

AID TO ORPHANS OF MADAGASCAR

AOM is committed to offering assistance to child centers and other programs in Madagascar that help children and their families in need by providing food, education and job training. Your donations are precious gifts that transform the lives of children who live with so little hope. Our very small organization with its equally small budget is able to succeed because we know each person we are helping and can keep in touch with the results of each project. This year we were able to make significant improvements in these children's lives because of your generous donations.



Rafanomezantsoa Heriniaina Charlotte's home in the making. Beams and bricks are ready to support the new roof.



Clovis turning into fine tradesman.



Sewing skills help build new business .

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF DEPENDENCE

Charlottes' mother can tell you firsthand there is no money to be had or saved when you drop out of school and work as a house maid. Her father can tell you about all the time he spent working just to pay the rent on his cycloposse. Her grandmother sells vegetables by day and makes and sells soups and snacks in the evening in order to contribute to the family income. Everyone works in order to earn enough money to meet their modest goals.

Charlotte cherishes her education and is certainly taking advantage of this opportunity sponsored by AOM. She makes sure she stays at the top of her class, not only because there are monetary rewards for this position but also because she loves to learn. She loves science and health and her other subjects too. She wants to continue her education so she can be a health worker. Her parents know she will be able to help support them later in their life.

This family of four has decided that renting a house takes resources that could be better used investing in their future. Renting is also risky when jobs disappear and there isn't enough income to keep them housed. The family came up with a plan to build a house all together. After studying for her classes, Charlotte transports needed building materials. Her mother makes and fires bricks and her father builds their traditional rammed earth home. They have worked on this project in their free time for a year now.

Studying for difficult classes is a welcome challenge for Charlotte. Building their house together is paving the way to a better life.

AOM is providing the materials for their roof in order to support their initiative and speed up finishing the house: helping them on their road to independence. Your support allows AOM members to attain a better life.



ELEVEN YEARS WITH BRIGITTE



Brigitte's infectious laugh rings through the classroom full of AOM's new sewing students. You can just see the shoulders of parents relax. No big problem if the thread knots or the seam is crooked; everything can be fixed. Experience usually takes care of most sewing woes. She has been there and explains that it's part of learning. Brigitte's advice comes from her warm heart and a natural ability to teach. I remember first meeting her 11 years ago when she was just learning how to sew on a hand machine in AOM's first sewing class. She radiated sparkle and enthusiasm and a sense of teamwork. She was everyone's friend.

For all her good cheer and care, life has not been easy for Brigitte. She started working at a young age as a house maid. She married a kind man, but he didn't have job skills or an education. They had a hard time earning enough to live on. By the time their first child was 3, they were in dire straits. AOM welcomed their daughter into preschool and fed her nutritious meals. Brigitte took AOM sewing and knitting classes and started making a living repairing clothes, crocheting hats and cleaning houses. Despite all the challenges they faced, they steadfastly paid for a small plot of land.

According to The World Bank, Madagascar experiences frequent, deep and persistent crises. These economic downturns affect all of our families. Brigitte and her family were not alone as they faced devastating challenges. They made tremendous sacrifices and even went hungry at

times in order to make payments for their small rice field. Eventually they decided to provide security for their family by building a house in the rice field. The remaining portion of land was sold to pay for building materials.

Brigitte and Rolland have three children enrolled in the AOM scholarship program. Their eldest son, Eliva is 14 and not sure what he wants to study or apprentice for next. At age 7, Marie Elija, is always among the top of her class and is an enthusiastic student. She loves the sciences and math and plans to follow a career in the health field. Eliah is 4 and in kindergarten.

AOM has expanded our income enhancement programs by partnering with an organization that helps families explore their assets and encourages them to make use of all their skills. Brigitte and Rolland completed the training and have made significant strides. In addition to sewing and crocheting hats, Brigitte sells homemade floor wax, and is teaching sewing skills. Her husband, Rolland, is a self-taught mechanic and has found work.

Lalaina, the widow with 6 children, who was featured in the last newsletter has pulled her family up by working in the AOM library, tutoring math 8 hours a week and coming up with a way to take damaged clothes and make them like new. Lalaina's re-newed clothing business is growing. She needs help and wants to **hire** skilled AOM members to help her refurbish clothing. To accomplish this goal, Lalaina has asked Brigitte to teach AOM members sewing skills. Lalaina wants to return the favor AOM gave her when she was down so Brigitte is being paid to train seamstresses and families are hired to fulfill clothing orders. Community unity!





DESPITE THE ODDS

Clovis! I can just hear the pride in your mother's voice. You are the shining hope of the family. You are a success. You welcome every opportunity you have been given and gladly embrace new ones.

Following in the footsteps of our first trade school student, Madresy who graduated last year, Clovis is a keen student. He is in the second year and second semester of trade school and is second in the class of 20. His teachers are proud of him and say he is conscientious and hard worker. He has become well known in the area his family lives in as being able to repair broken things and make furniture.

Our director, Jacky has found a summer job for Clovis where he has access to power tools. These tools make building so much easier and are fun to master. Clovis' skills are broadening daily, as his world is opening up.

Not only is he a skilled woodworker but he carries integrity with you wherever he goes. This is probably the biggest reason his mother is so proud of him. Clovis could have followed in his father's or brother's footsteps and become addicted to substances, stolen from others, or just decided to drop out of school. Instead, Clovis' footsteps followed his dreams put your dreams, and he chose to look after his mother while realizing his goal of becoming a skilled, sought after craftsman.

Clovis is making remarkable progress for a 2nd year student.

Well Done Clovis!



AOM is in the early stages of trying out a new method of community support. Approximately 10 families in the same neighborhood are brought together. These coops or pods are created to make a safety net, encourage accountability, develop shared ideas and work through as many angles of a project as possible. This helps develop entrepreneurship, while including and encouraging the families that struggle the most.

Currently, the sewing moms are learning how to repair and improve damaged clothing, which will be followed by business classes. We are also setting up a tree nursery project for members that feel they have no marketable skills. Madagascar is starting to put more focus on reforestation, creating a market for trees.



Pictured are a few of our junior secondary school graduates. They have passed a very rigorous exam that allows them to enter Senior Secondary level. Our students have been issued a completion certificate. Next step is Vocational training or continuing on to Senior Secondary education which is a 2 year program usually reserved for rich students. Go AOM students!



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A big shout out to our Director Jacky and his family.
Left to right,
Valiha - 13
Hira - 4
Oliva -12
Jacky / father
Avena - 10
Nomena /Mother
End of year activities make for an incredibly busy father. He has his own graduating family members along with all the AOM graduating students.
CONGRATULATIONS ALL!