

# Mufindi Moments

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## Education and Health Works Together for Wellness Checks

Finnish Doctors Jani Liimatta and Laura Salkinoja spent a month in Mufindi working with Dr. Leena at our Care and Treatment Center and with our Home-based Care Program. However, they also dedicated time to working with our kids on-site at the Children's Village, as well as in our Kindergarten! Together with our teachers and volunteer Molly Hirtle, Jani and Laura performed wellness checks on each child. Unlike many of the check-ups performed in clinics, these assessments included an examination of students' gross and fine motor skills, eyesight, and hearing, as well as psychosocial development.



and Laura who then made recommendations based on each student's performance.

Development tests included a station where the child cut with scissors along a straight line, a station where the child copied pre-drawn shapes, a simple eye sight test that asked students to look at different sized

stickers from a distance of 5 meters, and a hearing test where a word was whispered into each ear. Jani then performed a complete physical and Laura walked each child through physical exercises designed to test his or her motor skills.

In order to perform thorough examinations on each child, stations were set up so that the class and teachers could work through the activities under the guidance and supervision of Jani



students that are delayed in de-

velopment and the possible causes. Part of the wellness checks were the training of our teachers to be able to perform development checks themselves. They learned how to take personal histories and what kind of questions to ask. They also learned what different signs of delayed development are— both physical and mental.

In the coming months, Molly and her counterpart Doricus



will work on creating a standardized test that each village teacher can follow and record for their students. Then our on-site teachers will act as the leaders of such checks

and visit village classrooms to help conduct these checks and make assessments. We are excited to add this crucial milestone check as a service to our kindergarten classrooms and their students!

These tests were purposely kept simple so that they can be replicated in village classrooms and would enable local teachers to identify stu-

### Special points of interest:

- Sewing School Students join Kindergarten Circle Time!
- Kindergarten Outreach Visits were conducted.
- Work-study students participated in an Adolescent Seminar.
- CIEE students entered a two-week homestay program.

### Sewing School joins Circle Time!

Starting at the beginning of March, the Sewing School Students added a new activity to their morning routine! The Sewing School students are now joining the Kindergarten Class in their morning Circle Time. Each morning, the Kindergarten Students begin their school day with a Circle Time where the Tanzanian National Anthem is sung, greetings in Kiswahili and English are practiced, and games are played. When Sewing School Teachers found out that not all the sewing students knew the National Anthem, they approached the Montessori teachers with the idea!



### Around the NGO...

Head of Guardians Rehema Mgimwa and Child Welfare Officer Joseph Majembe load up the car to take clothing, household supplies, and school supplies to vulnerable children in the village.



Joseph, Libe, and Isaya meet briefly on a Saturday afternoon to discuss counseling options for HIV+ teenagers who live at the Children's Village.

### Olive Branch for Children Mentors Lend Time to Better Outreach Program

We were so fortunate to host Farajala and Sylvester from the Olive Branch for Children in March for a ten day visit! They arrived the first of March to begin a week of visits, culminating in a seminar at the end of their stay. Starting on Monday, March 2nd, Farajala and Sylvester accompanied Molly and Doricus on a visit to Mlevelwa to visit the first classroom. These visits focused on monitoring the classrooms and evaluating them for areas of improvement as a follow-up to the visits performed in November. Isipii Village was visited on Tues-

day, Mkonge on Wednesday, and Ludilo Village on Thursday. After the morning observations during class, the teachers met with Farajala and Sylvester who provided feedback based on their observations. This was also an opportunity for teachers to share their challenges and frustrations. Many of them consisted of complaints regarding the teachers' relationships with their larger schools and head teachers. It is quite common for the teachers to feel overlooked by their colleagues. In order to heal the relationships, it was recommended that follow-up meetings are had between the teachers and their school committees with the NGO as



they saw during their visits and to open up a further dialogue about common challenges. We are so thankful for the continued support of OBFC and their wonderful mentors!



the mediator to help support the respective teachers. These meetings are being planned for April. After the visits, Farajala and Sylvester held a seminar to address some of the mistakes



### CIEE Students Arrive for Homestays!

The CIEE study-abroad students arrived to Mufindi from Iringa Town on March 23rd. These students are participating in a two-week homestay program, after which they will move on-site to the NGO for volunteer work. Each student was paired with a family. All families volunteered to participate and are compensated appropriately for their time and en-



ergy in hosting the students. In fact, we had more families ask to host students than necessary after the popular success of the last CIEE students! These families are spread out in our project area and includes villages and subvillages of Iyai, Fyogo, Ipafu, Luhunga, Mkonge, Ikaning'ombe, Kidete, and Ikanga. These families come from all walks of life in Mufindi – farmers, engineers, shopkeepers, restaurant owners, and NGO employees! All families attend a mandatory seminar that reviews expectations of hosting a guest, including cultural

differences which the family might encounter and how to approach them. On their first day, students arrived to the NGO, and after a quick introductory lunch with our staff, the students also participated in a homestay seminar to prepare them for the challenges of living in a homestay. We are excited to hear about their experiences!



### New Jumpers Just In Time for Cold Weather

Through the generous work of Mufindin Ystavat, our Finnish partner charity, 20 new jumpers were given to our children just in time for the approaching cold weather months. 45 University Education students at the Normaalikoulu (Normal School) made the jumpers for our kids and delivered them through Dr. Leena Pasaden. 25 more jumpers are to come!



### Adolescent Seminar Opens Up Dialogue for Secondary School and Sewing School Students

On Saturday, March 28th, Jani Liimatta and Laura Salkinoja hosted an Adolescent Seminar focuses on puberty, reproductive

health, and personal safety. Social Welfare Officer Joseph helped to translate and add cultural explanations when needed. 27 students from our work-study program were in attendance. Students submitted questions in private prior to the seminar so no topic was off limits!



## Foxes' NGO

In partnership with:  
Mufindi Orphans  
African Book Box  
Orphans in the Wild  
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## Foxes' Community and Wildlife Conservation Trust– Foxes' NGO

**Foxes' NGO was established in 2005 to support projects aimed at combating the devastating effects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Mufindi district of Tanzania in East Africa. We aim to provide shelter, sustenance, education, and medical care for orphans, other vulnerable children, and people living with HIV/AIDS within the project area.**

**Do you have a great photo of the NGO and its projects? Please share it with us at [foxesngo@gmail.com](mailto:foxesngo@gmail.com) to see it in these newsletters!**

### Volunteer Spotlight:

#### Jani Liimatta and Laura Salkinoja

Jani and Laura came to Foxes' NGO after a month-long stint in Moshi. Jani just completed his medical degree in Finland and Laura is a physio-therapist. Their primary work was done alongside Dr. Leena in her work in Mufindi. Their first three weeks was dedicated to visiting patients in their home– specifically physically disabled patients and kids– and receiving and treating patients at the Care and Treatment Center in Mdabulo. At the CTC, they worked alongside Izack and Dr. Ndenga (Clinical Officer), who helped to spread the word throughout our project area of the services and expertise brought by Jani and Laura. On Thursdays of each week, Jani, Laura, and Dr. Leena joined Mrs. Vinton of Village Schools Tanzania to conduct home visits of the sick and disabled in the NGO's neighboring villages. Home visits made up a huge portion of their work as they

delivered walking devices and physio-therapy tools with instructions on how to use them.

Their final busy week in Mufindi was dedicated to work on-site at the Children's Village once Dr. Leena had departed for Finland. On-site, they conducted wellness and development checks on the Kindergarten and Pre-school students– focusing on our students who come from Igoda Village each day. Recommendations for improving development were made and exercises taught to the teachers. Their final weekend was spent hosting an Adolescent Seminar that reviewed puberty, reproductive health, and safe sex practices. 27 work study students were in attendance with private wellness checks the following day. Jani and Laura gave more in their 4 weeks than most give in their lifetime and we are incredibly grateful for their service!

We are crossing our fingers for another visit soon! Karibuni tena!

