, a young girl in the 6th grade with no parents. Thank you also to Mama Martino who helped us to get two boys into primary school for the first time. They are adjusting well to school and their mother is doing well on antiretroviral therapy. It costs about \$25 to get a child into primary school.



Jalala and Happy

Dental

Thanks to Mina Van Dyne and Elizabeth Jameson of Arizona, Gabriel, Ben, Ben, Emmanuel, William and Yassini have now all been to

their first dental appointment. Amazingly enough, none of them require any fillings! (I am coping with my envy). Yassini has deep

staining on his front teeth which will cost \$100 to fix, but other than that they are fine! Still to go are Pascal, Bakari, and Saadi.

Montessori!

Just when I thought I would take a nap.....we decided to open a Montessori preschool! The new Mwandu Family residence has a classroom in the back. We hired two Montessori trained instructors (Tanzanian) to live and work with us. Neema and Gertrude are terrific women and fun to have around. They come with their own hand made set of Montessori learning materials. These women are so dedicated to the method that they are taking a salary based on enrollment! Currently we have 6 students whose parents can pay and two from our outreach. Ultimately this will be the school for Baobab children. We are still in the early stages so please let us know if you have any friends-of-friends who are involved in Montessori. We would love to get all the resources we can.



Justis pals around in the new classroom



Neema and Gertrude

George

And remember George? The boy who ran away? Thanks to volunteers Daphne, Saskia, Martha and Gemma he was evaluated at the government hospital and found to have a generalized seizure disorder. He has been put on medication and it has stabilized his behavior and concentration considerably! Now we are looking for a school for him so that he can finally get the special attention he needs. This picture was taken before he started meds.



Dora the Cow...and Friends

Thanks to The Towndrow family of the UK we have a cow! Dora the cow is several months pregnant and we eagerly await her little one so that the milk starts coming for the breakfast program! Dora wakes us up each day with more of a roar than a moo. She is lovingly tended to each day by Abu, our neighbor's cowherder who has agreed to let Dora sit in on his herd's lunch each day. Abu is also a skilled milker who will impart his vast knowledge on all inter-

ested visitors. Dora's namesake is the widowed grandmother of volunteer Sarah Towndrow. Dora resides in Crondall, Hampshire U.K.

Also thanks to the Towndrows, Baobab will soon have a new website! Simon works for Steak media (www.steakmedia.co.uk). Together with John, Penny and Derek at Steak they designed a great new site for us that is really easy to navigate! Jill Towndrow

has helped us so much with text and style. To thank the team at Steak, Simon bought chickens in their honor so there will soon be two legged, winged versions of John, Penny and Derek. Read more about both of the Doras on the new website!



Betrothed



Many of you will remember Asia. She and her infant sister were the first people living with HIV to be helped by Baobab in 2004. Asia was very sick at the time. Nowadays she is in good health and is raising her young sister well. Baobab does very little to help them these days but we are Recently, Asia's friend proposed to her but she told him that he had to ask us first! Asia told him that she and

her sister come as a package. All six of Asia's children were born still so Rehema is her only child. He is the leader of Bagamoyo's only organization of people living with HIV. Naturally, we gave our blessing and in June Kim Taylor will come from the United States to bestow Baobab's wedding gift- a new house!

This is the House that High Tech High Built Y'all!

Shani, Patrick and Abdallah are three boys of about 15 years who have lived without parents since they were very young. Shani has a mother but was refused by his stepfather. Patrick lived with his grandmother until she died in 2005. For a few years they have pooled resources and lived together while they finish primary school. They were given a plot of

land but could not afford to build a house on it. Enter 19 American teens and their teachers from High Tech High in San Diego. They came to Bagamoyo for only three days but they left a beautiful legacy- they built a house for the boys in ONE day. It was an awe inspiring, mud- slinging, sticky hot display of can- do- it attitude. In case that wasn't enough the High

Tech High students also planted trees, painted an elementary school classroom and hosted a soccer tournament. They donated over \$3000 to Baobab which will be used to help Shani, Patrick and Abdallah, feed some of our outreach babies, repairs on the baby home and getting many kids into school. Thank you High Tech High! Karibuni Tena!



Abdallah, Shani and Patrick are in the front row.



Thank you High Tech High of San Diego!

Mwanaidi

In sadder news, Mwanaidi continues to decline and suffer from severe pain in her lower body. For those of you who don't know, Mwanaidi was referred to us by Asia. She has been losing power in her legs for several years. With

a prior case of pulmonary TB in 2000, doctors were quick to diagnose her with spinal tb. After 5 agonizing months and a lot of expensive, wasted trips to Dar es Salaam, we learned that she did not in fact have TB, but an incur-

able degenerative spine disease. At this point Mwanaidi remains in constant pain. She has refused our offer of a specially made wheelchair suited to Bagamoyo roads.

Haki Elimu! The Right to Education!

Despite our efforts at transferring the boys two years ago, Yassin, Benedictor and Benard again have the worst academic situation of all of our boys. A few weeks ago Benedictor and Benard came home announcing their government run school had shut down. The month before there had been rioting over lack of food. The problem of teacher attendance

has been getting worse since late last year. I emailed a newspaper reporter from the Citizen in Dar and he showed up. I worried how my whistle blowing would be received, but everyone, even administrators, were eager to talk and the food rioting was just the tip of the iceberg. The reporter brought the issues to the Ministry of Education where he has pow-

erful friends. Although we are hopeful that the article will bring positive changes to the school, it's too late for us. We have decided that Yassin, Ben and Ben must get to better (private) schools. We are researching that now. Trinity Cathedral in Phoenix, AZ sponsors Ben and Ben. Thank you Trinity!!

Rescued

Volunteer Maria is making a huge difference for one little boy and his family. Hamisi, a year old boy with HIV is very malnourished. Maria helped get his mother to HIV testing and treatment. Maria is temporarily supplementing their nutrition and she got Hamisi's mother started back in business selling dry goods and vegetables. Last week Maria saved Hamisi's life. In this region of TZ it is common for a shaman to cut out the uvula (the punching bag in the back of the throat) of a child who is sick a lot. En route to the hospital, Hamisi's mom visited the shaman with Maria. When he got out the scissors, Maria got Hamisi safely away and to the hospital for pneumonia treatment. There is little chance that he would have survived such a cut.



What We Still Need.

A sponsor for Frank (one of our street boys \$900 per year); monthly donors to help to pay for tutoring for Ben, Ben and Yasini before the new term starts (\$20 per week); Montessori materials and

info. Farming tools. A baby bottle sterilizer, help getting George to a special education class (\$1000 annually). Also...more laptops! Last year's drive was a huge success but this year we need three

more- one for an HIV counselor, one for baobab. If we get one at the baobab home this will mean that volunteers can update the blog often about the babies!

To our global family of supporters

ASANTENI SANA*THANK YOU*DANK U VEL*MERCI*
DANKE*GRAZIE*TACKA DIG*WABALE*GRACIAS*
THANKS MATE!

