



Beth Swadener
Mark Okello
Jirani sponsored child, Eric
Soula Mitakidou
and Nancy Knoche

Letter From Our Board President

Greetings,

I hope that you have had a good summer and are enjoying the transitions that early fall brings. I returned to Kenya in July for what I came to described as a "packed, productive and powerful" two weeks in the field with Jirani Project Coordinator, Mark Okello. We were joined by volunteer and new Board member, Nancy Knoche from Phoenix and Soula Mitakidou, from Thessaloniki, Greece. We were able to visit all but two of the 19 sponsored children, visit guardian's homes, many schools, workplaces of recent alumni, and travel in western Kenya. Nancy writes more about her impressions this first time in Africa in another story in this newsletter.

One of the highlights of the trip was delivering over 600 donated books for children and youth to Lumakanda, where a small library is being completed within the Jirani Project office! We met with members of the Local Advisory Committee and together planned for both the completion of shelves and tables, as well as logistics of operating a library. We stayed two nights in the home of Mark and his wife Peninnah and family – which is also a group home for 5 of the Jirani children. Peninnah is one of

the unsung heroes of the Jirani family and we arrived on her birthday and were able to bring a cake and sing to her!

We were also able to have group meetings with guardians, follow up with graduates of Jirani Project in their homes and places of work, and bring greetings from YOU.

One of the major reasons for the trip was to make arrangements and try out various activities that we may include in the long-awaited "Rafiki Tour" for friends of Jirani Project, which was postponed to 2013. We are planning to travel there during late July perhaps into early August, when more of our supporters are likely to be able to take some time off. This also coincides with the "great migration" of wildebeests and zebras, so our safari time should be a photographer's dream!

We are excited to announce our **3rd annual Harambee event on Friday, October 19** from 6-8pm, again to be held in Tempe, AZ and Madison, WI.

I want to thank Debria Smith, board member and chair of our communications committee for her exemplary service to Jirani Project, as she leaves the board. I also want to welcome Nancy Knoche to the board; Nancy brings expertise in non-profit development and fundraising and now knows Jirani Project from the ground up after our trip.

In visiting children who are excelling in school, such as Celestine, and those who have graduated and are starting their own families and working to support them, such as John, Elphaz and Lucy, I was moved and reminded of the difference that your caring and generosity make in the lives of ALL our Jirani children!

See you at the Harambee on October 19!

Asante sana!

- Beth





Nancy Knoche and Soula Mitakidou

Kenya 2012

Jirani Supporters Tour Kenya

Jirani Board President, Beth Swadener, led a small group of Jirani supporters on a tour of Kenya in July, which included visits to the Jirani project children in both Nairobi and up country in western Kenya. Ahead of Beth's arrival in Kenya, Jirani Project board member Diane Adams and her husband Bert also visited before moving on to Uganda. Beth had the pleasure of introducing two new Jirani sponsors to our children in Kenya, while introducing them to the country. Mark Okello, the Jirani project coordinator in Kenya hosted both groups and planned a series of visits that allowed Beth, Nancy Knoche and Soula Mitakidou to not only have time with students, parents and guardians in the city of Nairobi, but also visit with Jirani students that are boarded away from home. Beth and her party were also able to get out to see the wonder that is Kenya with a few nights in the national reserves.

The Journey of a Lifetime: Kenya 2012

by Nancy Knoche

Jambo!

This summer, I accompanied Beth Swadener to Kenya to visit Jirani children and their guardians. We traveled over 700 miles through beautiful savannahs, crowded settlements, scenic coffee fields and bustling cities. A friend of Beth's, Soula Mitakidou, who is a professor at Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Greece, joined us in our journey.

I have many wonderful memories of the people and places that made this adventure so magical (and over 1000 pictures in case I forget). Every day was filled with new places

and people; here are three of my favorite highlights of this amazing adventure:

Highlight #1 On the first day, we visited a preschool class taught by Jirani alum Grace. Beth and I entered a classroom of 30 eager, inquisitive and curious three-year old girls and boys as they were learning English words and letters. The small classroom, made of old cardboard and steel sheets, was brightly decorated with handwritten posters of English letters and words. Every young student was engaged in the lesson through spirited chants and dance. Their smiles and happy faces reflected how much fun learning can be!

Thanks to her long-time sponsor, an early childhood professional, Grace's schooling and preschool teacher training was paid for by the Jirani Project. She graduates in December and hopes to own her own preschool/child care center.

Highlight #2 Beth and I were guests for lunch with the Ufanisi Mothers' Self-Help Group, in a slum area west of Nairobi. The group was co-founded by Beth in 1994 and has stayed together while facing challenging life struggles. These talented ladies create and produce the beautiful jewelry, purses and scarves that are sold at our various



Nancy and Beth with donated items for the the Ufanisi Mothers' Self Help Group in Kangemi

Jirani Project events. Beth and I both went into total shopping mode, purchasing unique gifts to bring back. This craft work is their main source of income.

These women have helped raise hundreds of dollars for Jirani through their jewelry and designs. Look for their creations on our website this holiday season!

Highlight #3 Soula, Beth and I traveled up to Lumakanda, six hours north of Nairobi and the home of Jirani Headquarters in Kenya. We brought over 600 books to the new library. We also met with the Jirani Project Local Advisory Committee who support us with their time, leadership and talent. They were truly excited to see that their dream of a local library becoming a reality. Ideas on how to promote the library to local children and their parents were discussed, and community support to build bookshelves, tables and chairs were finalized.

We also took time to go on safari, visit museums and go nightclubbing in Nairobi. I would like to acknowledge Jirani Project Coordinator, Mark Okello who was with us for the entire 15 day adventure. He kept us safe and secure; we were never in a dangerous situation and didn't even have a tire puncture!

I encourage you to participate in the July 2013 Jirani "Rafiki Tour" - it's a memory you will never forget!

Asante Sana!

Nancy





Congratulations, Dr. Peters!

Lacey Peters receives her Ph.D. from Arizona State University and joins the faculty at the CUNY-Hunter College.

The Jirani Project Board of Directors congratulates Dr. Lacey Peters for her recent achievements!

Lacey has been a supporter of the Jirani Project for a number of years, while studying for her doctorate. She received her Ph.D. in early childhood education at Arizona State University. Her dissertation research emphasized children's voice and participation, focusing specifically on the transition to kindergarten

Currently Lacey is a member of the Donor Communications Committee, and enjoys corresponding with the many generous supporters of Jirani Project. She joined Beth Swadener on a trip to Kenya in July 2010. She is very eager to go back and see all the Jirani Project children on the Rafiki Tour in 2013.



2010 - Lacey Peters having fun with Jirani children.

In her new endeavor in New York City, Lacey Peters holds an Assistant Professor position in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Hunter College – City University New York. In addition, Lacey had a fellowship in interdisciplinary early childhood special education and has served as a research assistant in three mixed methodological research projects.

Lacey has worked with preschool aged children in a various capacities, primarily as a classroom teacher. Her time in the classroom raised a number of questions and generated a number of interests used to guide her work in early childhood, and she maintains a strong desire to collaborate with the children, their family members,

along with the professionals who support the learning and enrich the daily experiences of very young people. She is also involved in early childhood teacher education, and is currently working in a program dedicated to preparing teachers for the complexities that arise within today's schools.

She is involved in a number of local organizations in Arizona that support children and families, and promote community involvement. Further, Lacey looks forward to engaging with individuals and groups involved in community and family-based advocacy work in New York City.

Friday October 19, 2012

HARAMBEE
for
The **JIRANI**
Project

Phoenix • Madison

6:00 - 8:00 PM

Visit <http://jiraniproject.org/events.html> for more information.

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Mark Okello

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Become a regular Jirani Donor and help us help a child in need!

New and sustaining donors are the lifeline of the Jirani Project. A little can go a long way and becoming a Jirani donor can enhance the life of a child or family in need in enormous ways.

Giving levels have been established to recognize Jirani Project donors for their annual support. Donations are needed at all levels to strengthen the base of support for all Jirani children.

The levels of giving are:

Rafiki (friend)	Mdhamana (sponsor)	Akida (leader)	Kikombe Jaa (full cup)
\$25 - \$399	\$400 - \$999	\$1,000 - \$4,999	\$5,000 +

Monthly Donations Now Accepted Online!



A Monthly Giving payment option is now available online!
For more information, please visit:

<http://jiraniproject.org/donate.html>

The JIRANI Project

The Jirani Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and all donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Your gift of any amount will be received with gratitude - *Asante sana!*

We help a few kids in Kenya...



You can too!

[Donate](#)

Jirani Project Announces Legacy Giving Program

Please consider including the Jirani Project in your estate plans. Gifts can be in many forms, including a simple bequest in a will, charitable trust, life insurance or IRA beneficiary.

Through this commitment, you will help ensure that the Jirani Project will continue to support and educate future generations of vulnerable Kenyan children so they can become caring, confident and contributing citizens of their country and our world. Your thoughtful and generous gift will also deepen the friendships and international bonds between our children, their guardians and Jirani supporters.

Naming the Jirani Project as the beneficiary of your life insurance policy or IRA can be done by listing it on the appropriate lines in the policy statements. For gifts given through a will or trust, please talk with your attorney. For any estate planning changes or additions, please consult with your financial advisor and legal advisor. The Jirani Project is a licensed 501(c)3 nonprofit registered in the state of Arizona,

Your legacy will shine through the smiles, laughter and achievements of Kenyan children for years to come!