

January 2008  
Bethesda Lutheran Church  
Ames, Iowa



# Bethesda Shighatini



## Bethesda helps education expand in Shighatini—

You're in Sunday school and recognize a familiar tune. It's "Jesus Loves Me," but the words are unfamiliar because the children are singing

in Pare. Then you're reminded that the message of God's love surrounds you whether at Bethesda or visiting at our sister congregation in Shighatini in Tanzania. The relationship between the Bethesda Sunday school students and the Shighatini Sunday school students is ongoing and growing. Recently our Sunday school children made Christian bookmarks.



Shighatini  
Sunday school children

## Bookmark exchange

In July 2007 during a three day visit to Tanzania as part of a Southeastern Iowa Synod Vision trip, Carla Peterson, from Bethesda, delivered the bookmarks to the Shighatini children. She shared news of the Bethesda children and also brought colored pencils and paper to the Sunday school. In exchange the Shighatini children used church benches as tables to eagerly create bookmarks for the Bethesda children. The Shighatini bookmarks will be presented to Bethesda's Sunday School children.

## Bethesda Sunday school children respond

When the Bethesda children learned that the Shighatini children needed money for school uniforms, they decided to send their offerings. Their money doubled when an anonymous Bethesda member heard about the children's generosity and spontaneously matched their offering. The Bethesda Sunday school and matching gifts from two sessions made it possible for almost all pre-primary and primary students ages three through 14 to attend school. This program is continuing. In Shighatini children must have uniforms to attend school.

Shighatini Lutheran Sunday school, pastors and teachers are very interested in getting all children in Shighatini to go to school, whether Lutheran, other Christian religions, Muslim or African religions. By providing money for uniforms and school fees, Bethesda children are relating to all children who live in the Shighatini village.



Shighatini  
School



## Scholarship for Lutheran secondary student

The Tanzanian secondary level is similar to high school in the U.S. In Shighatini the Tanzanian Lutheran church operates the secondary school. Though it follows the standardized Tanzanian curriculum, it is allowed to include Lutheran Christian education. Tuition is \$500 per year or \$250 for the first semester from January through May and \$250 for the second semester from mid-July to the end of November.

The Shighatini Lutheran Secondary School asked Bethesda for tuition scholarship funds to support orphans and other needy students from Shighatini parish. This fall semester Bethesda is supporting one student whose father is in prison. Pastor Walter Msangi and the Shighatini education committee select the students who will receive the tuition scholarships to attend Shighatini Lutheran Secondary School.

## Shopping for books

Though the Tanzanian government mandates a standardized national curriculum, text books are scarce. A classroom in Shighatini may have only one text book and that is for the teacher only.

Bethesda was asked to provide money for text books for the Shighatini primary school attended by 400 students in standards (grades) 1 to 7. Bethesda collected funds and determined how to deliver them in a way that would involve a Lutheran representative in the purchase. (In Tanzania, the head master, a government official, decides which books to purchase.)

Recently Bethesda members accompanied the Shighatini primary school head master to a bookstore in Moshi, a larger city about an hour from Shighatini. The head master spent much time carefully reviewing books before he decided which would be the best to purchase for his primary school. The books will supplement simple teaching materials such as sticks and bottle caps that aid children as they learn to count and do arithmetic.

## Future goals

Building a dining hall ranks as a high priority for the Shighatini Lutheran Secondary School. Currently, children often eat lunch in their classrooms because frequent rain keeps them indoors. The dining hall also could be used for school and community events. Bethesda also plans to continue to help with funds for books and scholarships.

Carla said, "Witnessing the joy people experienced in sharing their faith and strengthening their communities has helped me understand more fully that we are all part of one world-God's world."

Pastor Randy Gehring wrote recently, "Bethesda Lutheran Church is a member of the worldwide body of Christ whose purpose and mission is to love and bless the world." The covenant between Shighatini and Bethesda Lutheran congregations fosters relationships to do this mission.

For more information or to become personally involved, you may contact

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