



Sakila Sponsorship Program

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Dear Sponsors and Supporters,

November 2008

Happy November! This is one of our favorite months, the month of the forgotten holiday, Thanksgiving! We are so thankful for the privilege of serving our God in a land where it's not yet against the law to do so. Our children can't pray in the public schools, but that doesn't stop us from teaching them about the loving God we serve when they are in the nurturing environment of our homes. Thank you for the love you are sharing with the children of Sakila.

Meg and Rich of Poulsbo, Washington, were able to visit their little girl in July of this year:

"We walked quickly through the school property loaded down with gift bags for the Sakila children who were sponsored by friends back in Poulsbo. We were very excited about meeting our little girl, Helena. We'd been there over a week and had wanted to be spending time with her all during our visit. That is not how it's done in Africa, so we were grateful this morning that it was finally happening.

"We had just begun to sponsor Helena in March. I had picked her out of a stack of photographs of the current kindergarten children who were yet to be sponsored that Lorraine had carried with her to the container loading. It was love at first sight. She is a beautiful girl. But what struck me was how sad she looked. My thought was, "I can make her smile." That was my goal on this morning. Rich and I would meet her and make her smile. Those of you who know our family and me know that we are all about smiling.

"It had rained the night before and the grounds were muddy. They had announced that week at church for a list of specific children to come to the Bible school at 9:00 AM on this day, to talk with the Americans. They were told that many would meet their sponsors. The children were not outside the office where we had expected them to be, so we kept walking. We saw a group of children and parents waiting on benches near the parking area for the school. Most were in the uniforms and school shoes that their sponsors had provided for them. They sat quietly, expectantly, beside a family member or a parent of a fellow classmate. Rich and I were the first to arrive. Of course we speak only three phrases in Swahili, and they spoke one or two words of English. So I began asking for Helena Petro. Sadly, she wasn't there. Maybe she will come soon they tried to convey to us without words. I asked for Joshua Jonas, my good friend's little boy. He and his mother were there. Front and center. I brought out his gift bag, showed him the photographs of his sponsors. Took several pictures and gave him his gift from America. His smile came easily.

"Soon the other Americans began showing up, and the director of the school. People were paired up with their children. Such wonder in the young eyes as their gifts were opened, a little glimpse of heaven.

"Helena appeared at the eleventh hour with her lovely mother. She wasn't smiling yet. We gave her the gift bag we'd prepared and with the help of the director we were able to communicate with them both. She sat quietly on one of the benches between Rich and I and looked longingly at the bag. We opened it and showed her what we'd brought, the director interpreted. "This is a shell from the Pacific Ocean. We will learn where that is in school next term..." Rich and I learned some history about her family and



made a date to come and visit them at their home the next day. We learned that they lived just a two-minute walk from where we had been staying the whole time. We managed to coax a smile out her that day with the help of Adele Smith. (Editors note: Adele is Godwin's mother-in-law.)

"The next day we went to the Duka and bought some food, soap and cooking oil to bring to her family. They live with her maternal grandparents, as they don't have the funds to build a house on the parcel of land they own. Her father works in Arusha, and spends very little time in Sakila with them. There are three kids, one from a previous marriage. We noticed wrappers from the candy we'd put in her bag intermingled with the chickens in the yard. She did have the nail polish on her and all of her nails... and was wearing the tiny shoes we'd brought her. She smiled when we walked down the garden path to the house and willingly posed for pictures. We hugged when we said goodbye and thought we might not see her again this side of heaven.

"We got a bonus the next morning. It was Sunday and we all went to church. I looked through the sea of faces, but wasn't able to pick her out of the crowd. After church, we headed back to our quarters to pack, as we were leaving that day. Godwin's girls called after us to come back. There was little Helena, all smiles today. She had on all the jewelry I had given her mother, several pairs of earrings! She was quite the sight. She smiled and hugged Rich and I. What a dear little spirit she is. I'm so grateful that God put that vision in my heart. That little smile was worth a whole lot more than two plane tickets to Africa and \$30 a month. Helena never stopped looking back and waving as her mother took her home that day. A little angel.

"It is now our privilege to pray for Helena every day, that God would cause her to grow and bloom into the flower he has created her to be. Our sponsorships are the water that these little ones need to flourish.

"God has touched our lives throughout this priceless and rewarding experience. Don't ignore the tug at your heartstrings, as it is God's way of letting us know how much these children reach out everyday with hope that we will have faith to reach back."

~ Story by Meg Burkett

Thank you, Meg for a wonderful letter. We're pooling the extra money from the sponsors and supporters again this month for food. It's going to be a lean year for the people of Sakila. Your extra fives and tens will make the difference of whether a child goes to bed hungry or not. They are fed at school but not on weekends or when school is not in session. For every ten dollars you send us, we can send you, at your request, a card of thanks. You can then tuck the card inside an envelope and give it to a neighbor or friend or even the postman, letting them know you gave the gift of food to a child on their behalf.

We thank you so much as we remain in His service together with you.

Gene & Forraine Anderson

The Sakila Sponsorship Program is a certified 501(c)(3) Charity. All donations are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to the Sakila Sponsorship Program (S.S.P.) or pay securely using your credit or debit card by going to www.sakilasponsorship.org and clicking on the 'CONTACT INFO & DONATIONS' button.