

To: AAUW Supporters
From: Glenda Price
Subject: St. Clare Girl's School



I have just returned from an absolutely incredible experience in Meru, Kenya and bring you greetings from the girls at St. Clare, Father Riwa, and Bishop Mugambi. My ten day visit to the community at the base of Mt. Kenya was an educational journey, as well as an opportunity for service. As a result of this trip, I can assure you that our

support of this school is a worthy investment in the lives of many deserving young women.

Currently the St. Clare Girl's School consists of two buildings that are both residential spaces and educational facility. Both buildings are two stories in height, with a third level being constructed on each. The enrollment at this time is 350 with an anticipated residency of 500 when the building is complete. For the most part, the girls are orphans, or abandoned by their parents, or in some cases, rescued from marriages to older men. The school is responsible for their total care. All of their needs are met by donations to the school and/or the support of the Catholic Diocese of Meru. The girls come from the streets with nothing. They are provided clothing (two pair of second hand jeans and two white tops), food, housing, and an education. The goal is to assist them in growing to be self-sufficient, responsible members of the community.

I carried two suitcases of items such as tooth brushes, tooth paste, lotion, soap, hair care products, feminine hygiene products, deodorant, and wash cloths. Though I collected items from a variety of sources, they were all presented in the name of the Detroit Community.. The school was grateful for the supplies as these items are either not available or terribly expensive. The girls do not own anything beyond what is given to them for immediate use. They live in dormitory style rooms with a large number of beds per room. They are responsible for maintaining their own clothes and wear them until they no longer fit, or they are simply worn out.

Every contribution that we make to any cause has an impact, however I cannot imagine any program, project, or group where the impact is greater than it has been at St. Clare. My visit touched the community in ways that I would not have anticipated. One of the teachers indicated that one of the girls expressed her amazement at seeing me there. She always thought that all those who do mission work were white. They have never had an African American visitor come to help. If for no other reason, my stay in Meru has been a positive statement for African Americans and Detroit.

On a personal note, I loved the opportunity to engage in conversation with those individuals who attended the leadership workshops that I conducted. They were curious about the U S, wanted to know about who we are and they are anxious to learn. Though poor, they appear resilient, and positive about their future. Everyone walks everywhere. They are thin and tall. Most people speak English (though of the British variety) and they are committed to education. There are schools everywhere. There are also churches everywhere. They were welcoming and invited me to return. I hope to do so some day.