

## Call to Mission

By Barb Andrews

Looking back on my past, I can see the path that led me to my first and very important mission trip to Kitui, Kenya. I have just returned and feel transformed by my experiences. I now look at my life and make decisions in a different way. What were the life experiences that God provided to bring me to this point?

When I was in Catholic grade school in 7th Grade, our nuns encouraged us to support poor children in Africa. I had no job and money was very tight in our household of 7 children. Mom paid me \$5 per basket to iron my

dad's shirts, pants, and all my brother's clothes. It took forever to earn the \$25 I wanted to donate to Africa. I wrote to the group who collected the donated money and received a letter back from a nun in Africa saying how much they appreciated the support and how it helped.

I had a roommate in college who was from Africa. She was tall and beautiful and had such a loving, generous spirit. I grew



up in a small city in Wisconsin and had never even seen an African-American except in the media. I had learned from my parents that it didn't matter what an individual's color, religion or race was and that I needed to treat everyone equally because we were all members of God's family. Ever since that time, I have had a calling to go to Africa.

But as dreams are often interrupted by life, I got married, had a family and career.

Encouraging a missionary spirit when one is young is an important way to build a foundation for the future. Schools can be an important resource for teaching students to reach out to the needs of the local and global community. Serving others can become a lifestyle for students in any school. Perhaps begin-

ning a pen-pal program with others would be important for personal connection. Hearing from the people in Africa was important for me. Contact was invaluable.

Parents are also an important role model encouraging children to reach out beyond themselves and attend to those in need. It doesn't have to be a foreign mission either. Just bringing your children along to work at Habitat for Humanity and other giving opportunities instill this sense of mission.

It became my turn to fulfill my dream and in September 2009, I traveled to Kitui, Kenya for two weeks. It was an amazing experience and I have my school and parents to thank for planting a seed that sprouted.

Trips being planned through our office for 2010:

### Trip Immersion information

Parish Leadership team - El Salvador. Contact Kathryn Runman-Zimney at 651-291-4446.

Youth Immersion trip - Red Lake Reservation. Contact Mike Haasl at 651-291-4504.

GATE (Global Awareness Through Experience) sponsored trips: Guatemala - March 25 - April 4, 2010. Mexico-Oaxaca - Jan. 30-Feb. 7, 2010. Information: [www.gate-travel.org](http://www.gate-travel.org)

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Spring 2009

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Lew Grobe

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Spring 2009 Stories of sharing and discovery from people in global communion



## Mission in Tanzania: Learning the Good Life

By Lew Grobe

When I went to Tanzania, I anticipated being immersed in a very foreign land and culture. And while I noticed that our social, political, and economic tendencies couldn't be more different, I came to see how very similar we really were as people. The Tanzanian villagers and I shared our humanness: we shared similar pains and emotions in our daily experiences. This discovery helped me gain a better sense of self, community, and humanity from a global perspective. It enabled me to realize what is really important and to live my life accordingly.

Hanga village, located in the remote bush of southwest Tanzania, is home to more than 7,000 people, 1200 of which are students at one of the four schools supported and run by the African Benedictines. I was sent to Hanga Abbey to teach at one of the schools supported by the St. John's Benedictine Corps and the Center for Mission.

My work involved teaching



English to first year students at St. Benedict's Secondary School. My class had about 150 students (ages 14-43) in a 25' by 25' room. There were 5-6 students packed at each desk. The students did not have books, handouts, or electricity but were intensely curious and eager to learn. When the rain pounded on the tin roof and flooded into the room, the students were still engaged in their lessons.

The immense effort for these students to attend class at all was in itself astonishing. They awoke at 5:00 am to prepare food and water getting to school by 7:00 am. They attended class until 2:00 pm and would return home for lunch arriving back at school for private study until 7:00 pm. Then back home again



for dinner and studying until 11:00 pm.

I was saddened to learn that many of my students would not return after their first year because they could not afford the school fees. The tuition of \$350 per year was enormous for students where the per capita income was \$320 per year. In an attempt to help, I began "Phoenix Rising" - a cross-country bike trip, to raise a \$25,000 scholarship endowment that would enable Hanga students to complete their secondary education. So far, this has been very successful.

While the Tanzanians in Hanga were incredibly poor, I encountered their happiness, joy, and overall zest for life even with their many hardships. They praised God for the very little that they had been given. I discovered more and more about what is really important and am determined to live my life according to the values formed through my Hanga experience.

Lew Grobe is currently discerning entering the St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, MN. You can learn more about his bike trip and the Phoenix Rising Endowment at his website [www.hangaabbey.org/index\\_files/rising.htm](http://www.hangaabbey.org/index_files/rising.htm).



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