

## Report on the children's cottages Namwianga, Southern Zambia

In May 2007 a container was loaded in Abilene, TX that went to Namwianga, Kolomo, south Zambia. The container arrived in February 2008 and distribution began immediately. The container was sent to assist efforts in providing care for orphans and a free hospital and clinic network. Here is a report on the conditions that most of these children struggle against in their brief lives.

—John L. Kachelman, Jr.

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**From:** Roy & Kathi Merritt  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 15, 2008 8:45 AM  
**Subject:** First drip

Here he is!

### Gary!

Entertainer. Babbler. Tease.

*Haven I*, now Eleanor's House, is FULL.  
*Haven II*, now Kelly's House, is FULL.

So overflow is splashing into Eric's house—again. **Gary** is the *first drip*, so to speak. The first drip in the coming flood.

Kathi says;

We have three homes going now. It's time to add a fourth.

Eric's House has 25 older kids and teens.

Kelly's House has 25 toddlers 14 months to 3 years.



Eleanor's House has 37 itty-bitties—newborn to 13 months.

That's 87 children who live here. We also provide infant formula to other babies kept by their relatives.

We now have **Five** HIV positive babies. **Two** are already "stage 3" and on antiretrovirals. One of these is also hydrocephalic. **One** baby is "stage 2." **Two** test positive but don't have symptoms yet.

**More and more come tiny, and with fragile health**

Eight other babies show positive on one test and negative on another. We will re-test them in three months.

Last time we tested for syphilis, ten out of ten babies were positive. We now treat all new babies for syphilis.

Three days ago a little girl died. Yesterday I drove sick little Paul four hours over terrible roads to Macha Mission Hospital.

I am saying all this because many babies are coming sick—very sick. This new house we want to build will be a child hospice. I want ☺

- \* music 24 hours a day,
- \* gaudy colors, and
- \* lots of nannies to pamper and cuddle the babies as they die.



Eric's House is full—but half stay at boarding schools 9 months a year. So overflow drips, like Gary, will plop in here till we finish the new house. We'll be cramped during school holidays. We can handle that. Once the hospice is ready we will move the sick babies over, leaving room for Gary and others in the homes.

Sand, gravel and bricks arrive bit by bit. So far we have spent \$1,500 for bricks. Local women deliver gravel they've hammered out of the landscape. I will eventually pay 70 cents per five-gallon bucket. Ladies come every day begging me to buy—even though I offer long-distance promises. *"It may be June before I can pay. Maybe July...Maybe when?"* They bring it now so they will not miss out later. Not much demand around here for homemade crushed stone.

"This stuff is vile. Four sharp teeth don't even make a dent."

We need significant funds to start the new house.

The plan is to build the hospice a bit bigger than Kelly's house—24 meters by 28.

Larger rooms. Lots of windows and light. Less play area. Its foundation and reinforced slab should be in the \$25,000 to \$30,000 range. Next, the walls. 150,000 bricks at 10 cents each, plus loading, transportation, and unloading--\$20,000.

This house needs 32 metal door frames, 36 metal window frames (these go in with the brickwork), "air blocks", and brick reinforcement wire; around \$15,000. Cement mortar and plaster; plus or minus \$10,000. So, to put walls on the foundation we anticipate a cost around \$45,000.





Kelly's House with unfinished walls and roof

Third step is a roof. Kelly's House beams, purlins and iron sheets cost \$30,000. This one will be more like \$35,000. Then there is electricity, plumbing, tiling, cabinets, a ceiling, painting, glass, appliances...

Is an artist reading this? Or maybe a whole art class? Why not fly over here in a year or so, and paint bright murals in every room?



Thank you! Roy and Kathi . . . and? Oh yes—remember...  
**The first drip!**

Babies keep coming. And some arrive sick and scrawny. This is teeny tiny Paul. He is about two months old and bony as a starveling, though he is not. "What's wrong with him? Does he have AIDS?" He sure looks like it, but all his tests so far have been negative. Today Kathi has him, feeding him by IV and bottle. I leave the bedroom when she does the IV bit. Kathi says he's picked up a little the last few days...

