



# Operation Bootstrap Africa

## *Dignity*

Winter 2021 Holiday Edition

### **Heri Apendalo Mungu**

**(Good is what God wills, what God wishes is best.)**



**Jason with new friends  
outside Southern  
Maasai Church.**

Having just returned from Tanzania 6 days ago, I am still feeling the effects of jet lag, as well as processing the trip emotionally and intellectually. If you have been to Africa, you know the feeling. It is a great honor to reflect on our mission, the people, and our experiences after 2½ weeks in Tanzania. It usually takes me longer than a week, but we want to get “The Dignity” in the mail before the holiday rush. As a result of COVID-19, it has been over 1½ years since my last visit to our schools in Tanzania. It was so nice to see all our friends and colleagues again. For the most part, they are doing well. The virus has gone through the population 3 times, but in many ways they are doing better than some of us in the USA. Tanzanians have an acceptance for things out of their control. If someone gets sick or worse, it is God’s will (Heri Apendalo Mungu). Everyone there knows someone who has passed away with respiratory or flu-like symptoms, but there is very little testing and not a lot of health care available.

Because of previously arranged commitments, our staff person Bri arrived a few days after me. Unfortunately, she missed the MaaSAE Girls School Form 4 graduation. It was wonderful watching the girls accept their certificates and awards. They have come so far in a short time. It was, however, an odd graduation ceremony in that there were no family nor guests present. In previous graduations I’ve attended there were hundreds of supporters celebrating the girls’ success. The other students provided a lot of exuberant support. I felt the love and saw the pride in



**Children at Eluwai Monduli Juu**



**Drinking Water at Eluwai  
Monduli Juu**

their eyes. Bri joined me a day after graduation and we did a whirlwind tour of 16 schools in 10 days. In addition to checking our current projects, we visited two very rural schools requesting assistance. It was great to see another part of Tanzania, but it was also troubling. On the top of the mountain in Monduli, there is a school called Eluwai Monduli Juu (Monduli Up). They have 638 students, 6 teachers, and 4 usable classrooms. The memory that sticks with me most is when they showed us their kitchen. They poured out some of the water used for cooking and it was “chunky”. They are using the same open water source as the cattle.

We made the long trip to Orkesumat in the Semanjiro region of Tanzania. The Bishop and Secretary-General of the Diocese joined our entourage. Word got out that the Bishop was coming and it seemed everyone in the area came to meet him. There were speeches, beautiful music, and shukas, but it was the message we brought that resonated with me. The Bishop spoke about not fearing education and change, I encouraged the men to not fear educating their girls, but it was Naishivai, a graduate of the first class at the MaaSAE Girls School who had the greatest message. She said, “I graduated from the MaaSAE Girls School, went to college, and now work as an architect, but I am still a Maasai woman!” Those attending applauded. Let's hope the message was accepted.

In addition to spending time with the Bishop and his management team, we met with Lilian Shuma, the Principal of the School of Nursing. We also met with Dr. Peter Mkanza, her supervisor, and the new Director of the Arusha Lutheran Medical Center, Elisha Twisa. They all appreciated our donor's support and agreed to more frequent and specific financial reporting.

Our last visit was to the Courage House. You will read more about their very important mission in this newsletter; however, I want to say that the issues of sex trafficking, the age of the girls, and their stories have haunted the thoughts of this father of 3 young daughters.

Altogether it was a very good and fruitful visit. Hopefully in May we will be a group of 10 celebrating the success of your investments in Tanzania. By empowering young Africans with education, you are making a difference that will be felt for generations. It is an honor to represent you in the schools around Central East Africa. It is my responsibility to bring back the appreciation of the people whose lives you have changed forever.

Asante Sana!

(Thank you very much!)

Jason



**Bri and MGLSS  
Graduate/Architect  
Naishivai**

# Donor Contribution — Jack McAllister



Jack McAllister is a member of the OBA Board of Directors, as well as a father, grandfather, and gifted angler. In 1986, a friend of his “talked his wife and him into climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro”. It

turned out to be a walkathon to raise money for Selian Hospital. While making the ascent, he met OBA founder David Simonson and long time partner of OBA Prof. Mark Jacobson. Jack was impressed by their sincerity, honesty and commitment to their mission in Africa.

Jack’s wife Jane worked as a teacher and was very interested in educational projects in Tanzania. Jack however was a Neurosurgeon, and was primarily interested in healthcare and medical growth. They became more familiar with OBA, and helped on projects at Selian, Hospital, the Arusha Lutheran Medical Center, and the MaaSAE Girls Lutheran Secondary School. More recently, Jack and his wife’s interests intertwined when the ALMC School of Nursing was created. Their love for medicine and education prompted

them to be committed advocates for the school.


Jack has seen the inception of many OBA projects. He walked through the rows of plants with Dave Simonson at the site of MGLSS when it was a run down coffee plantation. He and a friend of his designed and built the outpatient department of Selian Hospital in Winchester, Virginia. They had it sent to Tanzania in five sea containers (including the plumbing, the doors and the cabinets)! It stands to this day.

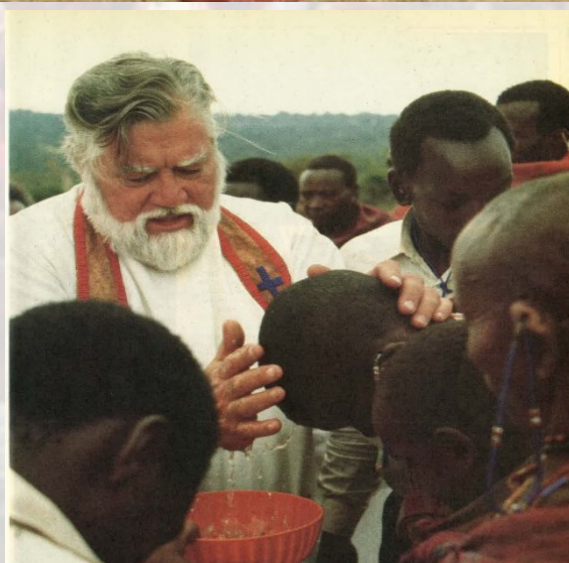
Jack has been back 23 times since climbing Kilimanjaro the first time, and will return once again with his family in December. His family has been a huge part of OBA in many ways. His daughter Mary has taken from her parent’s example and supported a young girl from the beginning of secondary school all the way up to Post-Secondary Education. Mary’s daughter Havalin has written letters with her sponsored student since she was young, and in a way the girls have grown up together. He says “the torch is being passed on through three generations of our family.” It is truly a blessing to see the same passion for Tanzania, and love share between our cultures throughout one family.

-Bri 



# Blast From the Past

OBA Founder's brother Jim Simonson reached out to OBA with this wonderful issue of "The Lutheran" magazine from January 1993. In this issue, we are able to witness Rev. David Simonson baptize hundreds of Maasai people in Tanzania in 1992. Thousands of Maasai traveled many miles to come to these events to be touched by "the bull" in a ritual Christian baptism. Simonson garnered the respect of the Maasai in many different ways, always wanting to work with them to make the changes they wanted to see in their communities. His mission rings true to this day. 





# COVID-19 Update

You all made it possible for us to provide 18 of our projects with supplies to help combat the virus, and keep themselves healthy. On our recent visit, we saw many of these supplies being put to good use on our visit! There was a large fresh water tank at Olchoki Primary that provided clean water for the children to wash their hands. Buckets were stacked up around it as well, waiting for new water! We also saw the children at the hilltop school Olarush using buckets with spigots attached for handwashing. At the MaaSAE Girls Lutheran Secondary School, the girls talked to us about the importance of staying clean and remaining safe. Quite a few of the young ladies shared stories with us of relatives that have passed away over the last year due to COVID-19. When the DELTA variant hit Tanzania, they said it scared them to their core, but they knew God would protect them through this hard time. We at OBA can say that things seem to have improved considerably since late last year.



As you all know, our August Event:

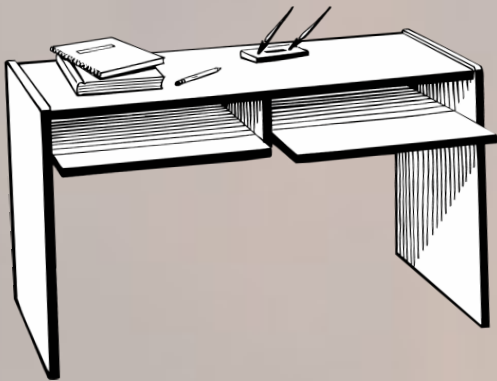
**"Celebrating the Past to Change Their Future: A One Night Flight to Africa"**  
was postponed.

We are happy to inform you that we plan to host the event this summer!  
Dates will be more concrete as time passes, but we will keep you in the loop.

This in person event/fundraiser will have a live auction, social, pig roast, and tons of fun. The dress code for the event is casual or vintage aviation.

It's been a long time since we all got together, and OBA is excited to be able to thank you for all you have accomplished in Africa.

# You Can Give More Than



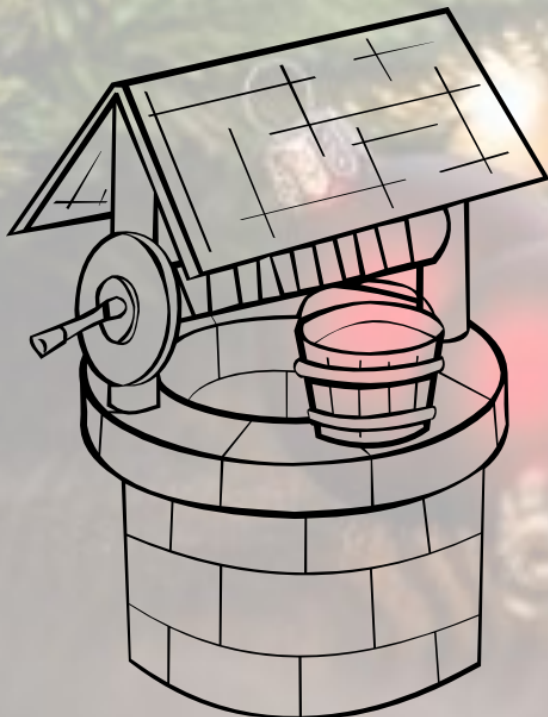
Desks: \$50

Sitting at your desk with room to write is a luxury for a child in Southern Madagascar. In school, they sit on logs with their notebook on their lap. There is no surface to learn and write on.



Chalkboard/Whiteboard: \$500

The board is the hub of learning, especially in Africa. Smart boards and projectors are impossible in villages without electricity. When chalkboards are added to the classrooms, the children will be able to come up to the front of the class and present what they have learned. Not only that, but teachers will be able to use the space to teach handwriting, math equations, and every lesson under the sun.



Well: \$25,000 Well Partner: \$2,500

Drilling a well in Madagascar is a life changing gift. Currently, parents have to walk over two hours to the nearest fresh water source. It is unsafe for the children to help fetch water because the water is infested with crocodiles.





# n A "Present" This Year

**The children of  
Madagascar are in  
great need.**

**Your giving can create  
the opportunity to be the  
change they want to see  
in their country.**



School Supplies: \$25  
This amount can  
provide supplies for one  
student for a whole  
year in Madagascar.  
These supplies are  
scarce, and they will  
change the way the  
child learns.



Lunch for 1 Child for One Year: \$50  
Lunch for 2 Children for One Year: \$100  
Meals are not promised at home. Food was  
so scarce in Southern Madagascar that  
nine students lost their lives to  
malnutrition. Since the start of the Lunch  
Program, children are coming to school  
every day and filling their bellies! No more  
children have passed away. By giving them  
lunch you will help them grow, and  
eliminate absenteeism.

School: \$35,000 School Partner: \$3,500

Mud and sticks make up the schools in  
Southern Madagascar. Our students share one  
teacher, and only come to school for half the  
day at most. There are not enough classrooms  
to host all of the grades at one time. Building a  
school would give the village an opportunity to  
learn beyond 3rd grade, which is now the  
grade many complete their schooling. More  
teachers can be hired and students can focus  
on their subjects.



## Giving Girls Their Childhood Back: Courage House and Courage Cafe

OBA recently traveled to Tanzania to visit the many schools and hospitals we work with. The staff saw many familiar faces and were delighted to make future plans with them on how to continue the growth and learning. On the last day of our journey, we visited a place called Courage Café. OBA was curious to see what it was all about.

Courage House is one of three organizations in Tanzania that is trauma focused and caters to the unique needs of underage victims of sex trafficking. In the country of Tanzania, there are few resources dedicated to the aftercare of victims. Though Tanzania has strong laws against the trafficking of children, the government is just now beginning to enforce the laws, identify victims and look for more strategic ways to prevent this crime. Often, trafficking is not committed by strangers. 90% of perpetrators are found within the family.



The Courage Café is Courage Worldwide's physical presence in the community and gives them a way to engage the public. They are raising awareness about the crime of sex trafficking and its long term impact upon its victims. The café provides a tangible vehicle for patrons to participate in the rescue and restoration of children who have been trafficked for sex in the local community.

Courage houses are private. They are a safe place for victims to grow and have control of their own lives. Courage houses allow young girls who have been forced into sex work a place to reclaim their childhood. There is a licensed school on the property where the girls can attend classes. Some of the girls were never schooled, but at Courage house they can have time to learn and grow at any age or grade level.

Since Courage Houses do not allow for tours or visits, it is often difficult for the public to feel connected to the organization as well as the victims it serves. Courage Café allows for that connectivity.

-Bri 





# My First Moments at MGLSS



Written by Bri Engh

Song floods the walkways as I approach the chapel. The girls have not yet noticed me observing. I soak up the Swahili verses mixed with the English ones. I have not heard such beautiful hymns in a very long time.

Jason motions for us to join the girls, and we share a hymnal sheet with a student. I hear laughter coming from behind me, and peer over to see the girls staring at me and laughing. It is not a laughter of ridicule, more a laughter of excitement. The service goes on, lead by Form 6 girls. At the end of service, I hear prayers. Long prayers, short prayers, prayers in English, Maa, and Swahili. The prayers are nearly louder than the hymns, and in my opinion potentially even more beautiful. I don't need to speak the language fluidly to understand that they are praying for their families. They are praying for us. They are praying for you. The service closed, and one of the older girls said a final word. She looked directly at myself and Jason and told us we were very welcome there. All eyes were on us. I felt extremely welcome, but also extremely humbled. She gestured for us to speak. I stood up and held

back tears. I knew so many of their faces. Every day I look at their records, update their

grades, and make sure they are well. Finally, I saw all of the girls staring at me, waiting for me to speak. I told them my name. I told them I loved them all, and that for the next three days they could come to me and ask me anything they would like. I told them not to be shy, and that they could practice their English with me. After this, Jason spoke, and the service was over. As I got up to exit the chapel, twenty girls swarmed me and followed me out. They were so happy to meet me, and began telling me their names. I spooked them a little by saying their last names as well, but then they became very jovial. "You know me Miss Briana?" I do. I know you all and love you all. They showed me their exam schedules, and made sure that I visited each of their dorms. The ones in the back touched my hair, thinking I didn't notice. I didn't mind at all. They told me of their dreams. They showed me the first graduating class of MGLSS, and told me they were going to be just like them. One thing they all asked me was if I knew their sponsors. I was glad to say I know you. More than anything, they wanted to talk about you. You have changed their lives, and they can't thank you enough. So, with all of the sincerity and warmth in the world from the girls at MGLSS, "Thank you so much, and we love you."





# Let Saving the Lives of Girls in Africa be Your Legacy

## Ways to Give:

- Give Directly from Your IRA—If you are 70<sup>1/2</sup> or older your contribution will count towards your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) and will not be included in your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI). You may contribute up to \$100,000 annually from your IRA. In some situations lowering your AGI may be more beneficial than itemizing charitable deductions.
- Make a Stock Contribution—Gifts of stock are generally tax deductible at the full fair-market value and exempt from long-term capital gains tax.
- Create a Donor Advised Fund—A donor advised fund allows your assets including cash, appreciated stock, mutual funds, real estate, and more to be invested and grow tax-free. Contributions to your fund are tax deductible in the year that they are made, but may be granted to eligible charitable organizations over a period of multiple years. Donor advised funds are a useful tool for donors who are affected by the new, higher standard deduction threshold and wish to combine multiple years worth of giving into one year in order to itemize.
- Legacy Gifts—Include a gift to OBA in your will or trust, designate OBA as a beneficiary of your IRA or life insurance policy, or give to the OBA Endowment Fund. InFaith Foundation.



OBA is proud to have been recognized as a 4-star organization by Charity Navigator for 8 consecutive years, and for meeting the highest standards of financial health, transparency, and accountability. This puts us in the top 10% of all nonprofit organizations in the United States. We are a mission-driven organization, committed to ensuring your support goes where it is most needed!

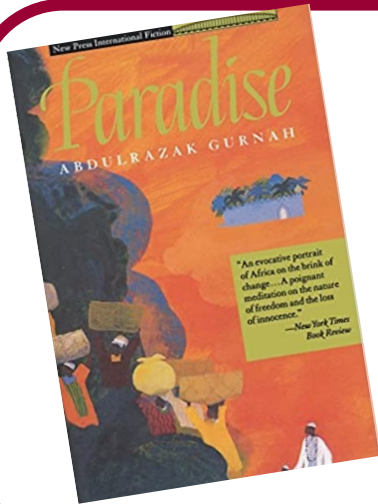
*For more information, please contact the OBA office.*

Operation Bootstrap Africa and its affiliates are not financial advisors and cannot provide tax, legal, or accounting advice. Please consult your financial planner to learn how gifts to OBA may benefit your unique tax or financial situation.



**Thank you for putting us in your estate. The little reminder cards cost a penny a piece. A small price to empower you to leave a legacy.**





## Paradise by Abdulrazak Gurnah

Paradise is the story of an African boy's coming of age, a tragic love story, and a tale of the corruption of African tradition by European colonialism. Sold by his father in repayment of a debt, twelve-year-old Yusuf is thrown from his simple rural life into the complexities of precolonial urban East Africa. Through Yusuf's eyes, Nobel prize winner Gurnah depicts communities at war, trading safaris gone awry, and the universal trials of adolescence. The result is a page-turning saga that offers a unique perspective on a seldom-chronicled part of the world.

## Do We Have Your Email?

Reach out to us via email to sign up for our mailing list! We send regular program updates.

Email: [info@operationbootstrapafrica.org](mailto:info@operationbootstrapafrica.org)

## Opportunities to Help!

### Volunteer with OBA

Do you live in the Minneapolis area? We are always looking for volunteers to help around the office with mailings, filing, and other projects. Please contact OBA at [info@bootstrapafrica.org](mailto:info@bootstrapafrica.org) to sign-up.

### Volunteer to Teach in Tanzania

Your passion and heart can be used to make a difference in Tanzania! The MaaSAE Girls' Lutheran Secondary School is asking for fluent English teachers to visit MGLSS and teach the girls English.

## Operation Bootstrap Africa Board of Directors

*Gene Mickelson (President), Stan Guimont (Vice President), Dean McDevitt (Treasurer), Kjell Ferris (Secretary), Michael Hedley, Doreen Hernesman, Jack McAllister, Marlys Peters-Melius, Peyton T. Taylor Jr.*





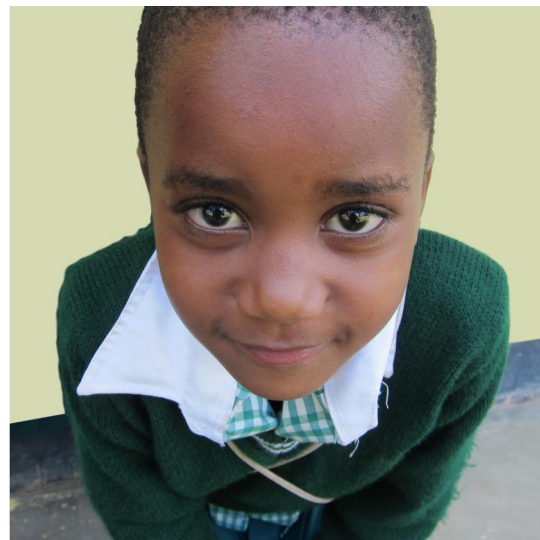
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Minneapolis, MN 55428

Dignity is a publication for friends of Operation Bootstrap Africa, a Minnesota-based non-profit dedicated to helping people help themselves through a variety of educational programs in Africa.

In partnership with African communities and organizations, Bootstrap provides support and assistance to projects and programs based on locally-established priorities.

Gifts to OBA are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. OBA reserves the right to utilize up to 10% of revenue to fund undesignated opportunities.

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## ***Join us for the experience of a lifetime in Tanzania!***

Travel to Tanzania with Operation Bootstrap Africa on a Discovery Tour! Visit OBA projects including schools and clinics, embark on safari to view some of the world's most abundant and beautiful wildlife, and engage in cultural activities.

Tours cost approximately \$5,000-\$6,000 per person, including airfare, meals, lodging, tips, and all land travel costs. Costs not covered include beverages, immunizations, anti-malarial medication, a Tanzanian tourist visa, and travel insurance. A Zanzibar extension and other optional excursions may be arranged at an additional cost. Tours are limited to 10 participants. Contact the OBA office for more information. or to secure your spot on a future tour.

**Upcoming  
Tours**

***May 2022  
October 2022  
(Covid Depending)***