

DATE: MARCH 3, 2011

TO: RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS, ORANGE CUNTY

FROM: JAN CARMICHAEL, TANZANIA 2007-2009

RE: REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR
TANZANIAN VILLAGE PROJECT

In August 2009 I was preparing to complete my Peace Corps assignment in Igoma Village. My last day in the village was to have been September 15. To complete one of my final village projects I had arranged to have solar power installed at the village dispensary. A down payment had been paid to the local technician and final payment of One Million Shillings would have been paid upon completion of the installation on Monday, August 17. Unfortunately, I became ill on Sunday, August 16 and was evacuated from Tanzania for medial treatment. I was never able to return to Igoma Village.

Need for lights for the small, sparsely equipped dispensary had been hoped for for a long time. I had attended the birth of a baby one night while holding one of three flashlights to assist the local medical officer. The very worst of emergencies almost always occurred at night. Open fires burned within the village's mud huts, and children often fell into them, or had boiling water spilled on them, resulting in horrible burns. With children too injured to be properly cared for in the dark, parents were relegated to walking many miles to another, better equipped clinic. Many did not live long enough to receive that treatment. Women who, while attempting to deliver a baby, developed complications (either during labor or after delivery) had to be sent on to another site for help. They too were often unsuccessful due to walking a significant distance since there was no available transportation. While these circumstances reveal several problems worthy of enlightened assistance, we can begin with just one small step. A lighted dispensary would provide for a greater probability of better care.

Funds for the project completion were in my bank account in Njombe at the time I was evacuated. Because of my absence from the area a Peace Corps representative went to the bank and requested my account be closed and the money transferred to the Corps. The bank refused to make the transfer without authorization from me. Due to apparent emphasis on more pressing duties, the need for authorization from me was not communicated to me for months. After almost a year, the necessary prerequisite formalities were submitted and the bank closed my account. However, due to unknown circumstances, the One Million Shillings balance had been reduced to 25,000 shillings. In my opinion, the bank, knowing that I would not return to the area, siphoned off the funds to a near minimum. (Graft and dishonesty is widespread in Tanzania, and often at the highest levels.) Therefore, the solar lighting project for the village dispensary was never completed. I am now hoping to collect the necessary funds to forward to trusted villagers to see that the solar panels be finally installed and the only medical assistance facility for the village and the surrounding area be able to aid the villagers in the darkest of conditions. The financial need is approximately \$1,000 American dollars.

If the Orange County RPCV chapter is willing to assist, any amount toward this end will be appreciated. I submit this with the utmost respect and appreciation.