

Helping build their future

Women's Ministries project raises funds to educate young girls in Kenya.

by Marium Rudd, Major –

The Western Territorial Women's Ministries Department has extended the 2007-08 "Woman-to-Woman" project into 2009 to continue supporting the education of young girls in Kenya. Last year, the project raised over \$30,000, which paid for educational scholarships for six girls to attend boarding school.

There are more Salvationists in Kenya than in any other country in the world including 400,000 junior and senior soldiers; 1,000 officers; 567 corps and 1,300 outposts. The Salvation Army operates 804 subprimary, primary and secondary schools that offer free education to children ages 6 through 13. However, many children are prevented from experiencing this free education because they cannot afford school uniforms, lunch, personal care items, books and supplies.

Of the 30 million people living in Kenya, 55 percent live below the poverty level most live on 70 Kenyan shillings per day, the equivalent of just over \$1. The cost of educating children in Kenya must be weighed against the very real possibility of starvation.

Due to this poverty, many children are abandoned, orphaned, or put to work at an early age to help sustain family incomes. Handicapped children and young girls are often denied educational opportunities. Many families choose a female child to be groomed for marriage; the girl wears heavy beaded necklaces in hopes of being chosen as a marriage partner. These young women will benefit most from the "Woman-to-Woman" funds as they are allowed to instead complete their education and become self-sufficient.

A grandmother's plea

The grandmother of a young girl named Caro wrote a letter asking for assistance. Caro was abandoned at birth by her mentally ill mother and taken in her grandmother. She is now an outstanding student and it is her grandmothers hope that she will finish her education. The grandmother is now also caring for Caro's invalid mother and two younger brothers. She struggles to keep the family going.



In her letter, Caro's grandmother wrote, "Please put me into your consideration so that Caro might be in a better position in the future in order to take care of her mother and brothers when I am old and I cannot care for them all."

The cost of empowerment

The cost of sending a girl to boarding school for one year is \$800. The girls also require school supplies at the following costs:

Bible \$13.00

Songbook \$3.50

Quality shoes \$15.00

Uniform \$45.00

Pens \$7.50

Dictionary \$15.00

Erasers \$2.50

Ruler \$.75

Pencils \$.75

Geometrical set \$3.00

Toothpaste \$11.50

Shoe polish \$15.00

Primary and secondary school education is something most Americans take for granted, but in Kenya it is a great privilege. It is our prayer that through the education endowment, hope will spread throughout Kenya.