

# **News from Bududa – March 2015**

## **Greetings from Barbara**

**By Barbara Wybar, Executive Director, Bududa Learning Center**



**Life and work in Bududa trigger many different emotions. Joy in seeing again the friendly and welcoming people, the brilliant sunshine, the abundant green, exotic vegetation, the colorful and plentiful birds and last but not least, the power of the pure black night sky, with the twinkling stars, and the moon rising over the hill 40 minutes later each night. Happiness to be**

**back in my simple home on the hillside, with water from the bore hole and a little solar power and Justine who takes such very good care of all of us. Pride in what we, as a group, have accomplished in building this center and working to make it better and better. A sense of being besieged by more work and details to attend to as the center grows and flourishes. Sadness following a visit to a young family of five children who have just lost their mother in childbirth.**

**The center looks just great and much as I left it. The compound is clean, fresh paint has been applied where needed and the trees are growing. There are more students than ever and still the most popular subjects are tailoring for the girls and brick laying and concrete practice for the boys.**

**The Women's Microfinance Initiative was stirring when I returned as one of the women in our hub had stolen seven million Ug Sh (\$2372 US) from the money which had been reimbursed by the women for their loans. She disappeared to Mbale, the local town and could not be found, but we tracked her down with the help of the police and our headmaster, who had to bribe the police. She was brought back to jail in Bududa and was immediately bailed out by her relatives and had to promise to pay back the money by the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month. We are waiting to see what happens. Truly there is never a dull moment**

**in Bududa.**

**Our Children of Bududa program is running smoothly, but sadly our international coordinator, Lizette Gilday is stepping down. Fortunately, Sheila Havard, a friend of BLC from its early days and a frequent visitor from her home in Ontario, is stepping in to replace her as the international coordinator.**

**Lizette has done an amazing job in the five years she has been running the program. She has focused on connecting our sponsors and their orphans, and on helping streamline the operations in Bududa. It is a huge amount of work and difficult as we are dealing with the poorest of the poor in Bududa, and like our poor in North America, they are very unstable and do not always stay in the same place and live with the same relatives. So no sooner do we have a poor and vulnerable orphan, such as Masibo Brenda, matched up with a wonderful sponsor in North America than the child is moved to Mbale to stay with an auntie and no longer comes to the program. So we start all over again, only to find a few years later that Brenda is back and needs another sponsor. Lizette has enriched the program and given careful guidance and oversight to her very valued Ugandan staff, Martha Nanzala and Grace Namyeka. She spent time here in Bududa in March, handing over the reigns to Sheila Havard and to Martha and Grace. Lastly, I have to add that with all the work Lizette has done, she has received no payment despite incurring a fair amount of expense with annual visits to Bududa, and paying for such things as postage and printing. Our debt of gratitude to Lizette is boundless.**

**The school is doing well. We were sorry to lose Fabian Valdivia last October when he and his partner returned to North America for the birth of their first child. But happily the chairman of the advisory board of Bududa Learning Center, Father Paul Buyela, photo left, chairman of Bududa Learning Center's advisory board, agreed to step in to oversee the BLC during the three months that I was away. We have just had a wonderfully insightful report from him with observations and recommendations, which a foreigner would not have been able to do. So if we are able to maximize our ef-**



**forts and follow through on these recommendations, we should have a school on the cutting edge of technical education in Eastern Uganda.**

**In bullet form, here are the new developments at Bududa Learning Center:**

- **We have hired a wonderful young Englishman, James Jacob, photo right, to be here for a year to support me and the African staff as they begin to launch new projects at the center.**



- **Our new carpentry workshop is about to become fully functional with the purchase and delivery of three new industrial strength carpentry machines to cut and plane wood.**
- **Our Bududa Vocational Academy accountant, Paul, has just informed me that the fees payment at the Academy this year is well ahead of last year, which is very promising.**
- **We are in the process of planning and raising money for a sewing workshop where we plan to get contracts to make uniforms for Ugandan companies and schools to bring in money for the Bududa Learning Center. We have two grants totaling \$5,500 US for this, but we need another \$10,000 US to be able to build the workshop and furnish it with sewing machines. If any of our readers would like to help us with this project let me know and we will send you our business plan and budget.**
- **Robert Kotaki, our headmaster, has told me that we shall have two interns from Uganda Christian University, who wish to be with us for three months. And one intern who**

wishes to join us from Uganda Islamic University.

- **I arrived to find that our hall which houses the brick laying and concrete practice workshop, a wonderfully large space which is cool with a superb view had been rented by the most powerful politician in Bududa District because it is the best meeting place in the district.**
- **Sleeping Children Around the World, SCAW, which is a Canadian NGO has agreed to give us 50 bedkits for the orphans in our program who are between the ages of six and twelve. The bedkits include a mattress, sheets, a blanket and a net as well as other important household items. We were connected to SCAW by a couple of our sponsors, Don and Heather Barclay.**



- • **Nabafu Edith and Nandutu Hellen, pictured above, will receive funding from the Aninga Project in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to help defray the cost of their fees in our nursery teacher program. The Aninga Project has agreed to sponsor these girls to go to BVA and study to be nursery teachers. Their guardians will pay half of their fees**

**and the Aninga Project will pay the other half. Nandutu Hellen has just been in the office with me reading her very touching letter of thanks to Jenny Benson, the CEO of the Aninga Project.**

- **I have started a small sewing workshop just outside of my office, on the balcony in the shade with two sewing machines and two grads from BVA sewing full time for me making aprons, little girl dresses and cushion covers. They are happy campers to be employed and I am proud to be giving them work. The items they make will be sold in North America to raise funds for BLC.**

**Now it is time to sign out and say thank you to all of our sponsors and donors for your miraculous support of the work we do in Bududa. If it were not for all of you, we would have accomplished nothing.**

**With much appreciation,  
Barbara**

## **Visit to a family in mourning**

**By Sheila Havard, volunteer from Ontario**



***Bulali Doreen's family***

**When news came that Bulali Doreen, one of the students in our Saturday program, had lost her 39-year-old mother in childbirth, it was immediately clear to the BLC staff that the family was in serious trouble. Any child with only one parent is considered an orphan in Uganda because two parents are needed to provide for children. Doreen has four siblings, all two years apart in age: Dereck, Peter and Brian and the three-week-old baby. Death in childbirth is quite uncommon in the West, but it is still a frequent occurrence in rural Uganda.**

**It seems that Doreen's Mum died at 7:00 a.m. after giving birth to a healthy boy at home a few hours earlier. She did not have a midwife. The after-birth failed to come out and tragically she bled to death. Poor Bududan women often do not go to the hospital to deliver their babies. One reason is that it is too expensive for them. Midwives demand a hefty fee, which is beyond the means of the average villager. The midwives pocket this fee themselves although this is illegal. Secondly, some midwives are rough or even cruel with their patients. In North American terms, we would say they are "compassion deprived." They are overworked and only paid a pittance. (Incidentally,**

**all Ugandan government workers are in the same boat except for most politicians, who earn more than their U.S. counterparts.)**

**Doreen's mother's death was a huge blow to her family. Barbara Wybar and I felt that we needed to visit and see what BLC could do to help. We met up with teacher Jane at the local village trading center and jumped on two pikipiki motorcycles for the trip to their house. The bikes strained and roared as they surged up the narrow winding path, shaded by eucalyptus trees, to a dusty hilltop, which revealed a glorious view of the mountains of Mount Elgon National Park. Here a sad group of family members were assembled on a rough wooden bench outside a crumbling family home, which was badly in need of remudding. Dad seemed to have steeled himself against the tragedy that had befallen his young family. He managed a smile, but the three younger brothers looked pretty sad. Most touchingly, the youngest, two-year-old Peter, laid his head on his Dad's knee, obviously pining for affection and physical closeness. The father did not react. I sat and thought how can we help in this situation? How can a mother ever be replaced?**

**Ten-year-old Doreen, the oldest of the siblings, was wearing a tattered brown outfit, which hung halfway down her muddy calves. She smiled shyly and then went off in search of a younger brother and emerged after awhile from a neighboring house tugging a bawling child. Mucus was pouring out of his nose and he was inconsolable. The father explained that the child was sick with malaria. Looking at his feet, we discovered that he was also infested with jiggers, a parasite acquired from contact between soil and unwashed feet.**

**Bit by bit we gathered the facts. The baby, who is less than one month old, is with a relative. The father wishes to keep the other children at home. This is a noble idea, but Social Worker Martha and Director Grace wonder if this will be possible since the father drinks. The wife's mother is too far away to be of much assistance, but we were introduced to the father's mother, who lives nearby and expressed her willingness to be of help. This grandmother greeted us and firmly refused Barbara's offer of her chair, plonking herself down on the ground instead and stretching out her legs in front of her.**

**On inquiring after the family`s physical needs, we found out that they have a small plot of land to grow crops. The children own a few clothes, but they are pretty ragged. They were all barefoot and thus in danger of picking up parasites. They sleep on reed mats on the floor as do most Ugandan children, and they share the tattered blanket they own.**

**After pictures had been snapped of the family members and they had admired their portraits with a giggle, the mood became slightly less somber and the crying boy calmed down on being given a sweetie. Another child wiped the boy`s nose with his shirt.**

**A temporary plan was developed. Teacher Jane would accompany the sick child to the clinic with the father. A package of clothes would be assembled at the guesthouse, where there are always spare garments in case of need. The family would be provided with some food, such as maize meal and beans, as a stopgap measure, and naturally Doreen`s welfare and progress will be monitored when she attends Saturday school at the Bududa Vocational Academy every week.**

**I would like to say that we feel hopeful about the future for Doreen and her family. But unfortunately, with a father who drinks, it is very uncertain that the family will be able to remain intact.**

***Sheila Havard is a longtime friend and supporter of BLC; she is also a frequent visitor, travelling from her home in Ontario.***

## **Children Of Bududa Sponsorship Program**

### **A farewell note from Lizette Gilday**



**I am stepping down from the position of International Coordinator of the Children of Bududa. For the past five years I have had the privilege of being a part of the Bududa community and coming to know a beautiful and generous people. Working with the donors has also enriched my life and has allowed me to witness first hand people giving from their hearts to support and improve the lives of some of the world's most needy children. The new International Coordinator will be Sheila Havard. The day to day running of the program on the ground in Bududa is in the capable hands of the Program Director, Namyeka Grace and our Social Worker, Nanzala Martha. The Executive Director of the Bududa Learning Center, Barbara Wybar, continues to provide oversight.**

**As I end the first part of my "African Adventure", I would like to take a moment to honour and thank Barbara Wybar who is the founder and moving force behind the Bududa Learning Center. She has been my mentor and teacher during the last five years and has taught me an enormous amount about the running of a charity in Africa. So I send a big thank you to my dear friend 'Bubby' for the wonderful times we have shared and for all that I have learned from her.**

***Lizette Gilday has been an important part of our Bududa Learning Center for a long time. A frequent visitor to Bududa, she coordinated the Children of Bududa program for a number of years and has been involved in many aspects of the center. She is stepping down as international coordinator of the COB but will remain a part of our family.***

## **Blogs about Bududa Learning Center**

**If you'd like to find out more about life here in Bududa, we heartily recommend that you check out the blogs of Sheila Havard, our new international coordinator for the Children of Bududa program, and James Jacob, the assistant to executive director Barbara Wybar. You can find them on our website <http://bududa.org>.**

## **How to Donate**

**Donors in Canada have a choice in the method they use to make a donation:**

**1. Please mail a cheque payable to Bududa Canada Foundation to 54 Aberdeen, Toronto, ON M4X 1A2. (Our charitable number is 82535 8286 RR0001.) If you wish to sponsor a child in the Children of Bududa program, be sure to indicate "For Children of Bududa" on the cheque.**

**2. Or you can make a donation online at [www.CanadaHelps.org](http://www.CanadaHelps.org). When you are asked what organization you wish to donate to, fill in Bududa Canada Foundation. CanadaHelps will direct your gift to Bududa Canada Foundation for Bududa Learning Center and will send you a charitable receipt. If you wish to sponsor a child in the Children of Bududa program, be sure to go to 'message/instruction' and put in "For Children of Bududa".**

**To make a US donation, please make your check payable to Friends Peace Teams and designate on the check "For Bududa Projects", and send to this address: 1211 Bay Street, Beaufort, SC 29902. If you wish to sponsor a child in the Children of Bududa program, be sure to indicate "For Children of Bududa" on the cheque.**

**Please allow up to 60 days for gift-acknowledgement letter.**

**Thank you!**

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