



The Village Times

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Welcome to Our New Director Ilan!

Agahozo-Shalom would like to give a warm welcome to Ilan Blum, our new Village Director! Ilan has spent the past 4 weeks in the village learning the ropes from our staff and preparing for the year to come. During the past several years, Ilan worked to improve management abilities and skills among municipalities' leaders (mayors and departmental directors of education and welfare). Ilan's positions as municipality-at-large coordinator and educational and social projects manager, allowed him to develop a systemic model to ensure high

quality sustainable educational and social services for children and youth at risk. As an army reservist, he served as a group counselor and mentor of officer cadets and commander teams in the School of Leadership, Israel Defense Forces.

Ilan has been involved in education his entire adult life: beginning with the establishment of "Mytar", an Open/Democratic School to teaching and training prospective teachers as director of the Language and Literacy Department at the Teachers Cen-

ter of Tel-Hay College. During his tenure with the Board of "Shaked's" Anthroposophical School, a nonprofit organization, he learned that management is always a collaborative effort between all participants involved. Ilan received a Bachelor's degree from Tel Aviv University, and a Master of Science in Education from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

Culture Day and First Lady Jeanette Kagame's Visit

By MWISENEZA Rosine

On the 21st of September 2010 we celebrated Culture Day in ASYV. The First lady came to visit us with the Imbutu foundation, the Minister of Sports, John Habinezo, the Minister of Education, Charles Murigande, the port commander, and other leaders from the eastern province of Rwanda.

This day was very special for the people who live in ASYV and outside too because of our very honored guests. The ceremony began with the song St. Republic. Then, the traditional dance troop performed and Jean Pierre shared a short summary of life at ASYV. He said that the kids of ASYV love peo-

ple to converse with them and told the guests to connect with us after the event. Alain, our Deputy Director shared a slideshow about when the village started. He said that we choose to teach our kids, "If you see far, you will go far." This means that the village wants to teach that all people can do anything good when they try hard.

The students of ASYV performed a skit which remembered the culture of Rwanda's past. The first lady then gave a peach to us. She said to us that she was sorry that she didn't visit when we first opened last year, but that she was also happy to be able to see the village so far

along. She was happy when she saw our art, music, and farm programs. She also wanted to thank Anne Heyman for her hard work and commitment to change in Rwanda. The first lady was also happy to see that Agahozo-Shalom takes in more girls than boys because it means that we really understand the problems in Rwanda. She told us that there is so much potential in our village. I was so proud of us that day.



News from Liquidnet Family High School

By UWAMAHORO Marie Louise and NGANIZI Augustin

Our students enter the Liquidnet Family High School in Agahozo-Shalom having completed a middle school education (Senior level 3). We then we provide a year of "enrichment" or catch-up so they can be successful as high school freshmen (Senior 4). In Senior High school in Rwanda the students choose studies of emphasis called their "combination". Before the end of the term our Enrichment year students are chose academic combinations for their next 3 years of study. Two of our students share what combinations they chose and how these studies will bring them closer to their life goals:

"I chose the combination H.E.G. of History, Economics, and Geography. I like to know history because I am interested in the past and the actions and progress of humans. Geography is a topic I find very hard, and I must study to succeed. I think it is important to know the physical and chemical features of

our country and our continent and also our whole world. Economics is very interesting in my life because I need to study how I can be a future entrepreneur. Economics is my favorite subject in my combination, because it will really help me in the future. I am preparing to be a business woman. I need to work very hard and not expect other people to work for me. I have to create my own opportunities. When I have success I will be able to help other children in the world, even my kids in University. I will be able to create big projects with my knowledge of Economics."

"For me, I chose P.C.B., the combination of Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. I want to be a scientist in Biology because I understand very well the sciences. In my future I need to be a good man who can help men who are poor and orphans. I want to be an engineer in water and electricity. In University I want to study pure physics. In my future I also know it is important to know the history of the past and so I would also study H.E.G. as my second choice. If I study H.E.G. I can become a lawyer and have positive chain in my country."



Marie Louise



Augustin

The Birth of Our Baby Calf!

By UWERA Justin

We are very happy in the village because our farm has a new baby calf! The baby is small with brown skin. It is very young now, but after a few years it will be very important in our village. It will give us milk and money if we ever need to sell it. We want our farm to be organic and we feed the cow natural foods so that it is healthy. In Rwanda, according to culture, cows are important in our life. If you want to marry, you must buy a cow to give to

your girlfriend's parents. I am not ready to get married now, so we can let the new baby grow up!



Tikkun Olam in Rubona: The Short Story of a Vulnerable Widow

By NSANZUMUHIRE Francois

This year in our Tikkun Olam group we worked to help a vulnerable widow. She lost her kids and a husband in the Genocide of 1994 and she had nothing in terms of materials, not even hope for the future, and she experienced great loneliness. We hoed her small farm, rebuilt her toilet and her kitchen (Inside and outside) and were able to finish all the projects.

She lives nearby our home (Agahozo-Shalom), she's very close to our farm. Personally I learned many things from this mother and she tried to join us in our activities even though it was too sunny and rainy and difficult for her to work. She came often

to show us the right way to hoe and while she was doing that she inspired us by telling us long stories (imigani in Kinyarwanda) and everyone in the group enjoyed learning from her. We ended our Tikkun Olam activities on 12 October 2010 and said goodbye to her. It was so sad and difficult to tell her that this was the end of our work with her. That day, she shared with us a story about her childhood. She said that she did the same thing for others as we were doing for her, and that now people (us) came to help her which means that we will be repaid in the same way in the future. She encouraged us to continue to

work hard because life is not easy, and she ended her talk by sharing sugar canes with us from her farm and giving us a blessing: *Imana Ibahe umugisha* (May God bless you.) After receiving her blessings we invited her to our Tikkun Olam event in the village, which will be held 5 November 2010, and promised that we'd visit her in the future.

Tikkun Olam/ service education is a central tenant in the Agahozo Shalom Youth Village. We believe that when a child realizes that he/she has the ability to give of themselves to others, they are empowered. In healing the world they are healing themselves.



Tikkun Olam, Social Affairs

By UWIZEYIMANA Jacqueline

In Tikkun Olam there are different groups for the school, the clinic, and social affairs. Social affairs is then divided into five groups of 16 each, all from the *Urumuri* (seeds) grade, and there is one educator/counselor who guides each group and reminds us to clean the tools and to work hard.

This year our group worked at two sites. In January we started to rebuild a house for a poor widow who lives with her son. She was sick and unable to work in order to earn money to rebuild her house.

She didn't have a door or windows so the youth of ASYV took initiative to rebuild it. We also helped to treat her for jiggers and left her with a system for collecting and storing water, so that now she is in a better condition.

In the middle of June we began working in another place that was closer to our village. We helped another poor family of old people who were in need of a new kitchen. We helped them to rebuild their kitchen out of mud. We were met with

some difficulties in this project because we didn't have enough time to finish this project.

Tikkun Olam gave up the ability to feel someone else's pain. This experience was also good because we have learned how to handle special cases or problems of different people who surround us, and to go the extra mile.



Remembering Victoire

By Barrie Adleberg

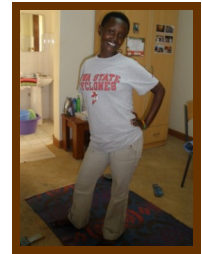
When I met Victoire she hugged me with a certain tenderness usually reserved for old friends. She arrived to the village several days after the other kids. I knew she was special from the beginning, even before I learned of her sickness. She carried herself with an unmatched poise and resilience. She had the air of a survivor, strong and wise beyond her 17 years. After her first several emergency trips to the hospital in Kigali, I realized she had been fighting an ongoing battle with her body nearly her entire life. It was finally revealed that her heart was not pumping blood the way it should. She was constantly dizzy and weak from lack of oxygen and her small frame would become bloated from retaining fluids. Despite her physical discomfort, Victoire always persisted. Whenever she felt slightly better, she insisted on joining the other kids in school. She had a unique hunger for knowl-

edge, a courage to pursue things that she was told were "impossible" for her to accomplish given her condition. The most striking quality about Vicky was her smile. Vicky's smile wasn't just a smile, it was an energy that could light up an entire room. There were several times when I visited her in the clinic and she was in bed drifting in and out of sleep. But, as soon as I sat down next her she would roll over and greet me with a beaming smile, strong enough to supply me a whole day of courage. A true testament to the contagious love she exuded was the bonds she shared with her sisters. Vicky made the village community stronger.

Her battle was an inspiration to us all. When Vicky went to South Africa and survived a very difficult open-heart procedure in which the surgeons nearly rebuilt her heart, it looked as though she

would return to the village stronger than ever. But due to a post-operation infection, this dream was never actualized. It is futile to look for reason behind the loss of a beautiful, strong 17 year old woman. However, I can take comfort in the fact that Vicky spent the happiest time of her life with us in the village.

Her spirit lives inside me every day and it is the force that encourages me to persist in hard times and to continue to make a positive impact on the lives of others. I will miss you Vicky. May you finally have the peace you deserve.



Tugiye kwiga English! (We are going to learn English!)

By Adina Navon

Last year, English became the second official language of Rwanda and the language of instruction in school. While this posed a definite challenge to our young students it presented an even bigger challenge to our adult staff. Most of our house-mothers and kitchen staff completed their education in the French language. Some have never heard English before in their lives. ASYV receives many visitors and volunteers who speak only English and it is therefore important for the staff to learn to communicate in this language. English is also becoming an important skill for communicating

outside of the village. So at ASYV we took the time to offer English classes to all the staff that was interested.

In addition to providing English as a Second Language courses for our permanent staff we also provided different classes for the village's daily workers. I taught the construction, landscaping and farm workers basic ESL four days a week during their lunch breaks. Every day I met with a different group under the mango tree in the center of the village. We began by learning how to say, "hello, how are you?" and from there progressed to introductions

and basic dialogues. Now, as this year's groups "graduate" many of them can carry on a complete yet basic conversation in English. They know how to talk about their favorite colors, describe their friends, talk to the doctor about their different body parts (and sing "head shoulders knees and toes"), depict their favorite animals, tell time in English, count, find their work tools and ask questions- all in English. Having this skill can help workers communicate better with their bosses and improve their employment prospects.

Having these classes not

... Story continued on page 5

only provided a very useful skill but it let all of the ASYV workers know that the village is invested in them and that we care about their success. I watched Some of the ESL students grow from shy individuals who did not know how to read and write in English or Kinyarwanda (many of them missed out on school due to the genocide and its aftermath) into proud and confident men and women who were not afraid to read a sentence in English, how ever slowly, and translate it for the whole class. Their thirst for an opportunity to learn was unquenchable and being able to sit in a classroom environment made them extremely proud.

By the third term of the year, several of the ESL students had advanced so rapidly that we decided to create an intermediate class for them. This class was able to read and understand

whole paragraphs and present complicated dialogues in English. Some of the intermediate students even assisted me in the beginner classes.

When class finished at 1:00 the workers would go back to their various jobs discussing what they had learned that day in class. They would repeat all of the new vocabulary they had learned and help each other with pronunciation. Whenever I would walk by a group of workers during the day they would all greet me excitedly in English and repeat things that they remembered from class. The conversation would go something like this: "Teacher! Good Afternoon! How are you? Where is my hat? Where do you live? My favorite color is orange. My hoe is heavy!"

As a volunteer at Agahozo Shalom, teaching English to these adults was one of my most rewarding experiences. My

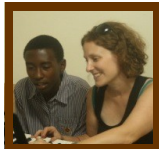
students taught me a lot of Kinyarwanda, they gave me lessons on Rwandan culture, shared stories with me about their families and always made me feel welcome. The fact that I was able to give these people a tool that they can use for the rest of their lives makes me so grateful to ASYV and to the JDC for allowing me to be here. I know that I have learned more from my students than I could ever have taught them and for that I am eternally grateful to them. I will never forget this experience and I hope that they will never forget their English!



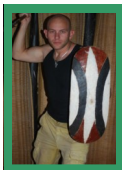
Dedication to Our Departing 2010 Volunteers



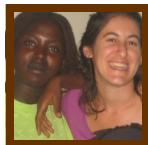
Barrie Adleberg "Everything you did in the village showed us how much you love us. We will miss you and our dance parties together." - Joyce, Kennedy Family



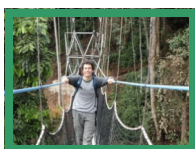
Suzanne Patt Benvenisti "Suzie taught me to study and to be a good sister. I will never forget her." - Cecile, C.J. Walker Family



Mike Brand "Mike was my brother and our best friend. He taught me many things like typing on the computer and American slang." - Serge, DaVinci Family



Micaela Hillman-Tincher "When I am sad Micaela, she comes to me to talk about life. She is a good sister." - Clarisse, Lumumba Family



Dudu Navon "Dudu is my brother. He helped coach me in Football. He worked so hard in everything he did. He is a real role model." - Lincoln Family

Amy Price "I'm happy for the time we spent together. Amy visited us during the vacation. We are so happy she will stay another year!" - Immaculee, Lumumba Family

