

### ***Susan, Achieng's daughter about her First visit to Hope Home:***

I suddenly felt the bus stop. I woke up with a slight panic "Are we there?" I asked in a feeble voice as I watched Lin take out our back packs from the bus rack. I threw mine onto my shoulder and followed Lin, Leah and other passengers out of the bus. It had been a long journey, all I needed was to stretch my legs.

We were now at Oyugis town. We followed my sister as she searched for \$ (belwaarde?) for her phone. She wanted to call mum and tell her we had arrived. She finally found some 50 shilling credit and called her. Now we had to wait on the light *drizon*. Most people were now heading home or buying some supper for it was evening. The evening *drick* ate through my skin as I regretted why I *hadn't* carried a warmer sweater. Maybe it was because we were in such a hurry that morning. I spotted a car that resembled my mum's small family car. We couldn't believe what met our eyes. We were all routed on the spot as mam passed by.

The car was all covered with red mud. It was even embarrassing to run after it. We came over our stupid pride and stopped it.

There were a few joyous hugs and as quick as a flash we were back on the road driving to a home that was a mystery to the three girls sitting at the back seats.

It started raining as we drove on the murrum road. "This will be hard." I thought. All of a sudden the car got stuck on the mud. The tyres rolled and rolled as the engine made the most gruesome noise. It was like we had gone on a Safari in the Maasai Mara on a rainy day. The driver made all attempts to drive the car out. Believe me it was a job well done, because we were out before you could say, "Can we help?"

The car drove smoothly once more. It cut a smooth corner, drove through two green gates and parked at the back of this huge house. As I walked out of the car, tiny nice faces came by. "Welcome home," came my mum's voice. We got in through the kitchen door. The children came to meet us as mum introduced them one by one. "This is Aluoch," she said. A small, sweet, chubby girl came by. I held out my hand as she said hello. "This is Newton," and immediately he saw us he started crying. One of the nanny's came and picked him up. "This is Alicia," I held out my hand and also said hello. She was so sweet. I also met Briton, Elizabeth and Miliscent who had a fever and was lying down. We made a tour of the whole house, which was a nice thing. All that was left of the day was to have some nice supper and play with the children. A good rest would be for later. We slept with a hot cup of tea for a big \$ was before us.

It was an early day break. I was awoken by the cry of the youngest of all the children Serge, who is 3 months by now. I got out of bed and immediately went out to look at the compound. I couldn't believe my eyes, "what a view", I thought. The compound looked homely but *what* you could feast your eyes on where we were was ... was the best kind of work mother nature had done just yet.

"Breakfast ready!" came my mum's voice from the dining room. The moment I heard of breakfast I got out of my trance and realised how hungry I was. Everybody had a hearty breakfast and I was happy to clean out after we were done. In the meantime Newton, Alicia and Aluoch were having "pity time", as they call it. Mum asked for me and told me that she was going to Nairobi because she had some important meeting. She left immediately. I spent the whole morning playing with the children especially Aluoch who is so fun loving.

A wonderful meal we had at lunchtime, I kept on eating until I realised I had taken five sweet helpings. In the afternoon the children were asleep. All there was to do was to have a nice bath and read a nice book and that's what I did.

You could think that the children had alarms in their heads that told them when it was the absolute right time to wake up. Immediately supper placed on the dining table they were out of deep *slum*.

All the relieving silence was lost and chuckles replaced it. All the children sat down as Aidal, one of the nannies served their food. The rule is different here, children first, not ladies first. I had never seen a group of children eat together, maybe at school, but this was different. They were still training on to hold their tiny spoons, they took their food in nibbles especially Aluoch, Newton and Alicia. What I noticed, most of them totally

disliked vegetables. They kept on \$ ways to do away with their well cooked sukumawiki, swallowing it. This was mostly on Newton who ate all his ugali and when it was time to eat his kale, he started chewing it and not swallowing it. When dinner was over cheeks were swollen stiff. Lori, a nanny also noticed something was wrong and forced him to open his mouth. A hand of sukamawiki fell out. I enjoyed my ugali, sukumawiki and chicken.

I went out to sit in the sitting room or the "teddy room". The room had all this nice teddy bears. I couldn't believe that mum had left, Lin had gone to visit my grandmother 'Mother'. They were both away but the place still felt as homely as ever. Everybody had a cup of tea and jumped onto their beds.

"Cock-a-doodle-do!," the cock crew. I blinked my eye and opened them. I tried to move but I was so tired. I heard Serges morning cry, "Why now," I thought. I'm not that of an early starter on holidays and weekends. I tried to ignore it and went back to sleep. May be it was hours later when I woke up again. I made my bed as fast as I could. "Alicia, give me five," came a sweet soprano voice. "Aluoch, give me five." "Mum is back," I said to myself. I hurried to the kitchen, there she was. I hugged her and went to sit for breakfast.

After breakfast mum asked me to go help her in the farm. I said a big yes. It wouldn't be that bad to go and do some planting and get my clothes dirty with some digging. I followed her as we walked to the shamba. The whole place was a job well done. I knew that when mum had the golden chance to farm, she would try her best to plant the most nutritious foods. There were butter bean which were so healthy and beautiful too because they had all this white flowers. There were other varieties of beans but I can't remember their names since mum mentioned their names in Luo. There were potatoes, maize, finger millets, vegetables like lettuce, sukumawiki, kales. We planted some onions and did a lot of weeding.

Since I was not used to this kind of work I left early a lot \$ of the other workers strength. I had never had my clothes this dirty before. I washed my hands and legs and took a nap. Sleep or no sleep I can't describe what I had for the children were jumping up and down playing.

Susan, 2nd May 2006