

Asante Sana

from Amani

Volume 3

Issue 2

Fall 2009

*Asante Sana means
"thank you" in Swahili.
It is with grateful hearts
that we bring you the good
news about the difference
so many people in Kenya
and here in the US
are making for children.*

Children in New Life Homes in Kenya –

- 10 The Ark Family Home
- 43 Nairobi Home
- 15 Kericho Family Home
- 40 Kisumu Home
- 15 Mombasa Home
- 23 Nakuru Home
- 17 Nyeri Home
- 23 HIV+ children on treatment
- 11 Children with Special Needs
- 40 Lamu Day Centre
for Abused Children
- 164 Total number of children
currently in NLH homes
- 1000 Children fed each day
at feeding centers



AMANI CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION
Serving Children Orphaned by Poverty and AIDS in Africa

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Dear Friends,

Last month I got to take Joy home.

She was 2 months old and had been left on the steps of a rural government hospital in Nanyuki. She then was transferred to the Nyeri New Life Home on the slopes of Mt. Kenya, and now she was headed to the special care unit in the Nairobi Home. As we drove with her down the rainy mountain roads at dusk, I studied her beautiful cheeks, curly hair and tiny perfect fingers. She was wrapped in layer after layer of hand-made blankets. The Nyeri home had sent her wrapped with care—and their best blankets!

What miracles of care and hard work had already graced her life—and how many more lay ahead for her as she will be cared for in the Nairobi home—and finally, most miraculous of all, she will ultimately go to her own home with her “forever” adoptive Kenyan family.

As I looked at her layers of blankets, I remembered the striped sweaters my grandmother, Chanche, used to knit. Every sweater was different—knitted in a variety of stripes from bright balls of yarn. As she grew older, Chanche began unraveling the sweaters she had made for herself from imported wools. Her own sweaters were rich and silky—knit from mohair and angora wool; she spread the finer wool among the 19 grandchildren—one stripe per sweater. Years after she was gone, my children would run their cheeks against those striped sweaters and remember their way back to Chanche.

The memory of those striped sweaters led me to think about past generations of mothers who gathered

*Baby Joy, safe and sound asleep
the first night in her new home.*

bits of cloth from their own dresses, their mothers' scarves and their aunties' blankets to sew tiny quilts into the lining of their children's nightgowns. Their hope was that if their children became separated from them, the tiny quilt with all its smells and textures would help them find their way home.

As we drove along with Joy, I wanted to tell her about the invisible quilt of care and hard work that volunteers in Kenya and the US are putting together to care for her—a quilt of generosity, beauty and commitment that will cover her well until she finds her forever family.

By that time, Joy was sound asleep, the road was rough, and the rain was loud on the roof of the van, but I think she heard me.

*Thank you for the part that you've
brought to Joy's quilt this season!*

*For the Amani Board,
Jane and Chad Stephens*





Promises to Keep.

The first night makes all the difference.

And Prisca knows how to make the first night count. Prisca is the RN who founded the Kisumu New Life Home with her husband John in 2001. They have welcomed over 500 new babies into their home—most of them in desperate condition.

The babies often arrive late in the afternoon. Sylvia, the social worker for New Life Homes, struggles daily with the difficulties of responding to alerts about abandoned babies—knowing that every minute lost in getting them to NLH for food and nursing care is critical, but also knowing that she must bring them with all the paperwork necessary to make them available for adoption once they have survived their first few months.

When a new baby finally arrives at the home, he is often lethargic and dehydrated, wrapped in soiled blankets or plastic bags, and covered with open sores and insect bites. But Prisca is waiting in the new baby nursery, and when she takes them into her arms, babies seem to know the hardest journey of their life is over.

Prisca greets every new baby with the delight of a new mother. She marvels out loud over the miracle of his existence, counting each tiny toe and finger, humming as she bathes him, dresses him in warm new clothes, and wraps him in a fresh blanket before giving him his first bottle. Two ounces at first; his empty stomach isn't used to being full.

Then Prisca sits up all night with every new child. When morning comes, and when she knows the child will make it, she hands him over to one of the incoming day staff members—but not without praying

for him by his new name.

Babies often come with Swahili names that describe the circumstances in which they were found: “by the side of a river,” “badly wounded,” or “left behind.” Their original name is entered into a long black ledger that Prisca keeps in the bottom drawer of her desk. No one ever calls the child that name again. Prisca enters the child’s new name into the public ledger that sits on her desk for everyone to read.

Michelle Salama



Betsy Azima

As she records each new name, she also records the promise she made to her new child the night before.

From Prisca’s desktop journal in August:

Betsy Azima

Azima is Swahili for “purpose”
Prisca’s Promise: “Betsy, you are consecrated to God and He will fulfill His purpose in your life. You are not a mistake.”

Michelle Salama

(Michelle was born in November, 2008—and named after America’s new first lady. She had been abandoned on a bus. The old man who found her got off the bus and spent the whole day with Michelle, hoping someone would come for her. Then in the evening, he took her to the Children’s Officer.)

Salama is Swahili for “peace, serenity, safety.”

Prisca’s Promise: “Michelle, God had started with you long before someone else decided she was through. You are going to enjoy God’s own security and salvation.”

Isaiah Heri

(Isaiah was abandoned in a government orphanage. Born tiny, he never thrived, and at 1 year old, he began deteriorating even more—not eating, smiling, crawling or even sitting up. The Children’s Officer asked New Life Home to take Isaiah, even though, at 1 year, he was older than their usual 0-3 months age limit for taking children.

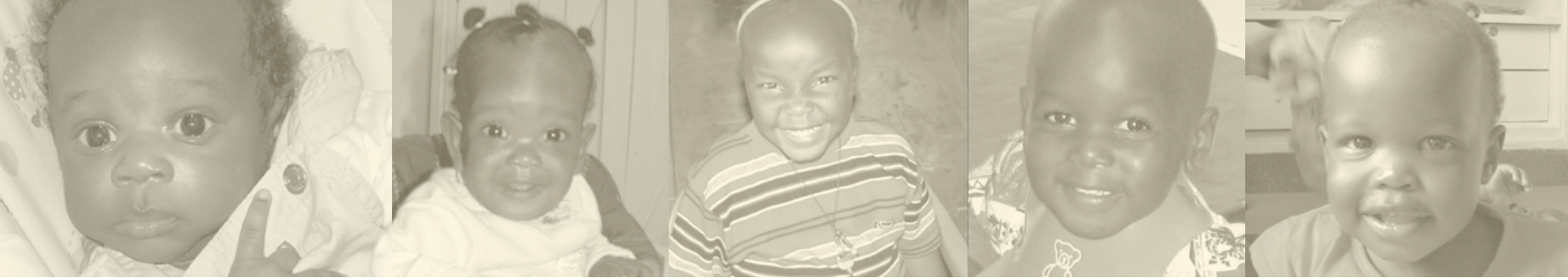
After one week at the home, Isaiah was waving and high-fiving! He’s now moved into the toddler unit and is hitting all his milestones!)

Heri is Swahili for “happiness, blessings, good luck, success.”

Prisca’s Promise: “Isaiah, God has been your salvation, and you are enjoying His goodness. You are going to be enviable because of this.”

Five hundred babies. 500 miraculous journeys to New Life Home Kisumu.

500 long first nights. 500 promises.

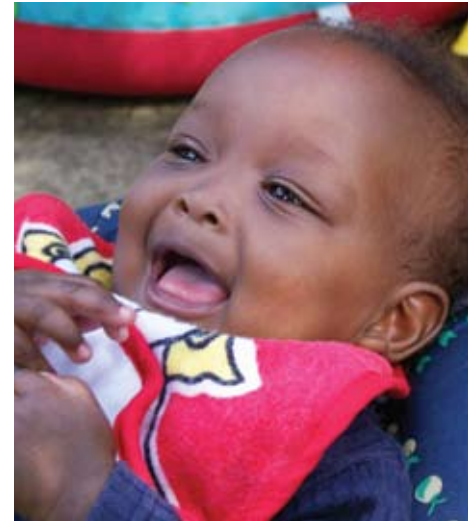


Solomon cannot crawl or keep up with the other children his age, but he misses nothing. The Nyeri staff believe he'll still live up to his name one day—wise and kingly!

Say it with diapers. . .

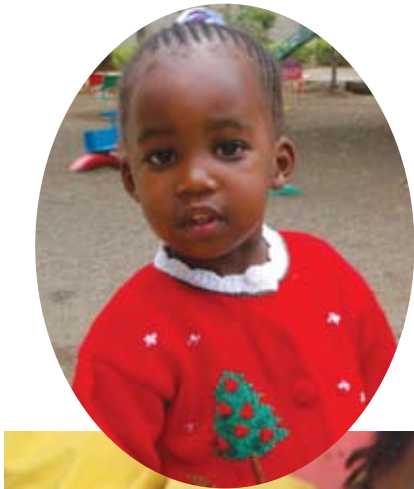
I wish you could see the way they change diapers at NLH. They use large, sheet-like “nappies” that they wrap around a baby and tie with a “Cirque de Soleil” agility. The upside is that their nappies go smoothly through a hand-cranked wringer washing machine and dry quickly in the sun. The downside is that they add several inches to the toddlers’ silhouette at bedtime!

On my last trip, I noticed that two little boys, Solomon and Luke, were sporting a smoother look than the others in their PJs. The night nurse gave me the scoop: they have a benefactress. An older Kenyan businesswoman in Nairobi is in the process of adopting them. She first fell in love with Solomon, a 9 month old with cerebral palsy, and later decided that it would be good for Solomon to have a brother in case something happened to her. She chose Luke for her second child.



Luke arrived at the Nakuru home weighing 3 lbs—and now he is thriving!

The court process has been slow, so in the meantime, she buys them both “real” disposable diapers. She wants her boys to look sharp—and stay dry all night! And they do.



Speak softly and wear a cool outfit

“Why do I have so many brothers?” Nyambura is the only girl among the 20 toddlers at the Nakuru home. Farida, her “mom in the meantime” prays daily for parents to come for her, but until recently, Nyambura was profoundly shy and would hide behind her brothers when visitors came.

Lately, she’s started coming out of her shyness. She has started to join in as the

toddlers sing before meals. She’s started talking back to the bigger boys when they cut in line to go up the slide. And she’s started to take great delight in her wardrobe! As the only girl, she gets first choice of all the girls clothing at the Nakuru home, and she changes as many times every day as the staff will let her.

During our trip to Nakuru in October, she dressed and redressed several times. She wore her raincoat, despite the fact that it was sunny; her Christmas sweater, despite the fact that it was October; and for the first time since I’ve known her, she wore a smile!

She uses everything—from kitchen aprons to volunteers’ cell phones—as props for her new social life. “Hello, is this my friend Josephine? I’m coming over for tea!” She may have 19 real brothers, but she also has 19 imaginary girl friends—and they all are calling to ask her over!





Make it the Christmas of a lifetime—with holiday gifts from Amani!!

Gifts guaranteed to delight a friend—and help a baby:

- **Amani ornament:** The back of the card reads: *“Because we cannot hold them in our arms, we hold them in our hearts this Christmas. A gift has been given in your name this Christmas to care for a orphaned child in Kenya.”* Send us your Christmas list and a minimum donation of \$25 per person, and we’ll send the ornaments in your name, or we’ll send them to you to send.

- **Shop The Amani Market in Winston-Salem:** (3288 Robinhood Rd., in the 2-story red brick building across from Fresh Market).

Holiday hours: December 1-23: 10-8 Mondays and Wednesdays, 10-6 Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 10-12 Saturday mornings. African jewelry and gifts—Amani Beads, Kenyan bags and scarves, ornaments and



more. So much more fun than the Mall, *and it all goes to the babies!*

- **Shop The Amani Market-Indy:** Stunning jewelry and gifts! Our newest Amani Market—you’ll want to return again and again! Office hours: Tuesday-Saturday 10-2, Wednesday 5-8.
- **Sponsor a Child:** This year, in lieu of gifts, many families and friends are committing to the care of Kenyan

children through home sponsorships of all amounts. What a great gift to share at any time, but especially at Christmas!

- A gift of \$50 feeds a toddler (1-3 years) in a NLH for one month.
- A gift of \$100 provides food and care for a baby.

For \$1,000, your family or group can sponsor an orphaned child for a year, which is the average time it takes before being adopted. You’ll receive a baby book with pictures of your child, his house parents and his home. And, when your child is adopted, you’ll be able to celebrate, knowing that you stood in the gap with your child until his parents came. What a difference this can make.

Order our newest Amani Celebration Holiday CD, ***Songs of Hope from Children Around the World.***



Amani Around the US

- Asheville, NC:** Amani Beads are sold at Old North State Clothing.
- Cleveland, OH:** cleveland@amanichildren.org
- Harrisburg, PA:** harrisburgbeaders@amanichildren.org
- Indianapolis, IN:** Indy@amanichildren.org, 9135 N. Meridian, Suite B, Plaza De Timbres, Indianapolis, IN 46260
- Winston-Salem, NC:** info@amanichildren.org, 3288 Robinhood Rd., Winston-Salem, NC 27106

To learn more or to find out about an Amani Bead event in your area, contact us at: info@amanichildren.org (336) 306-5404, or visit www.amanichildren.org

One-of-a-kind jewelry, baby photo ornaments, bead ornaments, scarves, kikoï totes — just a sampling of “all things African” at the Amani Market!

