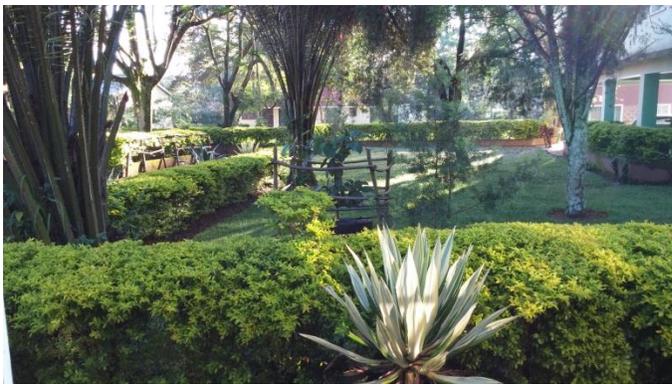


Dec. 26, 2015

Greetings to you all that are reading this letter. I hope that you all had a holiday that included friends/family and perhaps some great times and activities.

This letter will be focused on my settling in to my Kenya home. In addition to a touch of jetlag from 27 hours of travel it takes a bit to open my apartment, get the hot water in the shower, the drain in the shower working, the cooking fuel cylinders full and just generally reconnecting with my life here. I arrived to rain and flooding in Nairobi. As we drove out of the airport my driver said see the giraffes! They looked like large cranes in the distance. I was told they were not moving because of the rain. There were six of them and because of the mist and the distance my entry into Kenya felt somewhat unreal. This feeling receded quickly as we waited in the long lines of cars to get to my hotel. Kenya has a growing middle class which means when able families buy cars. Now that said most of the people I work with are a long ways from middle class.

I arrived home in Sigomere late at night in the rain. When I got up and looked out the window this was my view.



View from my front window in Peter Odera's compound. Peter's legacy lives on. Josephine continues to plant trees such as the one in the small enclosure and the abundance of rain causes everything to grow quickly.

It has rained most days since I came. Rain means short but deluge in quantity. The vast majority of this rains just runs off. Sasa Harambee intends to change that.

Planning with Community Health Volunteers

On January 23rd, I will be joined by Dr. Gretchen Berggren and Dr. Carol Swarts. Gretchen is a fellow Rotarian and has spent her entire life with her husband Warren (deceased) moving around the world impacting the health of primarily women and children. For the last 25 years Gretchen and Warren returned to Haiti. We are now blessed to have her and her friend Carol visiting us for two weeks. While here the team will assist the CHVs in constructing a map of East Uholo that will have every household on the map. This hand drawn map will help to visualize the incidence of different health concerns in a village. As the CHVs already have data on most households they will just need to color each household as to births, deaths, pregnancy, polio immunizations, and cholera outbreaks. The mapping will give us a baseline data. We can add information about our farmers or spring locations and their conditions. This creation of a baseline and registering households will form the platform for further research. Of special

interest is the relationship of agriculture to nutrition to better health outcomes for children and mothers. We have a strong public health coordinator to help us.



Rose Yogo , Public Community Health Officer on the left and Paskalia Shikuku on the right plan the mapping and women’s health activities.

On Tues. we met with 23 Community Health Volunteers. They are excited about the mapping but also readily embraced doing, a woman’s health days in each sublocation. No men allowed. Teaching self breast examination and discussing women’s bodies and the challenges women have in this community are possible topics. Sanitary pads have already come up. Rose and I are going to see if we can foster a small business making reusable pads. Start up funds are needed for this activity. Many women have treadle sewing machines in their homes. They look for opportunities to make money. Second hand clothes flooding the market from America and Europe mean making clothes is out of the question. Uniforms are still a good market but making reusable sanitary napkins might be attractive. We will of course do this through cost sharing with the seamstress. This idea also may be attractive to people living with HIV/AIDs . A common problem for them is low energy for working in fields.

John Omollo and family

Last summer I wrote about John’s growing Cadillac chicken coop. There is much money to be made from raising poultry. We have two hundred farmers in our poultry common interest groups. (CIG) The challenge is to get them all raising 100 birds each. We already have the market for three hundred birds a month. John has moved along on addressing that need. I went to visit John and Jane on Thurs. This is what I found. John with his wife Jane and Mother Rose have become committed to making every part of his two acres work for him. There is a lot of heavy work. But I saw huge strides. Last season the family raised enough maize to feed themselves until next August. That means these two crop cycles they can raise income generating crops and also enrich the family diet. They are raising bananas and paw paws, native greens- cowpeas, moto, suga, night shade, etc. John was in the process of creating raised beds with a rain water runoff system to irrigate. They will raise Kale, suga, green peppers, and tomatoes. With the proceeds from an early crop of greens they have improved the chicken house. He has 25 birds and 3 hens are brooding 30 more eggs.

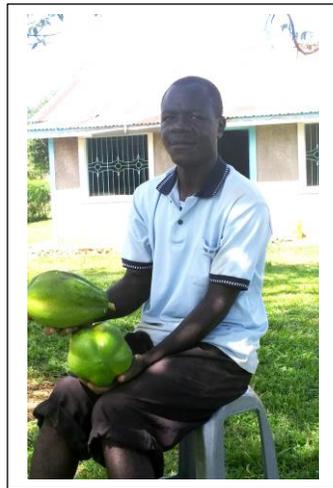


Chicken house will hold 300 birds raised in 4 month cycles. Each sells for 500 ke shillings. Do the math.



Until the chicken house is finished the hens brood in the kitchen and under Roses’s bed. They lay the eggs on her bed. This hen has 10 hens. Note those beautiful traditional pots!

John plans to be one of the first to model an underground cistern to catch the runoff of rain storms. With a small solar pump, a storage tank and piping he will be set to water an acre of irrigated vegetables. Here is Jane with their first banana stems. There are 5 of them. Each brings in 3000 keshillings that is \$30 in USD. I want to also mention that through the generosity of an American donor Jane has successfully finished her certificate in Early Childhood teaching. She was receiving 2000 ke shillings a month. Now she will earn somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 a month as a certified teacher. She is a fine teacher. While the government pays 15000 a month the pay is not consistent. Private schools pay less but consistently. So she is thinking when her results are in that she will go to a private school in the area. She wants to get her diploma (4 year degree) .



I do not enjoy papaya in the US where they are a tiny cousin to these. Picked almost ripe and allowed to sweeten these are truly an amazing dessert.

John has taken on this task of making the farm fully productive. Takes work but he and Jane can make a good life as farmers at home if they work.

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And finally, I want to share my joy in David and Mercy Otieno and their growth. They and their sister came under Sasa Harambee's wing in 2010. Mercy was 10 and David 11. They chose to stay on their land. They have rebuilt the deteriorating home of their mother and David has built his own one room hut. Donors in the US have helped me shoulder the costs of not only tuition but ongoing monthly food, clothing etc. They grow tall and strong. As important, David is 4th in his grade 10 class and Mercy 5th in hers. Their dream is to do well enough to go to University. To support this dream we have been paying for tutoring with great success. Peter tutored them this last term and also taught them math and

Chemistry at school. Great results. They received phones for Christmas and also this is the time of new clothes. Phones mean we can call them.

David, Mercy, Peter and I joined Paskalia Shikuku, Mary (who Sasa Harambee is sending to University where she enters her third year in January and will graduate with a degree in accounting and a CPA) and Julie, now living with Pakalia for Christmas day dinner. Julie at 30 left an abusive marriage, came home with four children and entered our secondary school. She has graduated and has been accepted into University. We are now looking for donors to help with this cost. Dinner was abundant and tasty. Traditional dishes for us all.



Left to right back row: Mercy, Julia, Paskalia, Carol. Front row David and Peter. Mary took the picture.



New clothes! David's first button shirt. How they grow well.



So it was a fun day for me with people I care about. Many of you who read this have been a part of gathering resources for these people. They all prosper as a result of your generosity. There are many ways to give beyond money. Good will and interest also counts. I hope when I write they become real to you. They are



And of course a picture of Mary is appropriate. She earns money by playing volleyball professionally. From a village mud hut she has gone far. Her prospects are bright. One goal is to visit her benefactors in the US when she graduates.