

# Newton Elders' Creative Missions Prove Welcome

CLIFF SCHMIDT, F.P.C. SPARTA

I became involved with the Newton-Nairobi Partnership in the spring of 2012 when I was persuaded to join Newton's Partnership Team. During the next two years, my interest in and love for the Partnership—what it meant and was doing—grew. I came to know about its history, its important mission projects in the areas of education and health, and the great value of the interpersonal and inter-church relationships in the universal body of Christ which the Partnership enabled and rewarded. I decided to join the trip to Kenya being planned for July 2014.

As much as I wanted to experience in person everything I'd ever learned about Kenya and the mission projects, I also hoped to be able to apply my professional knowledge and skills in Christian ministry if possible during the trip. Recent examples of my colleagues on the team made me feel that, as a career English teacher/professor, introducing the students to a few stories and poems of mostly American literature might be a way to achieve this goal. I turned to our committee for help. With twenty-plus years of experience and a wide range of friends and associates within the Nairobi Presbyteries, they were able to provide me with the names of administrators at three institutions. Through these contacts, I was able to line up a full week of classroom teaching opportunities divided between the PCEA Professor Sumbi Secondary School in Kasasule and the Presbyterian University of PCEA Teachers College-Rubate. Throughout June, in consultations with their English department heads, they created schedules and we coordinated plans that would be suitable and worthwhile for the class levels I would be teaching. When the time arrived, the staff and teachers at both venues did everything possible to accommodate me. The students were eager to learn, many of them spoke up during the classes, the exchange of ideas and the opportunity for the students to use English with an American speaker made the classes special. What was most special for me in the person-to-person contact was the presence and bond of the Holy Spirit that united teacher and students. It was as they (we Americans) say, Awesome (as in God).



I would wish such a ministry experience, regardless of one's particular profession or skills, for anyone with a desire to visit Kenya and serve others directly in the name of Jesus Christ, to consider doing so through the auspices and assistance of the NNPT and the NNPP connection.

## **MJ FINKEN, U.P.C. BELVIDERE**

I've led two trips to Kenya to teach Vacation Bible School. In 2007 we had a group of eight, leading 4 sessions in 2 weeks for about 250 children per session. It was an amazing time. On the 2013 trip we had five people. We taught 50 adults the first day and showed them how to run a VBS. The next day our group, and the people we taught the day before, worked together to run the VBS. What was amazing, was that some of the adults had been a part of our first VBS. The other amazing fact was that most of the children knew the songs from the first VBS. It touched our hearts to know that what we shared with the children was taught to brothers, sisters and friends.



If you decide to go on a mission trip to Kenya, be prepared to get far more than you can give. Spirituality, love, friends, camaraderie, joy, laughs and so much more.

## **DARLENE TAPIE, F.P.C. BLAIRSTOWN**

My first visit in 2012 arranged by David Ndumo, an Elder of Mathare North Presbyterian Church, was to this sister congregation in Nairobi for meeting with the Woman Guild. I was very warmly received; and the ladies were enthusiastic about the mission of making and distributing prayer shawls. They began working on the project immediately, and have continued since.



In subsequent trips God provided further opportunities as well as Rose and David Ndumo, who were my hosts. She arranged a home meeting with family and friends. During my trips I have shared the mission with everyone, including the PCEA Nairobi Partnership Board, Ministers, Woman Guilds, Lay people, a School Director, the Presbyterian University's Seminary Department; and many were interested in having this ministry shared with their people. Thus, I was able to have many group meetings throughout the Nairobi and Kibwezi areas.

In all of my visits I have met so many people and made good friends. My trips have been far too short to accommodate all the requests, which is why this year I am planning a two-months' stay. The love of God is so apparent in Kenya; and their desire to help others inspires me to do more each time I go.