Proper Walk 2012
By Marcia Moore

I have been supporting and reading about the children of Makindu in the newsletter for over 12 years. This past summer, I went to Kenya to be part of Proper Walk 2012. I finally got to meet those children, their guardians and see where the money is going that I have faithfully been donating every year. WOW, what an experience, I loved every second of it.

After leaving the Makindu Children’s Centre, I asked Winnie, “how does one ever feel like they have done enough?” She said that sometimes just giving someone a warm smile or hug can make a difference in a life. I took that to heart on this Proper Walk!

Just thinking about a 10 day journey through the Kenya wilderness is intimidating. Now after actually having made it out alive I can say it was truly an “Adventure for a Cause”!

I started out hearing lions the first night of the Walk - unbelievable because one really couldn’t even hear anything over the heavy rain blistering our tents. “Winnie... Michael... wake up, wake up”, I yelled, “I hear a lion. Michael, wake up, I hear lions...” Michael irritatingly yelled back, “Marcia, go back to sleep, that’s a camel”. Ok, so having woken up the entire camp the first night and then asking the second day if anyone wanted to borrow my tent broom, I was “marked” as a real rookie.

The first day brought us to a village and right away I made friends - walking and holding hands with the children. They seemed unique to me and I was certainly more unique to them. How could a young girl hold 20 pounds of beads around her neck and never remove them? And how did she earn those beads? We didn’t speak, just held hands and smiled.

Then we had to cross a flooded river. Good thing that we crossed before seeing the cattle get swept down river!

About day four I wanted a shower! In fact, I want it so badly that I ended up in a small river with a rather large male audience watching a mzungu woman (in a swimsuit) showering. I didn't panic, well, not until my hair was lathered and ready to be rinsed when a large herd of cattle, sheep and goats crossed the creek just 10 feet up river. “Just keep your mouth closed” was my mantra.

The 9th night of the Walk was a celebration! We were entertained by Turkana dancers, ate very fresh roasted lamb and took a 30 second shower. We went to sleep late that night with the sound of the
The End of the Walk  
Randy McMunn

The tenth day of the Proper Walk 2012 brought our pedestrian group to the shore of Lake Turkana, 150.7 miles from our starting point in the lush highlands of western Kenya. We had descended over 5000 feet into an increasingly arid, hot and windy flatland, void of any user-friendly flora or fauna. The last two days had demanded very careful walking over fist sized boulders likely to twist a foot or roll an ankle. The direct sun warmed us to a toasty 105 degrees but the constant 20 mph wind off the lake evaporated the moisture from our skin as quickly as it formed, creating an illusion that it really was not that hot. We were baking never the less!

We should have been elated to reach our journey’s end, but alas there was an emptiness and an anticlimax matched by the empty bareness that surrounded us.

“What a god-forsaken terrible place this is!” I thought. “We walked 10 days for this? This is it? No great view, no big animals, no celebrating crowd to meet us? This is it?” The conversation continued in my mind. My disappointment spilled out in a similar question to our grand leader, Michael Farley, “What kind of place did you bring us to? This is terrible!”

“Oh you are just saying that because you haven’t been in the lake yet!” Michael smiled back at me.

Still, there was an anticlimax just struggling to be resolved. I was tired, not jubilant about our accomplishment. I was sad it was over but glad I didn’t have to walk anymore! I knew we had reached our goal but we didn’t seem to be anywhere! How could this be a proper ending to a proper walk?

(continue on next page)
Months of planning, training, and dreaming had led to 10 amazing days of making new friends in a foreign environment, traversing very wild parts of Kenya, meeting Kenyan kids and villagers, and making friends with 22 camels! And all it got us was to a windy hot flat desolate space of emptiness! I knew there had to be more to it than this. And slowly the wisdom of my wise friend Michael began to set in.

The walk is pointless! It doesn’t matter where we walk to, or how far we walk, or even if we finish it or not! It doesn’t matter whether we ride the camels or walk behind them and never ride them. It is not the walk that matters to the kids of Makindu. What does matter is the stand I took to help the Makindu Children’s Program. By investing myself in telling my friends and family about the need for the Program and raising the money to make MCP possible and by believing that I could make a difference in the lives of 450 kids, I made the only point necessary! And that is the proper ending to the Proper Walk 2012!

Humbled, I thanked Michael for his friendship and his unfailing support in recruiting me into the walk and I left an empty desert with a heart fulfilled.

Increase in Number of Children Served by MCC
By Winnie Barron

Some of our donors have noted this year that MCC increased their numbers from 450 to 1,200 children! Although this seems like a dramatic change, in actuality it is not.

MCC offers six essential services to the children:
- Medical/health
- Nutrition
- Education
- Psychosocial support
- Protection/shelter/advocacy
- Livelihood support

Previously all MCC children received all six of these benefits, but for the past several years, accessory services have also been extended to additional children in the area. Between 1,200 and 1,500 needy children were able to access at least some of the MCC services. However, many of the children receiving benefits were not in need of all of the services. So, in order to ensure that the provisions were delivered more according to individual needs, MCC decided to formalize the process.

“Tumaini” (pronounced “too-my-enie”) means hope in Swahili, and the concept of hope in Africa is huge. We learned long ago not to make promises that cannot be kept; when people have so little, they tend to hold onto such promises like a lifeline. With this new system, the families can be assured that each child will get their unique needs met.

Thus, the latest restructuring of MCC. Many children still receive all six of the benefits, particularly the younger children who have more immediate and crucial needs. Some of beneficiaries only need assistance in certain areas, and not in others. Now the services provided are form fitted to best fit the needs of each child. While many of the kids still receive all six MCC benefits, all of the other children are now guaranteed to receive at least three of these benefits.

These 1,200 children thank you for your ongoing support, and for helping us to keep that promise of hope (tumaini) alive at MCC.

Asante sana!!!
Walking for the children
By Mandy Cole

What do Brownsville residents Winnie Barron, Paul Baxter, and Quinn Baxter have in common? In addition to sore feet from walking 150 miles in 10 days across the Northwest Frontier District of Kenya, the three trekkers are determined to fulfill their pledges to raise $10,000 each in support of the Makindu Children’s Center in Kenya. The three hikers recently returned from the Proper Walk, a major biannual fundraiser for the Children’s Center, weary and blistered, but thrilled by their adventure of walking along with seven other trekkers, accompanied by 20 pack camels and their handlers. “This is the 6th year the Makindu Children’s Program has hosted the Proper Walk; it’s brought in about $500,000 total over the years in support of the Center in Makindu where we provide medical care, food, safe shelter, and education for over 1200 vulnerable and orphaned children,” says Winnie, founder of the Program back in 1998. “Ten hikers went on the Walk this year and so far we’ve raised $82,000 on our way to our goal of $100,000. We are inviting donations to help us meet our target.”

As they marched across lava fields, through thorny acacia scrub, under a blazing sun, the hikers were motivated by knowing that the Children’s Center is bringing hope to hundreds of AIDS orphans and marginalized children in the Makindu District, Kenya. Nutritious food, medical care, socialization with other children, and an opportunity to go to school are provided, all unthinkable without the assistance of the Makindu Children’s Program. The Proper Walk began in August at the Children’s Center where walkers met the children they are supporting, seeing the facility where children and their guardians are fed each day, playing with youngsters who have hope in an otherwise desperate environment. “The kids and the staff put on a huge feast for us,” says Winnie. “It was good to have had that connection before going on the Walk.”

After a six-hour drive from Children’s Center to the starting point of the Walk, hikers met Amanda Perrett, their guide, her string of 20 camels, and the support crew representing each of the tribal groups along the route toward Lake Turkana. “Amanda grew up handling camels; she is the original camel whisperer. She’s quiet and calm and incredibly tough. She walked the entire 150+ miles in flipflops,” says Winnie. In order to beat the heat, walkers woke up each day at 4:30am, stowed their tents and broke down the campsite. Everything except daypacks with water and snacks for each hiker was carried by the camels. “After a breakfast of porridge, fruit, and camel jerky we were on our way, walking as the sun was rising,” says Winnie. “It gets hot early so we walked ‘til noon, had a break and snacks, then walked ‘til about 3:00 or until we found a good campsite with water and shade. Amanda is a fantastic cook so we always had a good nutritious dinner.”

Although the Walk threaded through what looks like vast wilderness, complete with lions and ostriches, tribal people often accompanied the camel train. “We would have children and villagers sit around and watch us in camp. It was like reality TV for them and they thought we were very strange and funny,” says Winnie. “One night, Turkana tribal dancers gave a demonstration of traditional dances and about 100 villagers accompanied them…we had a great time together.” This is not an easy hike, the heat is exhausting, there is often no trail, hikers pick their ways across volcanic rocks hidden by a vegetative cover of vines seemingly designed to trip you up. Winnie fell and injured her knee and later was bitten by a tick which led to hospitalization and transfusions once back home in Oregon. Paul and Quinn had their share of dehydration and exhaustion. “It’s all worth it when I remember what our Makindu kids endure every day. Going on the Proper Walk to raise money for these vulnerable children is a privilege,” says Winnie. “We are encouraging folks to donate to the Makindu Children’s Program.” For more information on the Makindu Children’s Program and the Proper Walk, go to: makindu.org. It’s easy to make a donation online.
**Have your own Kenyan Adventure**

*Save your Space for this great opportunity today!*

In 2013 we will lead a small team of supporters to **meet with the Children of Makindu**. Additionally participants will have the opportunity to participate in two safaris.

**MASAI MARA:** Have breakfast, then fly to the Masai Mara Game Reserve. Set in the heart of Africa’s Great Plains, the Masai Mara is the portion of the Serengeti ecosystem which lies to the north of the Kenya-Tanzania border. The views across the rolling golden grasslands studded with acacia trees, rivers and forests are unforgettable. The region offers spectacular game viewing all year. Activities include game drives, walking safaris and bush dinners. All meals and overnights at Karen Blixen Camp.

**TSAVO WEST:** Superbly situated in the lee of Mount Kilimanjaro and sheltered by the volcanic splendour of the Chyulu Hills, Kilaguni Serena Lodge overlooks its own water hole, which is visited daily by elephants, buffalos and a wide variety of plains game. One of the first lodges ever to be built in a national park, Kilaguni is cool, tranquil and hushed for optimum game-viewing. It is also ideally placed for visits to all the park’s prime attractions. All the spacious en-suite rooms have their own verandas, some overlooking the waterhole and some with views of the Chyulu Hills, which are one of the world’s youngest volcanic ranges. As for activities, the lodge offers numerous game drives, guided walks, bush breakfasts, volcano climbs and trips to Mzima Springs, a set of crystal-clear ponds fed by the melt waters of Mount Kilimanjaro, in which many hippos can be viewed from a submerged chamber.

The safari group has discounted their normal charges, in order to incorporate an automatic donation of $2000 to MCC for each participant that attends the safari.

For more information: Call Lou 541-729–3707

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**Makindu Success Story**

*Story Compiled by Agnes Koti, program officer*

Charles Musyoki is born fourth of his family of six. His father Charles died in 1996 due to HIV complications. His mother, Redemptor Kathei, who is HIV positive, was left with the responsibility of taking care and bringing up of the children. Musyoki sat for his Kenya Certificate for Primary Education in 2009 and attained 279 marks out of 500. In 2010 he was admitted at Kibwezi Technical Training College and took a course in Motor vehicle Maintenance. African Medical Relief supported his two year training course and Psycho social support during the holidays. Upon completion of his course, Musyoki was fortunate to receive a tool box, which he started his own business with in 2012. He is now working in one of the garages in Makindu and is able to support his HIV positive mother with basic needs and support her with transport to health facility to take her medications. He also supports his siblings with basic needs (personal effects) for his Sister Wayua who is in form one at Ukia Girls. Thanks to the African Medical Relief Fund for coming at such an opportune time for children who needed such kind of support like Musyoki.
Golden Gate Shadow Walk
By Dennis Wininger

We neared the top of the first hill on the Bay Area Ridge Trail, fog prevented us from seeing more than a few yards around us - the wind was at gale force! This wasn’t what I envisioned when we planned our walk to coincide with the Proper Walk. This walk was to be a challenge, but these conditions were more than bargained for - 42 more miles to cover in the next 2 days.

We had just crossed the Golden Gate Bridge an hour earlier - Lou, MCP’s Stateside Executive Director and her husband Russell, plus two 18 year olds, my son Clark, and our friend Sarah. After crossing the iconic bridge, we parted ways with Lou and Russell and hiked 7 miles to the Marin Headlands Hostel, a grand old remnant of this former military base. Fortunately, once we hiked down from the ridge, the winds died down and it became a more tolerable hike. Friends and family bearing wine, cheese and other goodies met us at the hostel for an evening picnic. I shared the news received from Michael on the Proper Walk and pointed out a difference between our Walks – we didn’t have any Tuskers.

The next morning we cooked a hearty breakfast in the hostel’s self help kitchen, loaded our day packs with snacks and water, were re-joined by Lou, and began the day’s hike in the cool gray light of an overcast morning. We walked by the lagoon where we saw sea otters playing in the water and a large blue heron fishing nearby. Following the Miwok trail, a fire road in this part of the park, we hiked straight up the first ridge, with cool temperatures easing the effects of the strenuous ascent.

As we descended into Tennessee Valley, the sun broke through and we had spectacular views of the Bay and the surprising appearance of Marin County towns below. We seemed to be so far from civilization, only to be reminded of our proximity to a densely populated corridor to our east. The next ridge was a long hot climb putting us behind schedule in reaching our next stop - Muir Woods, a National Monument with the most dramatic and most visited grove of coastal redwoods. It was very hot now that we were in open country. We descended to Redwood Creek and followed it to Muir Woods, where we met Russell and enjoyed a delicious late lunch. Our final climb was to Pantoll Campground, a first come, first served tent site where friends had set up our camp the night before. We had now come 27 miles since our first step onto the Golden Gate Bridge – only 18 more to go.

Sunday morning we had a “fat man’s breakfast” as Jasper Evans called eggs, sausage, and bread. Our hike took us through beautiful coastal oak forests with wooden bridges carrying us over small streams that surge during the rainy months. Our path cut through golden grass covered hills before climbing into second growth redwood forests with dazzling green ferns hugging the earth. Pools of water were standing in our path making us wonder if it rained. A passing hiker explained the dense night fog created so much moisture on the trees it produced a rain like drizzle. Soon we found our cut off that took us down to the Lagunitas watershed where we were picked up at our hike’s end. 45 miles in two and a half days, the cool water gave us a chance to soak our raw feet while discussing the beautiful Bay Area scenes we had come through.

It was a great start for a new Walk tradition! Next summer we will offer two walk options to give participants a choice of a fun walk or a challenging hike. Thank you to the donors who have supported the Shadow Walk and the Proper Walk. Please join us for next year’s Bay Area Proper Walk. For more information call Dennis at 415-271-0917 or Lou at 541-729-3707.
LOOKING FOR A GIFT?
Holidays are coming up. So are birthdays, anniversaries, just because someone is special and any other celebration. Why not consider a truly meaningful gift of life, hope and opportunity? Think about making a donation to the children as a gift in honor of your recipient. We will send a gift card to your recipient, in your name, or to you if you wish to deliver it yourself. We must receive your request 2-3 weeks prior to the event.

Ellie Smith

Makindu Success Stories
Martha Dickson is twelve years old and in class three at Kaasuvi primary school. She lives with her step mother and her father who are both HIV positive. She has two sisters and two brothers. (Mwende, step sister Sarah, Masila and Kyende Dickson) She was tested for HIV in 2009 and the results came back positive. Due to social stigma she left school and was not adhering well to drugs. The family was reached and counseled during recruitment exercise which dealt with the social problems associated with HIV at the family level. Martha Dickson was also identified by members of the community to attend stigma and discrimination sensitization meetings in during the school term. Martha received support from psychosocial events and was able to adhere to drugs. Her Community stood by her and gave her support, allowing her to bravely go back to school after two years out of school. Martha is now a happy girl enjoying her childhood rights like any other child in the community. Thanks to African medical relief fund for bringing hope to Martha and her family and other children in similar situations.

Sarah Dickson, Masila Dickson, Mwende Dickson, Martha and Kyende

Martha Dickson seated with her step mother and Community health Worker (Elizabeth Kilonzo) during one of the home visits
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Makindu Children’s Program is a 501(c)(3) organization tax ID#93-1153131 and your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

We need your help to keep the Makindu Children’s Centre in operation. MCC provides food, education, medical care and a place in the community for the Makindu orphans and their guardian families. Your donations help sustain a grassroots organization that is making a positive impact every day. Here are some ways your donations help:

$35 provides food, elementary schooling and medical care for one child for one month.

$50 provides school uniforms and shoes for 10 children.

$100 provides milk for 100 children for one month.

$200 provides bulk food (maize, beans, oil, etc.) for 59 families for four months.

$350 provides a high school education (tuition, boarding, books and supplies) for one student for one year.

Remember, all donations to the Makindu Children’s Program are tax deductible. Please consider becoming a sustaining donor or child sponsor.