

# Distance means nothing as church helps Kenya

BY JESSE BELL

They may be on separate continents, in separate countries, with very separate lives, but members of the Trinity Bible Church Ottawa (TBCO) have not let that stand in the way of them helping hundreds of men, women, and children in Kenya.

A project called You Feed Them was launched during a "40 Days of Community" group gathering in the summer of 2008. The gathering was meant to bring church members together and have them realize that they were joined for a reason. In doing so, the group was to work on an outreach project together.

The church members met with Kenya-native Silas Owiti Oduor, who now lives in Ottawa, and created You Feed Them.

The aiding organization is meant to find solutions to what, right now, is sending children to bed hungry and thirsty each night. Its mission, according to their Web site, is to "grow self-sustaining solutions that will provide economic stability, famine relief and spiritual nourishment, both locally and abroad."



From left: Eric Olsen, Mariann Sheldrick, Karen Westrup, Roland Piorier, Sally Grey, and Tom and Jan Phillips churn soil on the church acreage Saturday, Oct. 4.

The church, with support from local individuals, businesses and farmers, is planning on farming organic produce and raising money to support the project. Funds will go towards an in-school breakfast and lunch program for the school or-

phanage, as many children do not eat when they are at home.

Funds will also offer support for the Voice of Salvation and Healing Church and will go towards the purchase of 20 acres of Siaya District farmland.

So far a total of \$14,000 has been raised for the acreage in Siaya.

Olego Cia, a small village in Siaya, is where Mr. Owiti Oduor was born. He remembers the area well, but not for all positive reasons.

"It's my village," said the

microbiologist. "I've seen people go hungry there. At one time I did."

On Oct. 4, he stood with the TBCO members on the church acreage near Osgoode, hands gripping a shovel and turning soil. The soil he digs now will grow organic food that will be sent to his village; a part of Kenya and a part of himself, helping to feed the people who live there.

Part of the 111 acres that surround TBCO is going to be used as a community supported agriculture (CSA), whereby food that is produced will be sold locally and proceeds will support the efforts You Feed Them is doing for Siaya. The members are turning the soil, picking out the rocks and then adding compost cow manure.

"This is a breakthrough in organic biotechnology, specifically sub-terranean, probiotic inoculation of the soil," explained Roland Poirier, project organizer from TBCO.

"We are bringing life back to this soil."

These probiotic strains of 'friendly' bacteria that Mr. Poirier refers to will be put into the soil at the church and at the acreage in Kenya. It has proven to increase productivity and nutritional value to the produce grown within the soil.

On Oct. 31, the team — including Mr. Poirier and Yetta Dekker from TBCO, organizer Sue Blake of Midland, and Mr. Owiti Oduor and his family — will be travelling to Kenya to turn the soil on the acreage they have there, hoping to recreate what is happening to the church soil at TBCO.

"It's about good news, salvation is what we are doing," said Mr. Poirier. "We're not just feeding human bodies but we're feeding the spirit."

Twenty-five of the acres surrounding the church will also be used for certified organic grass-fed beef, said Mr. Poirier.

The plan is to raise the beef on pesticide free pastures, only feeding them organic grass and drying the beef jerky, then sending it vacuum-sealed to Kenya. About 50% of the remaining beef will be sold locally to support the project.

"With this new breakthrough in biotechnology," he said.

"There is no reason for starvation in the world."

As for Mr. Owiti Oduor, he is nervous and excited to go back to his village, but the excitement outweighs any fear he may have.

"I want to bring hope, that these people have a reason to keep on living," he said, touched by what all involved are doing for Kenya, a country he once called home.

"Humanitarian responsibility has no geographic boundaries," said Mr. Poirier.

*Please visit [www.youfeedthem.com](http://www.youfeedthem.com) to learn more and find out how you can get involved.*

