



KUPENDA Resource Center
By Beatrice Baya, Teacher

I would like to applaud the Kupenda library at Gede, which is very rich in terms of literature materials. Being a student – teacher pursuing a diploma in ECD, the library benefited me a lot when I was doing my research project about “Challenges faced by ECDE teachers in the Implementation of Inclusive Education”.

Not only did the relevant materials at Kupenda help me to carry out the research easier, it also improved my understanding and knowledge on various education and inclusive education. I would like to urge the expansion of such resource centers as a way to assist educators at Kupenda supported schools in delivering effective assistance to the children.

If the kind donors and sponsors of Kupenda programs can continue to provide reference material and research literature in the areas of early childhood development, early childhood education, and special needs education, we will be better equipped to handle the day to day challenges of supporting these precious children.

If anyone is interested in sending textbooks to support our growing educational and research library, please email us at: Kupenda@kupenda.org for specific current needs.

“And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.” (1 John 4:21)

Staffing Improved—An Appreciation from MADISERO/Kupenda Kenya Director/ Coordinator

By: Leonard Mbonani

Free primary education, continuous educational assessment by EARC teachers and increased child sponsorship are factors that have greatly contributed to more children with special education needs joining learning institutions in the Malindi district.

Sir Ali Special School for Mentally Challenged in Malindi town now has a pupil enrollment of eighty (80) pupils against four (4) teachers. The few hands in the classrooms to assist the children has been a big problem. To alleviate the situation, teachers requested Kupenda/MADISERO to employ a teacher aide for these children. In January of this year Oripa Zuma – a trained teacher in Early Childhood and Special Education was hired fulltime as a teacher aide by the organization and posted to the school. Her main responsibility is to assist the teacher by giving children specialized attention and ensuring their personal needs are met during class time.

At Gede Special School, the situation was even worse as the number of children increased to ninety nine (99). Children



Cynthia Bauer (President) and Leonard Mbonani (Director)

with severe Cerebral Palsy doubled to 44 with only two teachers and one teacher aide. In the O.T. room one could not imagine our single Occupational Therapist designing treatment plans for all the children and implementing them on daily basis.

Kupenda saw the need of hiring an Occupational Therapist Assistant to help in the treatment. Bena Kayoro from Mombasa was hired and was expected to start work by early May. It is unfortunate that Kayoro later refused to take the offer. The post will have to be re-advertised later.

For over one year the Kupenda Office in Kenya has had only one employee – the Coordinator/Director doing all the administrative, secretarial, and field work duties. With the increased child sponsorship the Coordinator has to travel to schools and homes to fill in child spon-

sorship forms, progress reports, and take photos of children. In the office he serves teachers who come to borrow textbooks on Special education from the resource centre among other responsibilities. He also has to travel to individual schools to pay boarding fees for the sponsored children as well as monitoring projects initiated by the Organization.


All these responsibilities were too much for one person to handle. The organization has since employed Thomas Katana to take on some of the clerical duties and assist in other office and field duties. I sincerely thank Kupenda Supporters for seeing the need to employ more staff and raise the funds for salaries. The growth in our requirements is a sure sign of our success in helping children all across Kenya.

Leonard

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To Support our Cause, Contact us at:
Kupenda for the children
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Please contact Cynthia (Cindy) at cynthia@kupenda.org if you would like to contribute to a specific need mentioned.

A Note from the Founder By: Cynthia Bauer



Kupenda is growing more and more everyday. It's still so incredible to me to see this little idea to help a few kids grow into an organization that now supports over 500 children with disabilities!

Although most of my time in Kenya is spent in the office, I get to go to the schools for a little bit to get my daily dose of hugs and smiles from the most beautiful children you'll ever meet. I think it's like getting a little glimpse of Heaven. It's the love from the children that keeps me going especially during those times when it seems impossible to continue on with the work that it takes to run Kupenda.

For those of you who don't know, I have been doing all the work of starting Kupenda and running it while holding a

full time job as a wildlife biologist for the past 5 years.

After a lot of thought, prayer and getting up my nerve, I finally left the security of my full time job to devote more time to the work of Kupenda. I am still working as a wildlife biology consultant so in some ways my stress levels are increasing a bit. However, I now have more flexibility for travel to Kenya and other places as well as being able to switch my schedule around to do the things needed on the US side. Eventually I hope we can actually get enough funds

to hire people to work on the US side. I found myself recently reaching "burn out" after our most recent trip to Kenya and it makes me a bit nervous. However, I still do not regret even one sacrifice I've made to do what I know is God's work. A friend of mine once told me "When things get tough remember to look up, breath, see as far as you can in the distance and think God is infinitely bigger." Lately taking the time to look up has even been a challenge. I appreciate every prayer so much.

Cynthia Bauer

Perspective of a Physically Challenged Pupil at Gede Special School. By: Shamsa Rajab



My name is Shamsa. I am a girl of 14 years and am enrolled in standard eight grade at Gede Special School. I am physically challenged. My legs have a problem and sometimes they cause me pain especially when I walk a long distance. I was not born disabled but this started when I was two years old. My legs started causing me pain and eventually they changed from their normal shape. My parents were shocked but later on I managed to walk with difficulties. I am the last born in my family, so when my father saw my physical problems he divorced my mother and refused to educate me because his friends told him it was a big shame for a rich man like him to have a daughter who is disabled. So we left him with my three sisters and a brother. My mother rented a room and a small kiosk nearby to start a new, hard life.

When I was in class seven in 2005 at Gede, my legs started paining me so that I could not walk completely. I went home and found my mother was also sick, suffering from cholera, so I decide to write a letter to my father to see if he could give us some money to go to the hospital. He replied to the letter and said he doesn't want to be disturbed and I'd better leave him to enjoy his life. I cried when I read that. My brother and sisters were still learning in boarding

secondary schools away from home so they could not help me. I had to stay at home for the whole year because my mother did not have money for my boarding fees at Gede Special School. People laughed at me because I had a hopeless future. My mother was giving me hope that one day she would get money and I will go back to school.

In January 2006, on a Saturday morning, mother and I were sitting outside our rented room, I saw a man (Leonard Mbonani) coming towards us. When he reached our spot, he greeted us. He asked me why I wasn't going to school. I told him everything without hesitating. He said the following week I should go back to school because "KUPENDA" (via Laurel and Andy Sprenger) had sponsored me.

I could not believe my ears, so I asked him to repeat what he said. Oh! What a surprise, it was to me. I thought it was a dream. I wished I could fly to the US to thank the sponsors. They gave me a vision to see my bright future. They are among the best people in the world. May God support them so that they could help other disabled children the way they are helping me. Now I am a candidate for secondary school (high school). I will take my final exam in November this year and wish to do even better. I hope KUPENDA will continue sponsoring me for my secondary education and I wish to become a doctor in future. I will live to remember the founders of Kupenda in my life and your colleagues in Kupenda. I wish Kupenda a fantastic life. If there are people to be blessed by God, my sponsors are. I will work hard to make my dream come true and show those who see us disabled like rugs that we can do anything they can so that they will know that disability is not inability.

Adventures for the Cure—Proud Partner with Kupenda By Adam Driscoll



Adam Driscoll and Patrick Blair (Adventures for the Cure) with Cynthia Bauer at a Kupenda display and information session.

Cindy Bauer asked Adventures for the Cure to write a summary of how we got involved with Kupenda and the ways in which we have helped support her organization.

When I thought about how we got involved with Kupenda; I always think of Cindy as an angel that fell into our lives.

We met Cindy in the fall of 2005 at a church retreat. Cindy gave a talk about what she was doing for children with disabilities in Kenya and we immediately knew God was calling us to help Kupenda in its mission.

We had been looking for organizations that we could help in the summer of 2006 when all of the sudden, there it was!! It is truly amazing how God

works. I thank God to this day for Cindy.

Two months after meeting Cindy, we were in Kenya with her sleeping on the top of a building in mosquito nets!

We fell in love with every one of the kids that Kupenda supports and decided we wanted to do our part to help this or-

ganization reach as many children as possible. For us, this meant biking across the United States to raise \$20,000 to fund the building of a new boarding facility in the Marafa district.

Our bike trip was a complete success! We were able to raise the \$20,000 for Kupenda and even raised \$11,000 for the American Diabetes Association (I myself am a Type 1 Diabetic). Even more importantly, this trip gave us the opportunity to speak with people all over the U.S. about Kupenda and its efforts in Kenya. Since we love to bike, run, and participate in endurance events, we hope to continue to find new ways to use what we love to help others!

Just recently we discovered that an additional \$7,000 dollars was going to be needed to finish the boarding facility. So we went to work looking for fundraising ideas so that we could raise the remaining money in time for our trip to

Kenya this upcoming June.

This task was a bit daunting but God once again blessed us in meeting Glenn and Debbi Weinberg. We received an email from Glenn stating that he would like to talk with us about the remaining funds that were needed. We met with Glenn and Debbi and a few days later we found out that they were going to donate the rest of the funds from the The Associated Jewish Charities! Another answered prayer!

The same week that we found out the funds were taken care of, we also got the news that Adventures for the Cure is now an official non profit organization. We feel so blessed to have met Cindy and are so thankful that she has given us a great cause to pour our time and effort in to.

Adam
and Adventures for the Cure



VISIT US ON THE INTERNET AT: [HTTP://WWW.KUPENDA.ORG](http://www.kupenda.org)

Reflections from Kenya Trip 2007
By: Andrew Bauer, Vice President



One would think that visiting Kenya repeatedly, would eventually get old, when the truth of the matter is that it gets so much better. Kenya, more specifically the Malindi area has become another home and the members of Kupenda another family. I have heard people say that they didn't fully understand what Kupenda was until they visited and were face to face with the children. You can look at pictures and watch video after video but nothing

compares to holding a "Kupenda" Child and looking into theirs eyes and seeing their smile. A smile that may have not existed if Kupenda never existed.

There was a specific moment on this trip when I was talking with one of the team members who was in Kenya for the first time. He told me "I have always thought that we needed to focus our attention on the needs of America first and then spread out to Africa

and other nations, but being here, I understand that these needs are much greater and though America has it's problems and poverty, they still have access to food and toilets."

Another team member found herself teacher a hearing impaired class. After teaching the students math, she preceded to teach them the next topic on the curriculum, which social studies focusing on family. She asked them the simple question of "What does you family provide for you?" The students had nothing to say and were confused. Thinking that communication was the reason for the confusion, the question was reworded to "Who provides you with food?" Food, being the answer the Curriculum was looking for. They all answered "Kupenda" after

looking at the list of answer, the questions were reworded to "who offers you shelter, food, and community?" they all answered "Kupenda" then they preceded to say that the school was their family and that the most important thing the school and Kupenda gives them is love. Cindy got a little teary eyed when the story was relayed to her.

I have seen children in their homes, laying in the dirt with no one to look after them, crawling around because of their condition. Then a year later visiting them at the Gede School and watching them smile attending school and living life a life that they may have not had with out the help of Kupenda. That's when it hits, that's when it all makes sense, That's why Kupenda exist.

Andy



Kupenda for the children

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