



Marianne Center

News letter of Marianne Center Foundation

"WHO IS THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED"

Historically persons with disabilities were regarded as outcasts and such conditions were associated with curses, witchcraft, evil spirit, etc. However, today such beliefs and thoughts are starting to change due to research and studies which have been carried out.

A mentally disabled person is one whose mental ability is lower than that of a normal person. Such a person experience problems during their development and as a result they lag behind in learning performance and in their general adaptation in society.

The behaviour of the mentally disabled varies according to cause and severity of retardation. Mentally disabled persons tend to forget what have been learnt very easily. They also take a very long time to learn some of the things that normal people acquire naturally and they have a very short attention span and are easily distracted. Therefore, mentally disabled persons need activities that will help them learn how to concentrate on a particular tasks and complete them. Many concerned people all over the world have come up with centres to try and assist mentally disabled persons who are part of our society and who for a long time have been either neglected, hidden or chained somewhere never to be seen or known by the community at large. Such a centre is Marianne Center located at the outskirts of Nairobi, Kenya with the aim of bringing together young adults who are mentally disabled and with the help of special trained teachers to train them to do various beneficial activities. Marianne Center believes that disability is not inability and together with you we can add value to the mentally disabled persons and make them too enjoy life.

Thank you and God bless you as you help the mentally disabled persons in Kenya and elsewhere in the world.

Peter Getao, Committee member Marianne Center



New location

We have been blessed with a new location in the beautiful area of Karura Village in Nairobi. This former guesthouse will be used from July 2009 for training our mentally disabled students. The amount of rooms this house has gives us the opportunity to have many activities, like the social workplace and different types of crafts. Around the house there is plenty of space to have a few farm animals and to grow vegetables. These activities are not only used to train our students but also generate income for Marianne Center and therefore will contribute in the continuation of the center.

We feel very fortunate to use this beautiful house where people with a mental disability get the opportunity to develop themselves.

Bernard Thairu, Board member Marianne Center



Awareness walk

On Saturday 23rd of May, the team of Marianne Center and inhabitants of the district walked 10 kilometres to create awareness among the

inhabitants about Marianne Center. Before starting, flyers were given to the people in the area, because many of them did not understand why all these people were wearing the yellow T-shirts. When the people were provided with water, glucose and a T-shirt, councillor Nene gave the opening speech and a start signal. The walk started in River Rori shopping centre and ended at Marianne Center. Young, old, physically and mentally disabled, everybody joined the walk in order to show his or her support, commitment and contribution. The youth walked in front with a banner from Marianne Center. The group was followed by a pick-up with a megaphone to inform people about the walk and Marianne Center. From everywhere curious people came out of their houses because of the noise. Many people joined and walked with us for some kilometres. When we arrived at Marianne Center, everybody was provided with soda and cookies. General manager Bernard Thairu held a speech and showed his appreciation on behalf of the team towards the participants. Everybody stayed for a second round of soda and cookies and everybody left Marianne Center satisfied.

Laura van den Heuvel, intern Marianne Center



Sponsor a student

As soon as the first students in July arrive at Marianne Center we introduce this sponsorship scheme.

This scheme provides an opportunity to contribute to the vocational education of Kenyan (young) adults with a mental disability. A student can be sponsored for only \$25 a month. With the donations people contribute to school fees, lunches and transportation of the sponsor student. The sponsorship also contributes to the purchase of educational materials. The educational programmes at Marianne Center help the students to become more independent and enables them to perform activities, which later on can generate income for their families. People can choose for the sponsor-a-student concept or from a shopping list of items available to sponsor. Items which people can sponsor are educational materials, lunch, transport

costs and school fees for a student. Also training for the staff and the parents of the student is one of the options. We also give the opportunity to donate school uniforms, made by our students for primary school children, to parents who are not sending their children to primary school because they cannot afford to buy them the required school uniforms. In this way you are not only supporting Marianne Center but also children who otherwise were not able to go to primary school. The profiles of the students can later on be found on our website together with the donation forms.

Nelie Janssen, Board member Marianne Center

Income generating activities

We mainly focus on teaching the students activities which are income generating, in order to ensure the sustainability of Marianne Center. Furthermore, our students can copy these activities and use them at their homes, which can support themselves and their family. We mainly focus on farming, gardening and crafts. We will keep a cow, a pig and some chickens where we can sell the products or the offspring from.

We will grow vegetables, like lettuces, tomatoes and spinach which are easily to grow and which people in the area eat a lot. Some of the animal products and vegetables shall be used for the lunch programme, the rest will be sold.

Next to this we will teach the students how to make school uniforms and some banana leaf products. All our teachers are qualified to give these trainings and have the experience with working with mentally disabled people.

Fanuel Ayumba, staff member Marianne Center

Ngong Hills hike

On the 20th of June Marianne Center organized a three hour hike on the Ngong Hills in Nairobi. It was a cold day, which made the hike less



exhausting and more pleasant. With a small group of people we enjoyed the variety of nature of the Ngong Hills, although it was a bit foggy. The hike had its tough moments which we had to regret the days after. Everybody arrived safely at the other side of the hill, where the general manager of Marianne Center was waiting with a delicious and well deserved lunch for every climber. The hike was successful, everybody enjoyed, but the most important is that we supported Marianne Center financially during this sportive way!

Laura van den Heuvel, Intern Marianne Center



The name of Marianne Center

Marianne Center is named after Marianne Janssen (see picture above), the sister-in-law of our board member Nelie Janssen. Marianne Janssen is 28 years old and has Down Syndrome. She lives together with her friends in a house where she has her own room. She can take good care of herself and even helps out with the domestic tasks. Once a week she is going to a studio where she makes beautiful paintings, which will be sold. In this studio she also designed the logo of Marianne Center. A few days a week she is working in a factory where uncomplicated routine tasks are done by people with a disability. Next to this, working in a pottery is one of her jobs too.

Marianne accomplished all this because she had the chance to go to school and to develop herself. She is an example of how mentally disabled people can live their lives. With proper training and guidance she is able to maximize her potential and live a happy and joyful life. We want to give the mentally disabled people in Kenya the same opportunity in order for them to live life and live it to the full!

Lucy Kiura, Board member Marianne Center



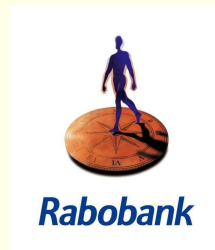
The Steering Committee

Marianne Center is run by a steering committee that meets every three months to evaluate and assess progress at the center. This committee provides guidance on overall strategic plans, procedures and policies for Marianne Center and by that contributes to the long term sustainability of the center. It is also in charge of budget and proposal approvals.

Its current membership is ten, of whom is a lawyer, two board members, a manager of Marianne Center, a staff member of Kenya Institute of Special Education, a teacher, an accountant, the area councillor and chairman of Karura Town Council where Marianne Center is located, the Kiambu representative for all the disabled persons in the District and a parent of one of our students.

Lucy Kiura, Board member Marianne Center

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We like to thank all volunteers, media, friends and family, who in any way contributed to this project.

Thank you so much!

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