



October Report

2019

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MUWENDO

What a summer it has been! We no sooner got home from our spring trip to East Africa when we entered the preparation phase to receive the first ever, inaugural, Muwendo Children's Choir from Treasured Kids Primary School. Paperwork was already in the Grace office and requests were being made to AGVA in New York and the Department of Homeland Security in California.



The choir was expecting to travel at the end of April or the beginning of May. But due to bureaucratic delays, they did not arrive until June 9th. Once they landed on US soil, it was all aboard for the ride! After their first concert at Grace Sturgis, it was off to South Carolina for a twelve day tour before returning to Sturgis. The next 4 months were filled with traveling to and from concerts, setting up the merchandise tables and promoting child sponsorships for TKPS. The children and chaperones were fantastic. Everywhere they went they won their way into the hearts of concert attendees and hosts alike. Their humble spirit and genuine loving embraces forever left a mark on those who have seen the choir perform. Now, after almost 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ months of touring and sharing their story and the needs at TKPS and in their home community

of Kosovo there is beginning to be a sense that the finish line is approaching.

The tour has already been a great success! The chaperones have been absolutely terrific. Their hard work has developed the choir from where it was at the beginning to a very professional group of young people performing at an incredibly high level. Their songs and dances amaze audiences everywhere. These 15 children are between the ages of 8 and 13 and conduct themselves in ways that represent their homeland admirably. And since they have arrived, (over)



there been 250 additional sponsorships added to the program. Wow! The expectation is that in the next two months the goal of 300 additional sponsorships will be reached and surpassed. The goal of 400 sponsorships is within sight



The cry now is “Finish Strong!” Yes there is some tour weariness setting in. But the children and their chaperones continue to press on. Already there is a homecoming celebration being planned for when they return to Kampala. Jennifer and I usually make a trip in November but we have postponed our trip until early December when the choir has returned home. We will get to be a part of their homecoming concert and celebrations of a job well done. It will be wonderful to see families reunited and rejoicing together. We will also be meeting with the new Executive and Sponsorship Committees at the Ugandan offices to make plans



for the way forward. These committees represent the new structure being put in place to oversee Deo Ministries now being called Heart For African People and Muwendo Ministries.

SUCCESS! The inaugural Muwendo Children's Choir has been a resounding success. Much ground has been plowed by this group of young people. Future choirs will be able to build on these successes.

What's Happening at the Farm?

As I write this newsletter report, the farm is taking a giant step forward toward the goal of becoming self sustaining. The new passion fruit plants are beginning to yield their harvest and I am being told the yield and market have been very good. The matoke (banana) plantation is also continuing to produce and together these two crops will lead the way to the goal. Our agronomist is planning to increase the number of acres of passions fruit. We will get a chance to inspect the farm when we get there in December. The well continues to have problems, working for a while and then breaking down. Pray with us that we can figure out why this continues to happen.



As always, thank you for your continued support of SMPI. I have realized so acutely that everything that gets done through SMPI for the people of Kosovo only happens with the SMPI organization being financially healthy. And we can only do our job with your continued support. You are making a huge difference in this slum suburb of Kampala. If you would like to become a partner with us you can go to our website, www.smpionline.org and click on the donation tab. Please designate your gift for SMPI in the drop down menu or call me at 269-743-9161. I would love to chat with you about being involved with SMPI.

We are forever grateful for you support!

Love and Blessings!
Ross and Jennifer