

KAPASSENI CALLING

AN UPDATE FROM THE KAPASSENI PROJECT COMMITTEE

Issue 6 June 2003



Kapasseni children bring a bucket of water for school breakfast program cooking. They help by collecting water and firewood.

Greetings

We are now settled in St. Catharines, Ontario. Joseph has enjoyed his first year at Concordia Lutheran Seminary. After he is ordained, Joseph wants to work in the Kapasseni area of Mozambique. Perpetua has found a job while she upgrades her skills to work in the healthcare area. We are working on the Kapasseni Project here, making presentations in the community. We will have a fundraising concert with the Kapasseni Choir, made up of our family and other African people of all ages. The concert will be hosted by The Niagara Area Lutheran Choir on Saturday June 14 - 7:00 PM at Grace Lutheran Church, 213 Linwell Road, St. Catharines.

We miss our friends in Victoria very much and look forward to seeing many of you again when we return before leaving for Mozambique on June 26. This year we will be joined by Shivon Robinsong and Ben Fox. There is much the committee wants to accomplish, and we tell you about our plans inside. Our priorities are the growing school and getting the new health centre running.

Once again, thanks to all of the people who have helped Kapasseni so much with their contributions, prayers, and good wishes. You have provided the people with new hope for the future.

- Joseph and Perpetua Alfazema

"No Time Not to Love" **Two Concerts For Kapasseni**

Our major fundraising events of the year will be held at 7:30 PM on Saturday, June 21 and 2:00 PM on Sunday, June 22 at the Alix Goolden Performance Hall (at the corner of Pandora and Quadra downtown). The concerts will feature the Gettin' Higher Choir with The KidPower! Chorus, the Hermes String Quartet, and our special guest and long-time supporter Ann Mortifee. Also performing will be Soundings and Lynda Raino Dance.

The theme of the concert is "songs to heal our world". It will feature original work by Ann Mortifee, Victoria composer Robert Anderson, Don Chambers, and our own GHC Co-Director Denis Donnelly.

Tickets (\$20/\$15) will be on sale at Munro's Books, James Bay Coffee and Books, and Ivy's Books (on Oak Bay Avenue) starting on June 2. Don't miss this fabulous concert! Get your tickets early to avoid disappointment, as they are likely to sell very quickly.

Journey To Kapasseni, 2003

After almost 3 days travelling from Victoria on June 26, we will reach Beira, the nearest city to Kapasseni. There we will meet with the Sofala Province's Director of Education regarding the school, and with the Director of Health, to discuss the new health centre and what the government's responsibilities will be. Other visits will be to the bank and to the company which fixed one of the village wells, as villagers may need some training to maintain the well. We will also do a lot of shopping, for school building supplies, and medical equipment and supplies. Then it will take us 2 days to cover the 400 kilometres of rough roads to Kapasseni. Our main goals are to initiate the addition of a fifth school classroom, and to ensure the health centre gets up and running. We will also talk to villagers about many things. Here are a few examples:

- Perpetua will talk to mothers about encouraging their daughters to stay in school, so they have a better chance to succeed in life.
- We will work with villagers on the agriculture program.
- We will work with the school to expand the breakfast program again, to provide two meals a day. Perpetua will encourage use of a smokeless clay stove.
- We will walk home from school with some students so we have an idea how far they have to walk and see their homes and lifestyle.
- We will talk to Njira, and hear how his speech has improved, how his relationships have improved, how he is doing in school, and what he has to say to Canadians who helped him.
- We will work on organising and preparing the school year end feast – this is one of the biggest events of the year in Kapasseni, when government officials, village chiefs, teachers, parents, and children gather.
- We will meet with village representatives and go through future plans aimed at helping the villagers to become self-supporting.
- We will meet village people to encourage a village arts and crafts industry, for example, basket weaving, pottery, clothing (sewing and mending), beading, musical instruments, metal work and woodcarving.
- We will encourage the health nurse to visit mothers and babies at home and start a nutrition program.

Documenting The Changes

There have been so many changes since the 1999 visit to Kapasseni, the project committee saw a need for a video update to show people what has been accomplished. We have arranged for Ben Fox to go to Kapasseni this year to film. Ben is the talented photographer who filmed the 1999 documentary *Journey To Kapasseni*. We look forward to showing footage later this year. Ben is excited to be going back: *"After my first trip to Kapasseni, I wondered if I would be able to return to the village someday and see for myself the positive change I was sure would follow building the school. Thanks to the Kapasseni Project, that day has arrived, and from what I hear the improvements in daily life so desperately needed by the villagers are becoming a reality as well. I will be returning to Kapasseni this summer with Shivon, Perpetua, and Joseph to gather fresh images of the village, its people, and the remarkable change that has taken place there."*

Kapasseni School Update

In 1998, when the Alfazemas returned to Kapasseni for a visit, they found a people devastated by war and dislocation. The village chief begged Joseph and Perpetua to help, with the first priority being a school, for the children's future. Escola Primaria de Kapasseni was built by the villagers in July 1999, with the help of Joseph, Perpetua, four others from Victoria who travelled to Kapasseni, and hundreds of generous people. The school was funded largely with the proceeds of a benefit concert performed by singer Ann Mortifee and the Gettin' Higher Choir. The first school building was a temporary one-room wooden structure, with 150 children and 30 adults taking classes in shifts, sitting on the dirt floor.

Much progress has been made since then. In 2000, a two-room permanent brick schoolhouse was built, and each year it has been expanded to accommodate growing enrolment. With generous grants, we have added desks and chairs, and last year a sewing program was introduced. The school has become the gathering place for the people and children of Kapasseni, a focal point for the rebuilding of a community.

There are five teachers, four paid by the Mozambican government and one paid by the Kapasseni Project. In February, our contact person reported 313 students enrolled, including 110 in grade one, 80 in grade two, 53 in grade three, 44 in grade four, and 26 in grade five. Since then, enrolment has increased to 345. To accommodate all the students, the school has 7 shifts over morning and afternoons. The curriculum is focused on Portuguese and arithmetic. When they reach grade six, they will begin to study English and other subjects. We are planning to add another classroom and hire a local carpenter to build more desks this summer.

School uniforms are being made right in the village by local tailors. Deborah Gruben, from Victoria, helped to establish a sewing school last summer – using two sewing machines bought with a grant from the Global Village store in Victoria. Mozambican cotton is used to produce the green and yellow uniforms which the students wear with pride. The uniform reflects the colours of the Mozambique flag - green for agriculture and yellow for corn.

School Breakfast Program

The school breakfast program has been highly successful. Two village women prepare large pots of porridge for students as well as for mothers and babies. Each child receives a 12 ounce serving of hot porridge, and sometimes that is the only food they have for the day. A single serving of porridge might not seem like a lot, but having a full stomach for a while really helps the children to learn. This year we want to start providing 2 servings per day. One Canadian dollar provides 25 cups of porridge, so our money goes a long way. We decided to expand the program to give porridge to mothers and babies too when we saw such a need. With frequent food shortages, this nutritional boost is very important for the little infants.



Building labourers working on the new health centre

Health Centre Building Completed

In previous newsletters we discussed the village's urgent need for healthcare. Many children and adults suffer from treatable and preventable ailments, as well as more serious illnesses. There is also a need for health education. We decided to make a health centre a priority, and with the help of funding from several sources we have been able to finance construction as well as supplies.

Following a Sofala Ministry of Health plan, villagers built the facility with a treatment room, examination room, medical room, and a veranda as the waiting room. The Ministry will hire a trained RN, but the wages will be paid by the project. The RN will work with modern medicine as well as traditional medicine and midwives. Furniture, medical equipment, and supplies are now urgently needed. While the Mozambican government will provide primary care medications, it is up to us to provide the rest. It has been recommended that we purchase quality ready-made "health furniture" in Beira. A kerosene refrigerator and sterilizer are needed too.

The Alfazemas plan to transport furniture and equipment to Kapasseni from Beira in July, accompanied by a government inspector and the nurse. **If you are involved with hospitals, doctors, or medical supplies, we would appreciate your help getting donations of equipment and supplies.** We can give you a list of supplies recommended by the Sofala Health Ministry. The Alfazemas will leave Victoria on June 26. For more information, call Doris at 474-5024 (before June 23).

Food Production

In the last newsletter we told you about the widespread hunger caused by drought. Many families had resorted to trapping field rats and mice. Food security is a high priority. Agricultural officers from the program Food for the Hungry have been teaching the villagers better methods of planting, irrigation, and production. In March the villagers planted corn, a staple food for them. Rain fell in April and the corn is growing well. After the April rain, another staple, kidney beans, was sown. The village women have also planted their vegetable gardens with seeds brought by Perpetua last year. We are hoping that the harvest will be plentiful.

Dry Your Tears, Africa

From Shivon Robinsong, GHC Co-Director - There is a powerful song we will be singing in our June concerts – the theme from the film *Amistad*. Sung in the Mende language of West Africa, the song translates: *Dry your tears, Africa, your children are coming home, sing a song of celebration, we're coming home!* Anthropologists tell us that Africans are the common ancestors of all humanity. That may explain why I felt so immediately at home on my first visit to Kapasseni in 1999. Africa, our shared Motherland, is hurting these days. Her children are dying by the millions. Her grief is enormous. She needs our help. While they are starving, we in the west are drowning in affluence. For centuries, the excess of our European/North American lifestyle has been built on the colonization and exploitation of Africans and other people of colour the world over. This summer, I am returning to Kapasseni with Joseph and Perpetua. As I anticipate the journey, I feel the call of my ancestors. My European forebears urge me to do what I can to address this imbalance, to right the injustice. Reaching back to the start of human time, my African ancestors are calling me home.

A Friend In Need

We recently received an email from the Mozambican niece of one of our dear friends, telling us that her mother has tested positive for HIV and that she will die, leaving her four children as orphans. The mother was abandoned by her husband years ago. She does not live in Kapasseni. We want to help. We have been in touch with a top US AIDS specialist, who told us that the mother needs triple antiretroviral therapy. In the US this can cost \$1,000 a month. Generic equivalents are available in Africa for \$400 a year. She may also need treatment for opportunistic infection due to her weakened immune system, and should see an AIDS treating physician in a major city to determine what is going on. Money is required to help pay for medicines and travel costs. We hope that treatment will prolong her life and ease her suffering. If you want to help, please send donations to: **Joseph Alfazema, Redeemer Lutheran Church, 911 Jenkins Avenue, Victoria V9B 2N8** (as this is not part of the Kapasseni Project mandate, tax receipts cannot be issued). Joseph will take funds received before June 26 to Mozambique and arrange for treatment and medications. Funds received after June 26 will be forwarded later. Your prayers would also help.



The Kapasseni village chief stands with the village orphans

Why Wear School Uniforms?

It is the custom in Mozambique for children to wear school uniforms. Initially, we provided T-shirts with the school logo, and these were used as uniforms. Last year, following the wishes of the villagers, we set up a sewing school and helped local tailors to teach villagers to make school uniforms from Mozambican cotton. The children are very proud to wear their uniforms. To understand this, we have to appreciate that much of Mozambican life has been incredibly disrupted for several decades. War, famine, environmental damage, and the impact of the HIV virus have forced millions to abandon their homes, life styles, and their means of subsistence.

The people most affected are poor rural villagers, often the children more than anyone else. In recent years the building of the Kapasseni school has given the villagers hope for a better future, something they can rally behind and become involved in. Little by little, people are returning from their exile as refugees. When children are walking the country paths and see a fellow student, the uniform quickly identifies a common bond, restores a sense of belonging, builds pride, and gives confidence to a shy child. Providing school uniforms has helped villagers to find a sense of pride and community again. And providing employment and non-formal education classes in sewing has also resulted in positive changes.



Children in the school uniform T-shirts last summer

About Mozambique

Mozambique is one of the world's poorest countries, with a rural illiteracy rate of 72% (women 85%), little basic health care, and life expectancy of 46. Mozambique is still rebuilding after a brutal 16 year civil war which left two million landmines. Most of the people in Kapasseni are recently-returned refugees.

More Info - Our 6 newsletters, with more pictures of Kapasseni and info about the remarkable start of this project, can be found at <http://www.kapasseni.org> We also have a brochure and other materials available.

Would you like to receive our next Fall newsletter by email? This would help us to reduce costs – and let you see the photographs in colour! Let us know by emailing us at: kapasseni@becon.org

Kapasseni Project 2003 Budget

PROJECTED FUNDS IN 2003

Balance from 2002	\$ 45,916
Fundraising concert proceeds	15,000
Individual donations	10,000
Sale of book/crafts/cereal	2,000
Other events	3,000
CIDA/Lutheran World Relief grant	<u>28,400</u>
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	\$104,316

PLANNED EXPENDITURES

School	Salaries	\$ 4,875
	Breakfast program	4,000
	Desks	3,000
	School Uniforms	2,000
	Building materials	5,000
	School supplies	3,000
	Maintenance	500
Health Centre	Building and equipment	12,300
	Medicine and first aid supplies	4,300
	Salaries (including RN)	1,793
	Transportation costs	3,600
Mozambican contact persons		1,440
Microcredit loans officer		400
Coordinators' travel		7,000
Agriculture and forestry		1,000
Wells - repairs		3,128
Video production		5,000
Communications		3,000
Banking fees		1,000
Other / Miscellaneous		<u>1,400</u>
Total Planned Expenditures		\$ 67,736
Set aside for 2004		<u>36,580</u>
TOTAL		\$104,316

- CIDA, through Canadian Lutheran World Relief, is providing matching funding of our other revenues, to a maximum of \$25,000 per year.
- A balance of \$45,916 was carried forward from last year. This relates to funds received late in 2002. We have set aside \$36,580 in reserve for 2004, to meet anticipated costs of the health centre.
- The Kapasseni Project is run entirely by volunteers, so administration costs are very low.

We'd Love To Hear From You

You can contact us at 478-6922 (Sylvia Gledhill) or email kapasseni@becon.org Donations can be sent to: Redeemer Lutheran Church ("Kapasseni Project"), 911 Jenkins Avenue, Victoria, V9B 2N8.

We welcome anyone who wants to help in any way!