

## February 9, 2009 E-Connections

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### Kenya—One Year Later Joy Remains Hidden in Compassion

*Joy is hidden in compassion. The word compassion literally means "to suffer with." It seems quite unlikely that suffering with another person would bring joy. Yet being with a person in pain, offering simple presence to someone in despair, sharing with a friend times of confusion and uncertainty ... such experiences can bring us deep joy. Not happiness, not excitement, not great satisfaction, but the quiet joy of being there for someone else and living in deep solidarity with our brothers and sisters in this human family. Often this is a solidarity in weakness, in brokenness, in woundedness, but it leads us to the center of joy, which is sharing our humanity with others.*

*- Henri Nouwen*

Dear Friends,

During our most recent Immersion Experience to Kenya with a delegation from the College of the Holy Cross (MA, USA), we were fortunate to visit with our Project Partners and receive updates on their initiatives, especially in light of the enormous challenges of this past year. We uncovered and experienced unending joy in their compassion and commitment alongside the people of Kenya.

The physical evidence of the tragedy that took place last year throughout Kenya is not glaring, but quiet reminders still exist for those who knew the country and the people. As we walked through the Dandora slum we saw empty spaces where women's vegetable stands once stood. IPM had funded many of these stands as income generating activities for these women. On one cool evening we drove through another bustling neighborhood in Nairobi, as our colleague, Jared Odhiambo, described to us the fires that had ripped through his neighborhood's streets only a year ago. It was difficult to imagine these crowded streets, which were now bustling with their eager vendors and market stands, empty and abandoned as residents fled the area to escape ethnic, political, and sexual violence. On our drive across the Central Highlands to visit our Project Partners, we saw large fields where internally displaced persons had fled during the height of the violence. A few hundred scattered, make-shift tents on these fields revealed the remnants of this displacement.



*Jared Odhiambo, IPM Logistics Coordinator for Sub-Saharan Africa, with his daughter, Sylvia, on the January 2009 Immersion Experience in Kenya*



*Joe Cistone, IPM Executive Director, with Joyce, a child at the Villa Teag Orphanage, during a January 2006 Immersion Experience in Kenya*

I visited with Francisca, the sister of the late Melitus Mugabe Were, my old friend and Kenyan politician who was murdered last year during the post-election violence. Francisca shared updates from this most challenging year, as she and her family still try to make sense of the untimely death of their brother and community leader. *Villa Teag Orphanage*, founded by Were in honor of his mother, is still undergoing restructuring as the community continues to organize under new leadership. I was deeply moved to see once again children who I have watched grow old before my very eyes these past few years. *The Dandora Women's Forum*, another IPM Project Were had championed before his death, has risen to the challenges posed this year and was able to host our delegation and share with us about their work and showcase some of their handcrafts and jewelry, (samples of which will be available for purchase at [Namaste! on March 6<sup>th</sup> in Cleveland](#)).

Remarkably, during our days in Kenya, I felt the same joy that I have felt since the first time I stepped off a plane in Nairobi. The spirit of hope, unity, and perseverance present among so many of our Project Partners is inspirational indeed, but so is the profound sense of joy that comes from being with a friend in times of confusion and suffering and offering simple presence to a Partner who in many ways remains lost in despair.

In spite of the obstacles Kenya and our Kenyan Partners have experienced over the past year—including the tragic fires of the past month in Nairobi and Molo—our Partners continue to dream of ways to improve their communities and continue to devise plans to make their dreams reality. Plans include everything from a new pre-school building at the *Kandula Village Project*, to the expansion of the *Unyolo Village Improvement Project (UVIP)* services, to the increased enrollment of new students at the *Bride Rescue Project*.

In this still new year, may we walk with them in the deep solidarity of our human family, and not only come to know them as our brothers and sisters but, in so many ways, as compassion for us and joy for our hurting world.

Peace,

Joseph F. Cistone  
February 9, 2009

To learn more about the recent tragic fires in Kenya, [click here for an article on the Nairobi store fire](#), [here for an article on the oil tanker fire](#), and [here for IPM's recent Faith Connections about the fires](#).

To donate to IPM's Project Partners in Kenya, [click here](#).

Connect with [Joe Cistone](#) and [IPM](#) on Facebook by visiting [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), or clicking the links above.

**Save the Date for Namaste!**

On Friday, March 6, 2009, IPM's Annual *Namaste!* celebration will take place from 6-10 p.m. at Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland. This is the 7<sup>th</sup> year that IPM has hosted this event, which benefits the programs and ongoing mission of IPM. The event features wonderful food and wine, handcrafts, music, and a silent auction. Live entertainment will feature Sogbety Diamande, Ryann Guitar Anderson, Nigana Fayola, and many more. We will have a delicious buffet of international hors d'oeuvres, and an open wine bar is being provided by Trader Joe's-East.

This event is a great opportunity to learn more about IPM's Immersion Experience Program and international Project Partners, while networking with corporate, philanthropic, and community leaders from Northeast Ohio. Tickets are \$50 for individuals, with a special **student price of \$10 with a current university ID**. For more information, or to reserve tickets for the event, contact the IPM office at +1.216.932.4082.

### **Connections available online!**

Go to <http://ipmconnect.org/publications/connections/91/> to view our most recent print issue of *Connections* online. Inside, read highlights from several of our Project Partners working with Youth around the world, letters from local students, and updates on our events of 2008.

### **Support International Debt Relief**

As a new administration begins in the USA, join Jubilee USA in speaking up on behalf of the world's most impoverished and vulnerable citizens. Through Jubilee USA's "What's on your Heart?" campaign, concerned citizens throughout the country are writing letters, post cards, and emails to communicate their concerns and hopes with Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner. Read more about the campaign, and submit a message of your own by **\*\*clicking here\*\*** <http://www.jubileeusa.org/heartcampaign/aboutyourheart.html> The primary issues of the campaign include international debt relief and responsible lending.

### **Upcoming Immersion Experience Programs!**

Join us in 2009 on one of our open Immersion Experience Programs, listed below, or consider organizing a group of your own! Contact Laurie Rodney at [lrodney@ipmconnect.org](mailto:lrodney@ipmconnect.org) or +1.216.702.2514 for more information.

*KENYA: July 5-15*

with IPM Executive Director, Joe Cistone, and Regional Staff

*EL SALVADOR "Educate the Educators": July 18-25*

with Laurie Rodney and Regional Staff

*WYOMING: August 7-11*

with IPM Board Members, Chris Henry and Caroline Mills

*NICARAGUA "Holiday with a Conscience": October 10-17*

with IPM Executive Director, Joe Cistone, and Regional Staff

*INDIA: November 12-22*

with IPM Executive Director, Joe Cistone, and Mahesh Updadhaya

*ITALY: December 28-January 5, 2010*

with IPM Executive Director, Joe Cistone

### **Check out IPM Videos on YouTube**

Find IPM's growing collection of videos from our Immersion Experiences and Project Partners online at <http://www.youtube.com/ipmvideos>. On this site, you can view and rate IPM's videos. You can also subscribe to IPM's Channel to be automatically updated every time we add new video. Visit our YouTube site today to view videos from El Salvador, India, Kenya, and Tanzania, and "stay tuned" for more!

### **Facebook**

Go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/International-Partners-in-Mission/15162862167> to become a "fan" of IPM on Facebook and be the first to see pictures and video of recent Immersion Experiences. Also connect with other friends of IPM from around the world on our wall and discussion board.

Setting up an account is easy if you don't yet have one. Simply go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) to create a profile and account so you can connect with IPM.

### **Goodsearch**

Use [www.goodshop.com](http://www.goodshop.com) for all of your online shopping, and IPM will receive a portion of the profits *at no additional cost to you!* Stores like Amazon.com, Toys R Us, Target, Zappos, and many more offer a portion of proceeds to the non-profit of your choice. Simply type "International Partners in Mission" under "Who do you Goodshop for?" and IPM will receive up to 30% of the proceeds from your online purchases.

As always, bookmark [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) as your search engine, and IPM will earn money with every search. Enter "International Partners in Mission" under "Who do you Goodsearch for?" and IPM will receive a donation for every search performed.