

**HFHK Statistics:**

Families served	2,795
Ave. monthly payment	\$11
Ave. house size:	34 sq. m
No. of Employees:	28
No. of communities:	63

Welcome to our December 2007 e-newsletter!

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**Jonathan Reckford, HFHI CEO, makes a memorable visit to Kenya**

There was great excitement at Habitat for Humanity Kenya (HFHK) when Mark Wooding, HFH Kenya National Director, announced that Jonathan Reckford, Habitat for Humanity International's Chief Executive Officer, would be visiting HFH Kenya.

Preparations at both the National Office and affiliate ensured that Jonathan and his crew were received well. His team comprised of Matthew Maury, HFHI/AME Area Vice President, Greg Foster, HFHI Regional Director - MEEA (Middle East & East Africa), Donne Cameron (Senior Director International Programs) and Ezekiel Esipisu, Regional Operations Manager, East Africa.



Jonathan and Jaffar's family inside their newly-dedicated home

Jonathan and his team attended a house dedication at our Mufu affiliate in Runyenjes-Embu region. The ceremony that took place on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2007

was a special event. The homeowner, Jaffar Ramadhan Muriithi, his wife, Maimoorah Njurah and their two children are Muslims. Being a Christian organization, HFH does not only seek to help Christians, but extends the love of God by developing communities with people in need regardless of their religion. The house dedication at Mufu saw Muslims and Christians work together in harmony while portraying a perfect example of the spirit of humanity.



Jonathan and the Jaffars cutting the cake

Members of the local community flocked to the site, eager to get a glimpse of Jonathan. The Area Administrative Chief, Peter Muriithi, and the Assistant Chief, Leakey Mikinyago, who is HFHK's patron in Mufu, were also present. The community was honoured to host Jonathan and welcomed him in the Kenyan way, with energetic singing, dancing, presents and a big, locally-baked cake.

After cutting the ribbons, the room was filled with rounds of applause from every corner of the small compound, and Jaffar accepted a Bible offered to him by the CEO. To Jonathan and everyone else present, it was a great and exciting surprise to find his own hand-drawn sketch of the house hanging on the wall inside the house! His infectious smile revealed the joy in his heart.

In his speech, Jonathan emphasized how a simple, decent home can create such a strong foundation for a better

life, and how Mufu has created a strong community through working with HFHK, a tangible experience of God's love. He had hopes that this Fiscal Year (July 2007 – June 2008), 48,000 families worldwide would get an opportunity to acquire decent houses, bringing Habitat closer to its dream of serving one billion families annually.

He urged the Mufu community to recommit themselves to this noble cause and create hope in their affiliate and elsewhere. Similarly, he shared the need for homeowners to repay their mortgages on a timely basis saying that Habitat homeowners are both recipients and donors. He informed the community that Habitat supports them, but families are the actual people who make it happen. "By paying mortgage towards the revolving fund, a homeowner helps another family realize their dream of acquiring a decent house," said Jonathan.

He emphasized on the rising rate of poverty housing in Kenya and worldwide and the importance of partnerships. "Although HFHI seeks to provide a solution to poverty housing, it cannot solve the problem single-handedly unless it partners with communities, donors, Microfinance Institutions and Habitat national organizations," remarked Jonathan.



Jonathan receiving gifts

Matthew on the other hand praised the community. Having worked in Kenya previously as a National Director, he was impressed that HFHK was continuing to serve more and more

families. Everyone was excited when he said that Jonathan purposely chose to visit Kenya during his short tour of HFH programmes in Africa, because he felt that Kenya is a unique member of the international Habitat family.

Greg was pleased to dedicate a house to a Muslim family. "Habitat Muslim and Christian homeowners living together in peace is a typical example of how God's love can be extended to others all over the world," remarked Greg.

Mark Wooding said that HFHK has served more than 1,000 families nationwide since 2004. He added that HFHK has brought the community of Mufu out of extreme poverty by partnering with their families to build decent and affordable housing, he was happy that the community had served 49 families with decent houses and encouraged them to achieve their goal of serving 100 families. He also noted that finally Habitat families in Mufu could have electricity. "Where there is no hope and no dream, there is no light," said Mark in relation to the light in Mufu that is present due to electricity and the presence of HFH.

On their return to Nairobi, Jonathan and his team met the HFHK staff and Board members at the National Office later in the day. The CEO, still smiling even after the long journey to and from Runyenjes, encouraged them to use their credibility by being a loud voice advocating for families in need of decent shelter. He said that HFH is growing dramatically and noted that HFHK's new housing initiatives are in line with HFH strategies.

We hope to host Jonathan again. The homeowner Jaffar, Maimoorah and their children were delighted that their house was dedicated by the HFHI CEO. An elated Ramadhan could only mirror the words said to him by Jonathan - "*Asante sana*" (thank you very much) for the warm welcome and God bless you".

*To Jonathan, Matthew, Greg, Donne and Ezekiel, thank you for visiting HFHK and "Karibu tena" (welcome back)!*

## HFHK celebrates its 25th Anniversary with style

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2007 will be remembered in the history of Habitat for Humanity Kenya for the special event that was celebrated in Bomet District marking HFHK's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of serving low income families in Kenya with simple, decent and affordable houses.



Mark Wooding (HFHK National Director), Seraphine Odongo (HFHK Board Member, centre), Ezekiel Esipisu (HFHI Operations Manager, second from right) and the homeowner (right) join in with the singing before cutting the cake

HFHK National Director, Mark Wooding and Habitat for Humanity International Regional Operations Coordinator for East Africa, Ezekiel Esipisu joined a team of Board Members, staff and house beneficiaries in singing and dancing, as they celebrated the special silver jubilee.

The day also commemorated the birth of our Kapliyo community in Bomet and the construction of the first Interlocking Stabilized Soil Block (ISSB) house in that region. Earlier in the day, the HFHK staff, Board members and hundreds of local volunteers participated in the construction of three houses.

One of the homeowners, Susan Cheriro, was elated and unable to express her joy when she was asked how she felt about her new Habitat house that was being constructed. "I am grateful, grateful, grateful... to HFHK and to God for answering my prayers," said Susan excitedly, as she shoveled soil for making ISSBs for her house.

In his speech, Mark said that HFHK plans to serve more families countrywide with decent and affordable houses before the end of 2008.

He commended HFHK's beneficiaries in Bomet region for taking the lead in repaying their loans toward the HFHK revolving fund. "Many regions are starting new projects, but we chose Bomet for our anniversary celebration because it is leading in mortgage repayments," remarked Mark.

For his part, Ezekiel reiterated to the community the importance of homeowners to HFHK. "We need homeowners. We cannot build without them. Our partnership with the homeowners has built HFHK as an organization for the last 25 years," remarked Ezekiel.

Similarly, Seraphine Odongo, HFHK Board member, reminded the community members present that HFHK builds families as well as houses. "We not only build a house but a family too. The children get a decent and secure house in which they can study well after classes, while the husband and wife find a clean house when they return home from work," said Seraphine.



Diana at work

It was great to see HFHK staff rolling up their sleeves to work together on the construction of three houses. Diana Warui, HFHK Programme Assistant, wiped sweat off her brow as she vigorously sifted sand, while Martin Njeru, Field Officer in Bungoma, tested his muscles as he pressed down the heavy block making machine. The other staff got involved in various activities such as clearing the site, ferrying and laying bricks, with much laughter and great excitement.

The climax of the ceremony was reached when a cake branded with the Habitat logo and colours was cut to mark the anniversary. Kapliyo community members presented Mark with a traditionally decorated gourd to signify the appreciation they have towards Habitat for Humanity, and more dancing and singing followed in the native Kalenjin language as the ceremony came to a close.

## HFH Kenya Scales up its operations

In a move to scale up our operations, HFHK plans to serve more families during the current fiscal year (July 2007 – June 2008). Our goal is to serve 750 families, an ambitious number when compared to the 238 families we served between July 2006 and June 2007. Out of the 750 families, 50 will be served in our pilot urban project in Naivasha, through a partnership with Panda Self Help Group.



The proposed house for Naivasha

This partnership will help low income flower farm employees (most of them single mothers, who head their households) realize their dreams of owning simple, decent and affordable shelter. They currently reside in substandard rental makeshifts in the slums of Naivasha.

Similarly, our new Rural Housing Project initiative, which involves partnering with already-established groups and offering various housing solutions such as repairs, renovations and building in stages (incremental houses), has picked up tremendously.

Please join us this Christmas in serving even more families in the urban and rural areas of Kenya through sponsoring a full house, incremental house or repairing an already existing substandard house. Write to us for more details on how you can help – [rdc@hfhkenya.or.ke](mailto:rdc@hfhkenya.or.ke)

### Corporate Partners join HFHK in a mission to eliminate substandard housing

HFHK corporate builds are the 'in thing'. If your corporate is not participating, you don't know what you are missing!

HFHK offers team building with a difference. It is an opportunity to make a difference in society, in the lives of the less fortunate, in the lives of your

employees and ultimately in the life of an organization whilst strengthening its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). During this year, HFHK has partnered with organizations/Institutions such as **Citibank, Housing Finance, International School of Kenya, MoneyGram International, Rosslyn Academy, Starfish Africa and Unilever East Africa Ltd.** in building decent houses for low income families in Bomet, Bungoma, Kisii, Machakos, Maua and Runyenjes. Similarly, these local partners, and others, have provided invaluable financial assistance through the HFHK house sponsorship programme. To all our local partners, we say "Asante sana" (thank you very much) for choosing HFH Kenya to spearhead your CSR goal towards making the world a better place for all by helping to serve families with affordable Habitat houses.

We also encourage other like-minded individuals, companies and institutions to join us in providing simple, decent houses for all God's people in need.

### Habitat Kenya's staff member promoted to the position of National Director, Lesotho

Here at HFHK we will be sure to miss our former Programme Manager, Shadrack Mutembei, who has just been promoted to the position of National Director, HFH Lesotho.



Shadrack receiving a farewell gift

Shadrack was with HFHK for twelve years during which time he displayed exceptional leadership qualities. He rose from the rank of a Field Officer to become a Programme Officer and then made it to the Programme Manager position. Previously, in 2005, he acted as National Director, HFH Malawi, for a period of six months.

During his tenure, he saw HFHK grow from partnering with seven affiliates to the current 63, and from building 40 houses annually to an average of 300 per year. He feels privileged to have worked for HFHK, a place where he has grown both physically and professionally.

*HFHK wishes Shadrack every success in his new position.*

## Global Village: a lifetime experience

The Habitat for Humanity Kenya Global Village (GV) experience is a life-changing one and an eye opener. The participants get a chance to not only tour the 'real' Kenya, but to also get involved in serving low income families with affordable houses.

The GV teams get to experience the culture of a particular community within our 6 regions, as they eat the local food, interact with the locals, stay in a local church or school and use local facilities such as pit latrines and temporary makeshift bathrooms. They get to have a taste of what life is like at the village, as they work alongside God's people in need by building and renovating houses and making the world a better place for all.

This year, HFHK hosted 6 Global Village teams from Canada, Great Britain and Northern Ireland. We hope to host many more next year and welcome any team wishing to have a Kenyan Global Village experience to come and sample Kenya's rural life!

*"Thank you for giving me this experience. It has changed the way I think about the world and the way I want to live my life," said Elyse Glor, HFH Canada Open Team Kaplong, Bomet - August 2007.*

## A WIDOWED HOME OWNER SHARES HER JOY OF OWNING A DECENT HABITAT HOUSE

Jane Wafula is a Bukusu by tribe. The Bukusu from Western Kenya have a rich culture, which they have preserved up to the present time. The Bukusu customs state that if a man dies, his house has to be demolished and his wife and children are left out in the cold. Jane will have to go through the same customs every Bukusu woman faces following the death of her husband.



Jane (left) and her family outside their new Habitat house

That was not to be the case, as she qualified to be a Habitat homeowner. She was ecstatic and could not believe her luck when she got the news. She has now been served with a decent house to replace the soon to be demolished mud hut.

Her beautiful fired brick house is a sharp contrast from her soon-to-be-demolished mud-walled rectangular house. "God is great; my life now has hope even though I am a widow," remarked Jane.

Widows in the community are often neglected as only a few cater for their needs. Most of these widows are usually jobless and, with the death of the breadwinner, life becomes almost unbearable both financially and emotionally.

Her former two-roomed house was mud-walled, had a rusty roof and an earthen floor. It was small and due for demolition in a period of six months to one year, according to the Bukusu customs. She was very worried that no-one would offer to help her build another traditional house. She consoled herself that she and her children would sleep in the kitchen until they got funds to build another house.



Jane and her family outside their old house

### Special thanks to the following partners who Supported our work between January and October 2007 (Our top 10 partners are ranked with numbers)

- Ashland County HFH (8)
- Cincinnati HFH
- Citibank N.A (4)
- Cobb County HFH
- Colah Robert (USA)
- D.C. HFH
- Dane County HFH
- Eaton Peter & Kate (USA)
- Fayette County HFH
- Fidelity Investments (USA)
- First Congregational Church (Bellevue, USA)
- First Presbyterian Church - Marietta, USA (9)
- Gibson Patrick (USA)
- Gloucester-Mathews HFH
- Griffin Area HFH
- GV - Abergavenny Methodist Church 2007 (UK)
- GV - Canada Open Team 2007
- GV - Ballynahinch Rugby Club 2007 (NI)
- GV - Dominican College 2007 (NI)
- GV - Great Britain Open Team 2007
- GV - Northern Ireland Open Team 2007
- Habitat for Humanity Canada
- Habitat for Humanity Great Britain
- Habitat for Humanity Malawi
- Habitat for Humanity Northern Ireland
- Harford HFH (7)
- HFH Kenya Board Members
- Housing Finance (Kenya)
- International School of Kenya
- Jean Yves (Kenya)
- Kent School HFH Campus Chapter (USA)
- Knox County HFH
- Langlois Marie J. (USA)
- Leonhard Henry & Norma (USA)
- Levi Keith A. (USA)
- Macon Area HFH
- Marshfield Area HFH
- MoneyGram International
- Montgomery County HFH (10)
- Moulton Wilbur N. (USA)
- Mueni Susan (Kenya)
- Niagara Area HFH
- Northern Berkshire HFH
- Omaha HFH
- Paterson HFH (1)
- Pittsburgh HFH
- Plymouth Congregational Church (USA)
- Pontotoc County HFH
- Prescott Area HFH (5)
- Prill Paul and Valery (USA)
- Redwood River HFH, Inc.
- Rosslyn Academy (Kenya)
- Salt Lake Valley HFH
- Scott Jeannette & Megan (USA)
- SE Steuben County HFH
- Seattle/South King Co. HFH (3)
- Shamoun Virginia H. (USA)
- South Sarasota County, Inc HFH
- St. Croix Valley HFH
- Starfish Africa (Kenya)
- Tulare County, HFH
- Tusa Metropolitan Area HFH (2)
- Unilever East Africa Ltd. (Kenya)
- Visa/Vodafone, UK (6)

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the entire family of Habitat for Humanity Kenya, HFHK Board, Jonathan Reckford, Matthew Maury, Greg Foster and Ezekiel Espisu!



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