

“Morning Bells Are Ringing!”

At the end of April this year, I received an email note from Jean Dowell, an American woman who was finishing her missionary contract here in Tanzania.

She had one problem. There was no one ready to take her position to teach and lead a small kindergarten of 12 children in Mwanza. This kindergarten serves children who are orphaned or living in one-parent families suffering from HIV/AIDS and poverty. And it was about to close. Jean asked me if I might perhaps take her place.



How glad I was to say yes! Now, we are happily readying most of our children to begin First Grade in January 2016. And ready for our next group to begin.

Who are the children of Shaloom Kindergarten?
(Pronounced “Shalom”)

There is Jerald, a child who comes alone on foot a mile or so each day through busy streets. His clothing is tattered and torn. But his smile is beautiful, and he loves to learn. He lives at home with his mother and small sister. His mother is deaf. Recently, whenever he has a crayon he draws a picture of her. And she is always crying.

There is Anita, our youngest child. She twirls like a ballerina in between our lessons, and scoots up to write on the chalkboard when there is a free moment. Anita came to class one day with lots of open sores on her head. Her mother explained she could not go to the doctor immediately; she did not have the money. Thankfully, Anita received medical care soon, and is well now.

There is Eliasi, our eldest child, perhaps eight years old. Twice he enrolled in other kindergartens, but for some reason, never did well. Someone advised that he come to Shaloom. With his maturity, he is a star. He is our very best listener! And never gets in tiffs with the others. Whenever I need a helper, he is eager and does a more beautiful job than one would ever imagine.

Then there is Christina, a tiny child whose mother and only parent just passed away a few months ago. Her mother’s mother has taken her in. Christina helps me well with Kiswahili! When I am struggling to find the right word, this tyke inevitably knows what it might be and offers it! Christina also has the gift of humor and storytelling. Who would have thought a five-year-old could have our table of adults and children in stitches when we share our morning snack!



Finally, Augustino is in the hospital. I learned this only this morning, and that his condition is “very bad.” He is the child that most of all loves to sing. When we are together in a circle, this tall boy’s eyes will twinkle and he’ll lead a festive song for us to join! But now, his condition is grave, and his mother is without money to pay. I hope and pray that God will show us the way. Illness and death are constant companions even of the little ones here in Tanzania.

Dear Friends and Family, as I write you these few words about our children, I would like to invite you to share as you might like to in my ministry with them. There are two ways you can be very helpful:

First, through loving thoughts or prayers. This, I am sure, is the very best help possible!

Second, if you would like to make a financial gift this Christmas to our Shaloom Kindergarten, I would be most grateful. In fact, as the director of the program, I must seek our funds.

For \$30, you can pay for the children’s nutritious snack for a month. This daily hot drink and fruit snack is a life-saver for children who literally are without food much of the time.

For \$50, you can pay our Teacher’s Aide salary for a month. Rehema is a most gracious and capable teaching partner for me. With this modest salary she peacefully raises her three children in a small room on Mwanza’s outskirts.

For \$100, you can purchase shoes for all 12 children. Though the streets are dirty with garbage and even with sewage, many of our children are barefoot.

For any amount you can help me purchase paper, pencils, crayons, and art supplies for the children’s lessons! And even a soccer ball or jump rope and a book or two to read at school. Our children’s families cannot purchase these luxuries, yet are deeply grateful for these blessings.

Finally, for any amount you can help me assist our families in paying for emergencies for our Shaloom children when sorely needed. Conditions here are not sanitary; illnesses are abundant. Most Tanzanians work very hard, yet earn less than \$2.00 USD a day. They can survive, but cannot pay medical costs. If we can assist in fostering the life of any of these children, we have done much.

May God bless you for your loving thoughts or prayers, and for any financial gifts that you may wish to share.

With much love, I will be with you each and all of you in prayer and in joy this Christmas.

Shalom!

Susan