

UMOJA ORPHANAGE KENYA

<http://www.umojahome.com>

Registered charity number CH2110



This month's newsletter

- 11 weeks in Kenya
- What has been achieved
- What is happening now
- What's ahead in the near future

Right: Location of Umoja land . 1 hour 's drive south of Mombasa. The land is surrounded by local villages and is close to the resort town of Diani Beach, which attracts thousands of tourists each year. A potential source of income and volunteers .

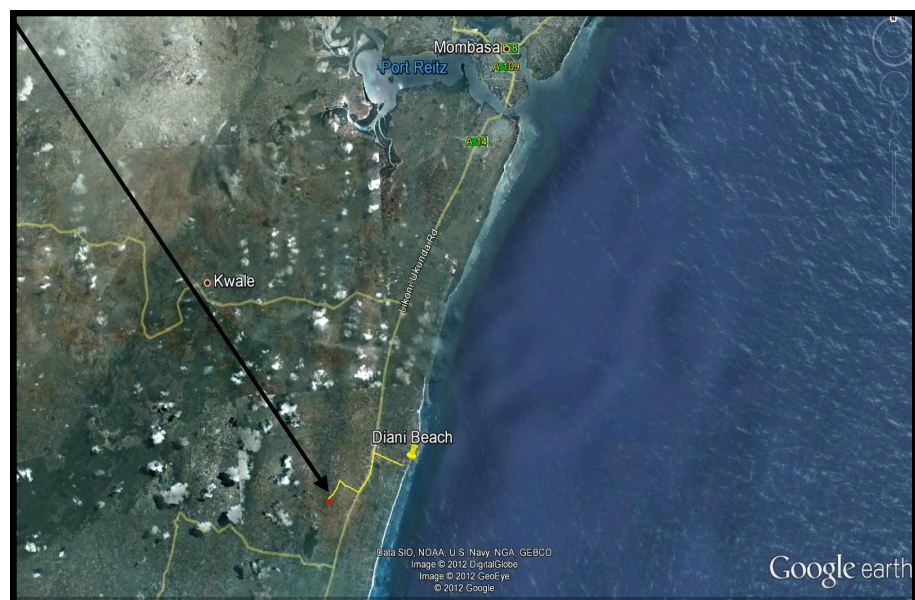
THE LAND HAS BEEN PURCHASED!

Exciting news! We have purchased a block of land outside Ukunda Village, Kenya. After negotiating with this lovely family (right) Umoja is one step closer to becoming an orphanage. The 17 acres of fertile land is only 10 minutes from the tourist hub of Diani Beach. It was only the second plot we looked at and ticked all the boxes required. The land is close to a village school, has water and access to electricity, as well as being approximately 3km down the road from a university campus that is under construction. The land has an abundance of cashew nut, avocado, coconut



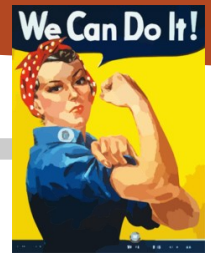
Lesley Bath, Vendor family, Cathy Booth

and mango trees plus a cassava crop. We looked at and negotiated a price on February 29th and on 1st March we signed the contract at the lawyer's office. Business is conducted a little differently in Africa but with the help of an interpreter we managed. The owners were illiterate and signed with a thumb print dipped in ink. Quite an experience!





11 WEEKS IN KENYA



I left Australia early in January, just after my father's death and my son's wedding. All this within three days of each other! It was with mixed emotions that I set off to volunteer once again at an orphanage, teach, purchase suitable land, set up a Non-Government Organisation and to also request permission of the Children's Department to build the orphanage where it was needed. Please read my blogs from the time in Kenya to find out more.

<http://blog.travelpod.com/travel-blog/boothy58/3/tpod.html>

In short:

- ◆ Spent 7 weeks volunteering at 'Footprint's Orphanage', Shimba Hills (my second visit)
- ◆ Taught once again at the local school and at the orphanage where I was mentored in the procedures of running an orphanage
- ◆ Accompanied Footprint's Orphanage owner to assess orphans in dire circumstances
- ◆ Visited 'Kikambala Children's Feeding Station' north of Mombasa
- ◆ Searched for land
- ◆ Visited Kenyan Children's Department in Kwale and met with delegates. Received confirmation I could start an orphanage in the Ukunda / Diani Beach area
- ◆ Purchased 17 acres of land
- ◆ Liaised over several weeks with Diani Beach Rotary president, attended Rotary meetings and was ecstatic when Diani Beach Rotary signed to be partner with Umoja Orphanage Project
- ◆ Set up a Non-Government Organisation in Kenya where the charity is being registered as **"Umoja Children's Village—Ukunda"**
- ◆ Volunteered at and was mentored by, owners of the professionally run, successful 'Goodlife Orphanage', Mtwapa. This included daily running of orphanage, staffing, budgeting, forward planning, building planning and approval process, pitfalls, learning curves and more.
- ◆ Visited several other orphanages in and around Diani Beach / Ukunda area to see what was working well and what could be improved upon.
- ◆ Took an eleven hour road trip (the worst roads I've EVER, EVER been on) to visit and stay at 'The School of St. Jude,' Arusha, Tanzania. We wanted to see first hand how Australian Rotary protégée, Gemma Sisia, had established her now famous school. Attended an hour and half meeting with Kim Seville who offered Umoja every assistance and advice we may require. The school and team of people supporting Gemma and Kim is nothing short of incredible!
- ◆ Had my good teaching friend, Lesley Bath, join with me to also volunteer at the orphanages and to bounce ideas off each other. We also took time out to go on a wonderful 6 day safari. (If you ever need a Safari Company/driver contact me. We had a fabulous experience.)
- ◆ Hired an architect to visit Umoja land and draw a site plan containing all the elements of our ultimate vision for the project. He was recommended by Kevin at 'The Goodlife orphanage'
- ◆ Became immersed in Kenyan culture to better understand cultural differences / similarities.



11 WEEKS IN KENYA CONTINUED

So in a nutshell, we were very busy and hot in Kenya where the unwavering Kenyan heat was relentless to say the least. Experiencing amazing/heartbreaking things, fact finding, being mentored and having such invaluable advice from people who already established orphanages and schools, has been both inspirational and invaluable to the Umoja Project.

The original idea of an orphanage and self-sustainable gardens, together with a safari business generating income directly back into the orphanage project, grew and grew. It became apparent we could not establish an orphanage without forward planning for a school, teenage transition house, and eventually a secondary school. We took to heart the African proverb, "It takes a whole village to raise a child," so we have planned a whole village to raise the whole child; spiritually, physically, mentally and emotionally. Surrounded by rural peacefulness in a tropical forest we plan for children and staff to feel at one with each other their surroundings and to get a second chance at a successful life.





WHAT ELSE HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- ♦ The partnership now signed between **Bundaberg East Rotary Club Australia** and **Diani Beach Rotary Club Kenya**. Welcome aboard Diani Beach Rotary members and thank you.
- ♦ RAWCS INTERNATIONAL (Rotary Australia World Wide Community Service) has registered Umoja Orphanage Kenya Project as a project of theirs. **Registered Project Number 51 2011-2012** <http://rawcs.com.au/ProjectSearchResults.php>
- ♦ Tax Deductibility now available with the RAWCS Registration. Any donation/sponsorship over \$2.00 is tax deductible in Australia.
- ♦ Interview aired on Channel 7, Good Friday 2012, about Umoja project
- ♦ Our first 2 volunteers from Boulder, Colorado, USA, arrive Ukunda on the 27th May to begin a 6 week stint helping build the fence around our 12 acre block. How amazing is it that already we have volunteers arriving to help us. We have never even met these 2 fantastic young men! Thank you so much Valerie Thwing (team member) in Washington, DC, who kindly organised the guys to help us. We don't have accommodation for them on site, however they will be well looked after and accommodated in Diani Beach by our Project Manager in Ukunda, Patrick Kea.
- ♦ We have received a magnificent donation from well known local and international business, **Bundaberg Brewed Drinks**. Thank you so much management. *No act of kindness or support will ever be forgotten.* You are now part of the Umoja Children's Village and you will be recognised on site for your tremendous faith in us. <http://www.bundaberg.com/>
- ♦ Meryl Heidke, our talented needlewoman, is now up to making single bed quilts. She has done an absolutely beautiful job so far of making baby cot quilts. We DO NEED donations of material, old quilted bedspreads or wadding for her to use as filling in the quilts. Also needed, zips, and material suitable for children's clothing. Please get in touch with us by phone/ website if you can assist Meryl in this work or with materials.
- ♦ Raised over \$2000 from the Umoja's Charity Golf Day, at Coral Cove Golf Club. Thanks to all those who helped and supported Umoja on the day. This was a terrific effort!
- ♦ Wonderful donation from Bundaberg "Inner Wheel Club". What a lovely bunch of ladies to share a scrumptious morning tea with.



So.. "Together 'We ARE' achieving the Extraordinary" and the charity is only 9 months old!



WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW & IN THE NEAR FUTURE?



- ◆ **Connie Maloney "Connie on Canvas"**
connieoncanvas.com.au painted and donated 'Tabu' for Umoja to raffle. Tickets \$2.00 or 6 for \$10.00. The hauntingly, beautiful **"TABU"** (pronounced TAH-BU in Kiswahili and meaning, long time suffering) depicts the sadness I see in the eyes of orphaned children in Kenya. Connie, thank you so very much for your talented support. Tickets available on website.
- ◆ **Jenny Dawes—Gold Coast Artist** is currently painting a piece of her magnificent artwork and donating it to be auctioned as a fundraiser for Umoja. (Right) Jenny and I at her recent exhibition. Thank you Jenny!
- ◆ As a result of our interview on Channel 7, we have received more offers of help from individuals in Cairns and Townsville to "Raise the Roof" for Umoja.
- ◆ **David & Emma Hannah from Colonial Rose Motel** in Townsville are planning a huge Charity Golf Day within the next 2 months. Thank you David and Emma for your ongoing support and your cash donation as well <http://www.colonialrosemotel.com/>
- ◆ **Orphan Sponsorship:** Be the first to sponsor one of our future children. No money upfront. \$1100 per year, min 2 year sponsorship. Payment begins when our first house is completed (approx. one year's time) Contact Cathy.
- ◆ **Stage 1** completed; Purchase of land and legal fees paid
- ◆ **Stage 2** quotes for perimeter fence etc being sourced by Patrick, in Ukunda. Build starts May. See brochure details.
- ◆ **Stage 3** buildings currently in design and quotation stage
- ◆ Visit our **Marketing Stall** at Regional Rotary Convention in Bundaberg on 20-22 April. See our exciting developments.
- ◆ **Cathy** spoke at Rotary Clubs in Melbourne and Bundaberg. Guest speaker at Inner Wheel Club in April. **Please invite me to speak at your meeting or function, I'd love to!**

