

# Mozambique Connection Volunteer in Mission Team

## October 2009

The New York Annual Conference/Mozambique Sister Conferences Connection was represented during the October 2009 trip to Biera and Lichinga Mozambique by three veteran VIMs: Martha Nelson, John Olszewski and Annette Griffith.

### **Why go to Mozambique?**

The first time any of us went to Mozambique as Volunteers in Mission was an exciting and life changing experience. We met our brothers and sisters in one of the poorest countries in the world, and felt a close bond as United Methodists from one side of the globe to another. Seeing the joyous spirituality of our hosts, and how much we could be a part of the growth of our church in Africa, gave us the inspiration to come home and want to share the good news with everyone we could. Along with many more members of the Mozambique Connection, we raised funds for the projects that our Mozambican friends identified as vital to the health of the community and growth of the church.

### **Why go back to Mozambique?**

Many have asked me, "You have been several times to Mozambique. Why is it important for you to return? Why don't you just send money?"

In the words of Greg Forrester, Northeast Jurisdiction Volunteer in Mission Coordinator, "The Project is not the project. The people are the project."

We return in person because the relationship with our brothers and sisters is the real project and we develop that relationship as we work together to build God's kingdom through the projects we identify each year.

The main projects for 2009 included:

1. The Bishop's Residence and Conference Center building.
2. Scholarships to develop tomorrow's leaders.
3. The Lichinga Farm Project.
4. The computer internet center project
5. The English School.
6. A student art exchange.
7. Dolls, solar ovens and dressmaking.

Some of the goals for the United Methodist Church in Mozambique set by Bishop Nhanala include:

1. Developing leadership
2. New places for new people
3. Self-sustainability
4. Inter-conference communication and cooperation

## 5. Financial transparency

Because we had a small VIM team this year we were able to spend time one on one with the leaders in the North Conference to discuss the progress of our goals and make plans for the future. Having have been to Mozambique several times, we were able to do more than we were the first or even second trip to the country. We now have a relationship with the leadership of the North Conference and can more easily work within the system to coordinate between our friends in Mozambique and those in the United States.

### **The Bishop's Residence and Conference Center**

We were delighted to come to Mozambique to see what was happening after two major contributions for the Bishop's residence/conference center were given this year: \$10,000 by the Bishop Partner's in Mission fund and \$10,000 by the Connecticut District. Additional contributions were also important to construction progress. While in Beira, we observed the addition of stairways to the interior of the building, window frames and doors, electrical work, and plumbing. About \$20,000 is still needed to complete the building but we have confidence that with God's help the building will be dedicated at our next visit.

The completed building will enable the bishop to meet with the cabinet more often to plan for the growth of the church in the North Conference. District Superintendents often need to travel for several days to reach Beira. Having a place to stay that includes the ability to serve meals and has meeting facilities will greatly enhance the cabinet's ability to function.

The building will also serve as a guest house for members of the church and others so that funds can be raised for the church and give employment to community members.



Beira Parsonage/Conference Center



Carpenter at work on the Parsonage/Conference Center

## **The Lichinga Farm Project**

Four years ago, Bishop Partners in Mission funds were used to begin a community farm project that would teach best agricultural practices, raise food for the community and help fund the Lichinga church. The plan was for this project to serve as a model for other United Methodist Churches to help support pastors so that churches could be self-sustaining. There were some initial problems with the project, but what we saw this year gave us great hope that our goals will soon be met. District Superintendent Graca is firmly behind the project and took us on a tour of the farm.

Although wild pigs dug up crops last year, there will be guards hired this year to be on site 24 hours a day to make sure this does not happen again. Banana trees have already been planted and church members will soon plant beans and corn. With the funds raised from these crops, a pig pen will be constructed and farm pigs purchased.



Lichinga Farm Project Worker



Lichinga Farm Project

## **Scholarships**

The Mozambique/NYAC Connection currently supports seven scholarship students. During the 2009 trip we were able to meet with Rev. Filimao Vilanculo, the Director of Education for the North Conference, to discuss improved application procedures, communication between students and their sponsors, and to expand the scholarship program to include other areas of the North Conference. A committee led by Rev. Vilanculo prioritizes scholarship applications based on leadership potential and service to the church both before and after graduation.

We are proud to be able to support Rev. Julio Vilanculos, who was identified as one of three leaders to pursue a doctorate degree, so that the Bible School in Cambine can eventually become an accredited university. Pastors will then be able to receive their theological training within Mozambique and not need to go to more expensive Africa University to become elders in our denomination.

Other students, both male and female, are pursuing degrees that include administration, agriculture, environmental studies and economics. We are always looking for ways in increase the number of students we can support.



Pierina – Scholarship Student

## **The English School**

Three years ago, one of our young VIMS - Katie Brunkhorst, was inspired by Mozambican youth who wanted to teach fellow Mozambicans English. They began a

Saturday school, which under Katie and her father's leadership, is now supported in part by finances from the Warwick, New York congregation. The stipends that these teachers earn are applied to their college costs. We observed the teachers in action and were glad to be able to report on the success of the program. Martha Nelson brought new English as a second language materials for them to consider and John Olszewski used some of the funds donated by his friends to purchase a CD player that will help students hear English pronunciations. We all enjoyed talking to the students.



English School



## English School

### **Art Exchange**

This year we initiated an art exchange project between students of the Saturday English School and students from the Wilton, Connecticut Public Schools. Students from each side of the world were or will be asked to draw something that has meaning to them and answer questions to share with their exchange partners. Some of the Mozambican students were able to write answers in English. I am not sure that the American students will be able to answer in Portuguese. Luckily the African students will be excited to receive replies in English!

As you can see from the examples below, there are some interesting differences and many similarities between African and American students. In April of 2010, both sets of drawings will be on display at the annual National Art Education conference to be held this year in Baltimore, Maryland.



**ARTIST DESCRIPTION SHEET**

Title of My Piece: clothes

Medium/Media: Colored Pencil

What is happening in My Scene?  
she is feeding her baby

Why I Chose This Scene:  
Because I love how women spend their babies

My Name: Fara Kausari Zangari My Age: 15

My School: Bahar English class

My Family: \_\_\_\_\_ My Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

I live with my mother my dad I have 3 brothers

My Likes and Dislikes:  
I like to study, play, I dislike to be angry

How I Spend My Free Time:  
I spend my free time watching TV, playing study

What I hope to do when I grow up:  
I like to be lawyer

Artist Photograph: \_\_\_\_\_



**ARTIST DESCRIPTION SHEET**

Title of My Piece: Importance for river

Medium/Media: Colored Pencil

What is happening in My Scene?  
we can see highly importance for river

Why I Chose This Scene:  
I chose this scene because I like to see nature

My Name: Jalpa Anwar Anwar My Age: 17-18 old

My School: Bahar English class

My Family: \_\_\_\_\_ My Teacher: Arumuda B. Com

I live with my mother brother and my sister

My Likes and Dislikes:  
I like night walk, I like to see people

How I Spend My Free Time:  
I spend my free time read and draw

What I hope to do when I grow up:  
I wish to be engineer

Artist Photograph: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Computer Internet Center**

Martha Nelson is coordinating the new Beira computer internet center. Using funds from an American donor, a three year pilot program will be established that encourages pastors, students and church members to use their own computers, or laptops brought over the years by VIM teams, and connect with the internet. A high speed connection will be available for conference staff and shared with those visiting the computer center. A part time person will manage the computers and help those not familiar with computer use. This program should fit in well with Bishop Nhanala's goals of communication and cooperation. Scholarship students will have access to the internet and be able to correspond with American sponsors by email. Students will be able to access information on the internet and type papers for their coursework. The numbers of computers in the public university in Beira is very limited. Students and staff are excited about the prospects of greater computer accessibility.



Rev. Jacob Jenhuro at the Computer Center

## **Cottage Industries**

Several members of the Mozambique Connection board have interest in supporting women with dress and doll making projects. Five prototypes of dolls were brought back to sell at conference in June. There are now only two left!

Another experiment is the use of solar ovens. The women groups at Central Church will be sharing two such ovens to see if they are practical and useful.

## **Gorongosa Wildlife Park**

We were delighted to take a few days of R&R to visit Gorongosa Park, and hope to include this side trip in future VIM trips. Tourism is an important industry in Mozambique. In addition to the beautiful beaches, the once famous wildlife part of Gorongosa is regaining the animals that made it famous. We took a safari ride that included fresh lion tracks and reports from other visitors that included sightings of elephant and rhinos. We did not see as many large animals as we had hoped and so are anxious to return another time.



Gorongosa Park



Gorongosa Park

## **Relationship**

As I stated at the beginning, the above projects are worthy but the real excitement comes as the relationships grow as we work together with our brothers and sisters in Mozambique. Because we were a small team this year, we were able to stay in the home of our friends Judge Jone and his wife Paula. It was a pleasure to be part of the family for two weeks and have some really interesting and in-depth conversations.



Martha, Paula, Annette



Jone, John, Lionilda

At our farewell service we exchanged gifts. John was delighted with his new Mozambican shirt, and our friends were excited to wear the choir robes from one of your churches.



John at the Farwell Service



Choir Robe Gifts at the Farwell Service

Thanks to technology, we now can talk using Skype and continue our work throughout the year. Our Mozambique Connection board meets regularly to raise funds, spread the word and support the projects in Mozambique. You are most welcome to attend meetings during the year at the conference center in White Plains and, of course, come with us on our next trip. Messages sent while we were in Mozambique, along with pictures can be seen at: <http://www.nyac.com/pages/detail/1683> . For more information please feel free to write me at: [annettegriffith@earthlink.net](mailto:annettegriffith@earthlink.net) . I look forward to sharing a life changing experience with you.

Peace be with you,

Annette Griffith  
Volunteer in Mission  
Mozambique, Africa