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FEBRUARY 2010

ISSUE 7



**Dear Ed,**

This month's eNewsletter focuses on our Adult Education classes. The numbers attending are impressive and are mainly composed of women, even many older women. They study the basics - letters and numbers to begin with. Those few who have had some education are able to progress. So read on to hear the stories of four Adult Education students. Read further to get the great news of a new immunization outreach program.

As always, thanks to our many donors! I hope you can see the impact your support has on the Maasai and others in need in and around Athi River, Kenya.

I hope to return to Kenya in about 4 weeks. My usual length of stay is 5 or 6 months. I can't wait to return!

Pictured is one of our Adult Education classes gathered under a tree.

Gratefully,

*Ed*

## Masai Women Struggle for Education

Currently there are 75 adults in our Adult Education classes! The classes

### In This Issue

**Masai Struggle for Education**

**Immunization**

**Flag of Kenya**

**Lenten Project**

**Friends and Interest Links**

### Lenten Project for Schools & Families

We recently distributed information and a Lenten Project to all schools in the Diocese of Covington. These are the schools with which I worked before coming to Kenya. If you or your school would like a copy of the Lenten Project or a Fact Sheet on our projects and the Masai culture, email us at [ecolina@aol.com](mailto:ecolina@aol.com)

### Donations may be sent to:

Immaculate Heart of Mary  
Mission Fund  
Ed Colina Projects  
5876 Veterans Way  
Burlington, KY 41005

### Kenyan Anthem

#### English Words

O God of all creation,  
Bless this our land and  
nation.  
Justice be our shield and  
defender,  
May we dwell in unity,  
Peace and liberty.  
Plenty be found within our  
borders.

are held in two locations within the nine manyattas (homestead groupings). Our Project Director in Kenya, Albanus Mwololo, interviewed four of the women who have attended our Adult Education classes. These women give us some insight into the hopes and dreams they hold for themselves and for their children. Thanks to all who continue to support these women through our Foundation.

### **Shitok - 15 Years Old**

Shitok was 15 years and in the 7th Grade when she realized that she was pregnant. She says that having a child at this young age was due to peer pressure and poverty that lead her on the sad path of prostitution. With the money Shitok earned, she bought food for her mother, brothers and sisters. Her father had long since abandoned the family when he lost all his cattle and sheep due to the prolonged drought.

Shitok's daughter, Loise, is now seven months old. Shitok has overcome the odds and has returned to school. She would like to be a teacher so that she can empower and build the capacities of other young Masai girls, warning them not to be swayed by peer pressure or surrender to the effects of poverty.

**Shitok's mother** also has newborn child of five months named Saruni. Just like her daughter, Shitok's mother was involved in prostitution in order to place food on the table for her family. She enrolled as a student in the Foundation's Adult Education classes but has recently stopped attending classes so that she can baby-sit the two infants, Loise and Saruni. She wants her daughter to be able to attend classes and realize her dreams in life.

Shitok is thankful to the Foundation for sponsoring all her school fees, books and lunch. She promises not to disappoint those who are helping her. She advises other girls of her age to concentrate on their education since it's the only wealth they can receive from their parents. She shed tears when asked about the challenges which she faces in her life.

She is grateful to all of the people who are helping her achieve her aspirations in life through paying for her fees as well as the fees of her brothers and sisters.

### **Mary-57 Years Old**

Mary is 57 years old. She can't remember when she got married but says it was between the ages of 8-12 years. She says that by the time she could understand anything about herself, she was wife to a man much too old for her and she was pregnant (although she can't remember how it happened!) She wants to study up to the fourth grade.

Her challenges include memory loss and therefore she remembers very little of what the teacher teaches. She wants to be able to identify the vehicles which travel to her ancestral homeland (Kajiado) so that she can return home alone, without being accompanied by one of her grandchildren. Reading vehicle number plates as well as bus route lines will be her greatest pleasure.

She says that although the Foundation has come to intervene late in her life, she is happy in that the teacher and the materials are provided for free. She challenges the young Masai women to come in big numbers and attend adult education classes. She boasts that now she can count 1-10 in English and say A-K without any problem.

### **Maria-17 Years Old**

Let one and all arise  
With hearts both strong  
and true.  
Service be our earnest  
endeavour,  
And our Homeland of  
Kenya,  
Heritage of splendour,  
Firm may we stand to  
defend.

Let all with one accord  
In common bond united,  
Build this our nation  
together,  
And the glory of Kenya,  
The fruit of our labour  
Fill every heart with  
thanksgiving.

### **Kiswahili Words**

Ee Mungu nguvu yetu  
Ilete baraka kwetu  
Haki iwe ngao na mlinzi  
Natukae na udugu  
Amani na uhuru  
Raha tupate na ustawi.

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Maria is 17 years old. She is already mother to three children. She was twelve years old when she was forced to marry. She had never been to school but is now a student in our Adult Education Classes.

She decided to enroll in our Adult Education classes so that she can compensate for what she lost during her childhood. She intends to study up to the fourth grade.

Her biggest challenge is a husband who is not supportive of her schooling and calls it a "waste of time". She is sometimes told to take the goats to the grasslands and therefore ends up missing classes. Though she dislikes this very much, she must remain submissive to her husband.

She wants to know how to read the Bible herself and also wants to be able to keep records of her milk sales. She thanks the Ed Colina Foundation for providing a good teacher, books and pencils. She hopes that the Foundation can reach the other illiterate women in her tribe.

## Ed's **JOURNEY**

If you are looking for a speaker for your school or group, contact Ed at [ecolina@aol.com](mailto:ecolina@aol.com)

I return to Kenya  
March - May 2010



(Pictured clockwise from the top left are Maria, Mary, Shitok, her mother and their babies)

## Medical Screenings and Immunizations Begin



When we began our work in Athi River, we immediately knew that there were serious health concerns facing the Masai, especially the children and pregnant women. We began our search for medical persons who were not only competent to perform health screenings and immunizations but were able to understand the specific challenges of the Masai and able to communicate in the Kimaasai language. Together with the Ministry of Health in the nearby town, our Foundation sponsors monthly visits from a local nurse. A de-worming exercise served 89 children. Measles vaccinations and administering Vitamin A began recently and we reached twenty children under the age of ten months. One challenge we face is obtaining needed medications and vaccines. But we have great hope and are grateful for a strong beginning to our medical programs. (Pictured is one of our Masai children being vaccinated.)

## New Kenyan Flag Unfurled!



A new Kenyan flag and flagpole can be seen in the center of our Esarunto Preschool compound. The school year began in January and our students

now gather each morning for assembly and inspection of their uniforms and cleanliness. Morning announcements and the singing of the Kenyan National Anthem take place daily. (see National Anthem >>)

Journey: The Ed Colina Foundation

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