



## Upendo Village Update September 2008

WEB Site: [www.upendovillage.org](http://www.upendovillage.org)



*On the left, Sister Agnes encourages a young Upendo Village client and her grandmother as they try to live their lives with hope and dignity. On the right, Sister Florence visits a new Upendo Village client whose newborn twins are presented with new jackets and hats crocheted by Virginia Hernandez in the USA.*

Summer of 2008 has been a very busy time for Upendo Village both in Kenya and in the US. On May 5<sup>th</sup> the Kenyan government initiated its program to return internally displaced persons to their homes. Unfortunately, there have been many setbacks in these efforts resulting in many people still living in camps. Some have lost families, homes and land and still face hostility from those who had once been their neighbors. Healing and reconciliation will take a long time and much work. To complicate this already dire situation even further, by May the inflation rate in Kenya had risen to 32%, making the cost of gasoline, milk, vegetables, tomatoes, potatoes, corn & wheat flour prohibitive. In addition, the people face severe food shortages because of the disruption of crop planting during the violence that occurred just prior to the onset of the rainy season in February. Many farmers still have not been able to return to their land. Further compounding the problem is the international growth in the use of bio-fuels. Increased Bio-fuel production has caused greater global demand for raw-materials e.g. wheat, maize, palm oil, sugarcane etc. 240 Kg of corn, enough to feed one person for a year, is required to produce 100 litres of ethanol, an amount used to fill a vehicle fuel tank once. This has led to food scarcity worldwide and higher food prices.

Upendo Village is striving to continue its nutritional supplementation program for our clients and their families, but the rising prices are threatening to bring shortages to our program as well.

Upendo Village is happy to welcome Sister Theresa Langfield as the new executive director in the USA. She comes to us with extensive experience in fundraising and has served in the Wheaton Franciscan ministry of providing housing for the poor for many years. We thank Sister Beatrice Hernandez for her nearly 5 years of service as executive director. Sr. Bea will continue to serve on the Upendo Village Board of Directors going forward.



*Sister Theresa Langfield became the new pro bono executive director of Upendo Village in the US in August 2008.*

Steve Monaco has volunteered to assist Sister Theresa with the bookkeeping for Upendo Village. Sister Clare Nyderek, a member of the board of directors, will continue to serve as pro bono accountant for the organization. Thanks to all for your continued dedication to the ministry to the poor people of Kenya who struggle daily with HIV/AIDS.

From April-May 2008 Sister Florence Muia was welcomed during her annual visit to the US. She met with our friends at several Churches, Rotary Clubs, the Du Page Glocal AIDS Action Network and the donors to our Children Of Upendo Sponsorship Program (CUSP).



*Sr. Florence Muia with Father Tivy, Deacon Tom Richardt and Sr. Beatrice Hernandez during their visit at St. Joan of Arc Parish in Lisle, IL.*

As of June, 75 children were able to continue their schooling thanks to the CUSP donors. 55 of these children and their guardians attending an academic day at Upendo Village to review their progress in school and to encourage them to continue their efforts. Even though many of the students witnessed or experienced much suffering during the recent violence in their country, most continued to show improved grades. Counseling has also helped them to deal with their feelings of loss and has motivated them to strive for success at school.

This month the Diocese of Joliet medical and construction mission team will arrive in Kenya for their 4<sup>th</sup> annual trip. They will work at the clinic at Upendo Village, at the Naivasha District Hospital and at the homes of our clients. Their work will bring surgical and nursing expertise, as well as lab and pharmacy assistance

as they provide for our clients and a wide range of medical needs to the people of Naivasha. Some members of the team have participated in multiple mission trips and others will be our guests for the first time. We look forward to their time with us and are grateful for the difference they will make in so many lives during their visit.

As summer here in the US draws to a close, we remember our brothers and sisters in Kenya who are struggling for survival. We reach out our hand to them offering what we can and pledging to walk with them into the future. Every day brings hope in new ways. Every person makes a difference. Every act of love touches someone and brings us together across oceans, across continents and across nations to a realization that we are one.

We continue to build a global village of love that values the life and dignity of each person and reaches out to meet the challenges of HIV/AIDS. Our prayers go out to the people of Kenya. We pray for peace, reconciliation, hope and healing.

**Thank you for your support for Upendo Village and the people of Kenya. Your concern and solidarity bring hope and life to many. Together we continue to work toward the day when the people of all the countries of the world will be able to live healthy and happy lives.—**

**Beatrice Hernandez, OSF, MD**



***Upendo Village, NFP.***

*HIV/AIDS Women Project-Kenya*

*Sr. Florence Muia, ASN – President*

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**Attention:** Please note that the Upendo Village NFP mailing zip code has changed to **60187**. Please make this change in your address book.