

Thanksgiving, after all, is a word of action. --W.J. Cameron

Thanksgiving 2009

Dear Friends,

As our autumn season turns into winter, I remember winter in Kenya and Uganda from my visit last July. Winter there is warm, and so was the welcome we received. So much has changed since our last visit. In the huge outdoor market, new business has sprung up, underwritten by loans from Jamii Bora in Nairobi. And the dairy project in Uganda is thriving...I actually was part of the presentation ceremony where a family in one of the villages received their cow.

Everywhere we went, we heard the stories...stories of hope, stories of dreams realized, and stories of gratitude. I'd like to share one of those stories with you.



John Katumva and Rosemary Kibwle live on an acre plot in Uganda. When John moved to his small piece of land in 2000, it was before he "got his sweetheart." He was able to earn some income from his plots of coffee, bananas and vegetables. He and Rosemary are now married 7 years and have 3 children who are 6, 2 and 3 months. They learned in a workshop about Caritas Maddo, MPA's microfinancing partner in Uganda, and heard that the opportunity to get a cow was open to all. They also learned that they could receive a microfinancing loan of \$800 for a cow. The preparation process was rigorous with the specialized vegetation and the soil and water conservation methods. It meant building contours, adopting hygiene and sanitation practices and constructing the cow barn for the cow on "zero grazing." It took John

and Rosemary 3 years. John described his own doubts, saying he "almost jumped off," but Rosemary persisted. She trusted Caritas Maddo that their cow would come. Their children were especially excited when the cow barn was constructed. They asked frequently, "When do we get our cow?"

Rosemary and John spoke of their dreams for the future to improve their crops through the use of manure, to build a better house, and to educate their children. They spoke of their own relationship strengthening as they share working together in new ways. Now, John will sweep, something only the women would do, since he recognizes the hygiene requirements. They shared how they've started their commitment to pass on their knowledge to 4 other households. Neighbors have already copied some of their practices. "For those who put in the effort and try," said John, "it works." Their greatest challenge is water. The closest source is 2 miles away, and they transport the water by bicycle. To thank us as we left, they gave us enough pineapples from their crop to fill the back of our pickup truck.



As we give thanks this year for the blessings we receive, I ask that you consider sharing your blessings with our friends in Africa. Your generosity will make it possible for families to support themselves and others and live in dignity. With your help, the market in Kenya will continue to grow and the dairy in Uganda will thrive.

Thanksgiving blessings be yours.

Sr. Antoinette Temporiti, CPPS & the Board of Microfinancing Partners in Africa:
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