

March 1, 2010

In 2008 I spent three months in Tanzania and was able to serve at Hananasif Orphanage Centre (HOCET). Those three months changed my life. God has directed my path to Hananasif and tied my heart to these people. My heart has been yearning to return for the past year and a half! The Tanzanian staff at HOCET has invited me to serve with them for a year. I will be departing in August for this yearlong stint in Tanzania.



Aziza & Mesekwa, two Hananasif Academy students, who I became good friends with in 2008.

During my stay at HOCET, I will offer my skills, knowledge and experience to serve the orphanage, its children and its staff. I will bring my love for the kids and my passion for caring for the fatherless. Joining with the local staff, I will help teach the children that their identity is not in their poverty or in being an orphan, but that they are loved and cared for by their heavenly Father. They have a new identity, they are “watoto wa Mungu” – children of God. I will also work with the staff to provide these kids with tools to overcome poverty and bring change to their communities and their country. One of the main tools the orphanage provides is education. Read more about Hananasif Academy at www.kujali.org.

One of my major projects will be educational programming for the younger children at HOCET's city center. These children currently attend government primary schools, but are not being adequately prepared for secondary school. I will help organize and coordinate supplemental education sessions at the center to ensure that these children obtain a strong foundation in Swahili, Math and English.



Hussein, Peter and Dafroza are three of the children who will benefit from the educational programming at the city center.

I have been preparing for my education work at HOCET by tutoring elementary, middle and high school students and regularly volunteering in schools in Gainesville. These skills will be put to use to serve the children of HOCET. I am also excited to use my Swahili skills, which I developed through two years of Swahili language study at the University of Florida.

Beyond my immediate contribution to HOCET, I am looking forward to the lessons God will teach me and the ways I will be disciplined by the Mwalugaja family (founders of HOCET), other staff members and the children themselves. I truly admire the work of HOCET and the people who have committed their lives to the task of caring for orphaned and vulnerable children. I am thrilled to join them in this work.

I am excited to share this next step in my journey with you. Please prayerfully consider making a commitment to support me through prayer and/or financial contributions. In the next five months, I need to raise \$17,000. This will cover all my expenses for the trip, specific training courses before I depart and \$2,000 for project funding. An intermediary goal I have set is to raise at least \$4,250 (25%) by the end of March. Can you help me reach this goal?

You can follow my fundraising progress and the story of my year at HOCET online at www.followingiris.wordpress.com. You will also find pictures of the kids and some stories from my time at HOCET in 2008.

Your involvement in my life and this trip is invaluable to me. I hope to talk to you soon!

Sincerely,
Iris Zielske