



Arbre de vie
Lebensbaum / Tree of life
Den Bedürftigen eine Zukunft geb...

ARBRE DE VIE - BENIN

NOVEMBER 2010

Protecting children in difficult living conditions

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“May your Kingdom come. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Matthew 6:10

Dear friends,

We have a lot to report on after the summer break! As you know, a mission team from Ohio, USA visits us every summer, and we also have various other pieces of news from Arbre de vie in Benin and our other associations.

A young team from Ohio on a mission at Yedidja

This year's team was an exceptional one! The average age was lower than usual and we only had one male participant. We also had 3 team members with the same surname: Dee, the Children's ministry administrator at BCN, and two of her children. The 10 team members had the opportunity to make friends with the children, and we found ourselves wondering whether the kids had actually already picked their "special friend" before the team arrived as everyone seemed to get on so well! Or was it the other way around? The team members had received pictures of the kids with their names before departure and some of them knew them already! Everybody quickly found their special friend, and Corey, the only boy, was quickly surrounded by our boys! We had a good time together, and it was great to see how each team member tried to adapt to the culture and got more or less used to the quite different food! The team's activities included gardening (weeding); evangelism; a visit to the hospital; a trip to a village and a Sunday service in Sakété.



Ohio-Team 2010 in Sahoro



Walk through Sakété

The volunteer season!

Two of our volunteers, Betsy and Rachel, came with the team from Ohio, both staying on for longer after the team's trip. Rachel was with us for an extra 3 weeks, and Betsy is staying for 4 months. Both have helped us enormously with both the educational work and everyday life. Betsy has become the 'Queen of the Treats'! Rachel was granted a bursary to buy school supplies with which she purchased a lot of school books and supplies for the kids. Betsy has only a week left now and we and the kids will miss her dearly!

We also had Angie (USA) helping with the children and every day activities, and Lydie (France), an accountant, who trained our staff in Excel and accountancy. Both have contributed enormously to our project. We thank Betsy especially who has sacrificed 4 months after her graduation just to help out with the NGO. May God bless all of our volunteers who have shared in the children's daily lives.



Betsy is making biscuits for Tati's farewell party

Gabi's trip to Germany and the annual members' meeting of Lebensbaum e.V.

I was thankful for the opportunity to spend the summer holidays in Germany with the girls. We visited friends in several places and I was also able to attend Lebensbaum's annual member's meeting. The committee was reelected for another year until the Faton family returns to Germany and takes on the directorship of the association.

The girls enjoyed our time in Germany where we went on many walks and Jamina was happy to use her scooter which she had been missing. The fact that we were invited to visit zoos 3 times in 5 weeks was not too much for the girls, and almost every time we left the house, Lena would ask if we were going to see the elephants! She was very impressed by these creatures and at various occasions she would insist on showing me how elephants eat with their trunks! Other highlights of our European trip were visits to Strasbourg, Hamburg and Neukirchen-Vlyun with friends and meeting my sister in Munich where we spent an entire day at the zoo together. I thank God for protection on the road and for very rich encounters with friends.



Jamina & Lena at the zoo in Hamburg

Biblical workshop with Daniel Freidinger

One of the highlights of this year was the visit of Daniel Freidinger, a friend from Strasbourg. He came to Benin to give biblical seminars on the last days. The participants at the seminar he gave in Sakété all expressed the desire for Daniel to come back and conduct more teaching. His visit at the orphanage was also one that the children will long remember. It was full of love and there were gifts for the children. They received each a T-Shirt, a bag, writing utensils and a baseball cap.



The Yedidja children and co-workers with their gifts from « Le Pas - France »

The Yedidja family has grown!

Yemissi is Alice's older sister. Alice has been in the orphanage since 2004. When we carried out our survey in 2003, we took Alice in and added Yemissi (approx 12 years old) to our database. We had hardly heard from their mother in the intervening period, until recently when she came to the orphanage several times to ask us to also take Yemissi. After detailed discussions with her, it became clear that this would be the best thing for Yemissi. We're very glad to welcome a new family member!

The ORO Cult

The Oro ceremony took place in the summer as it does every year. Oro is a voodoo cult practised by the Yoruba people and others in south-east Benin. During the three-week long ceremonial period, the uninitiated are not allowed to leave their homes on certain days so that they do not see Oro being practised. Women who are out on the street when it happens can be killed. The intensity of these ceremonies has been growing steadily in recent years which makes it a very challenging period. This year Ramadan also fell in the same month which lead to a number of religiously-motivated clashes in Sakété. Several people were injured and there were some deaths. Our colleagues are very glad that it is now over and that everyone is safe and sound.

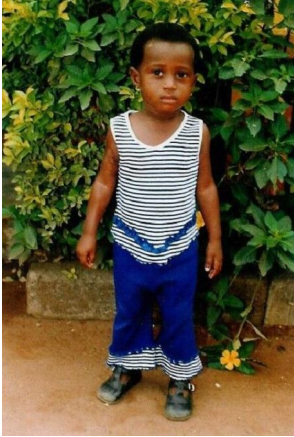
Ashley with Yemissi (right), her mother, Alice (younger sister) und Daniel (step brother)



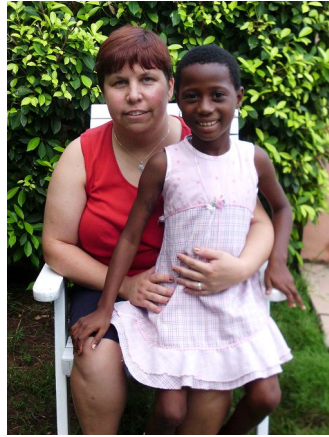
First Benin-USA adoption: It's always hard to say goodbye

Although the family grew, we also had to say our goodbyes to one of the others. Tatiana is one of our younger children at 8 years old. She came to the orphanage in 2006 having lost her mother when she was a baby. Her father had already retired and couldn't care for little Tati without his wife. Thus she came to the orphanage, where her half sister Charlotte has been the cook and foster mother for the kids for a number of years.

When the first group came from Ohio in 2008, Tonya met Tati and it was love at first sight! On return to the States, she began to think about adopting her. Tonya's husband and children immediately got on board with the idea of adding another member to the family and the paperwork commenced. After a long wait and many trips to various offices and waiting rooms, Tati finally got her visa and she is now with new new family. May God bless this new period of her life! We will never forget her and hold her close in our



Tatiana before she came to the orphanage



Tati with her adoptive mother from Ohio, USA. October 2010



The Yedidja family says good-bye to Tatiana: We will miss her!

School has started again!

Last year, the school year unfortunately didn't run as smoothly as it should have. Regular strikes, which kept teachers out of their classrooms, had a big impact on the students' results. Out of the 26 school children in Yedidja, six took the final primary school exams. Four managed to pass but only one of the twin girls who took the middle-school exams passed. In total, four of the primary students need to repeat the year. School started again on the 4th October after the 3-month long summer holidays and almost a month passed before there was a teacher for every class.

We say a big thank you!

Thank you for the funding for the playground which has now been built – the kids are having a lot of fun!

Thank you for the land plots that were paid for by many friends from Ohio. Arbre de vie now owns 20 plots of 25x25m which is a total of 12 500m².

Thank you for the donations for the perimeter wall.

The Faton family thanks you all for your support. Thank you for helping to give these children a happy future and also for supporting us as a family.

Yours, Gabi, Honoré, Jamina and Lena-Joy

In the headlines: **Flooding in Benin**



The UN High Commission for Refugees estimates that the total number of people affected by flooding in Benin has reached 680 000. In the face of this immense suffering, an airlift has been set up to provide basic supplies to those in the affected areas. The provisional numbers indicate over 300 dead and several thousand wounded in Benin alone. Cholera has also broken out in Cotonou with estimates suggesting about 800 cases so far.

We want to help and have already opened discussions with some partners about providing humanitarian and medical aid.

Bank account information

In the USA

Recipient: BCN

In the memo line write: „African child sponsorship, (name of the child if known)“

Address: c/o Ashley Barchus, 1850, N.

Fairfield Road, Beavercreek, OH 45432

Arbre de vie - Benin

Société Générale de Banques au Bénin

Avenue Clozel

01 BP 585

Cotonou

Bank code: B0104

Counter (guichet): 01000

Account no.: 10460923001

RIB 35,

IBAN : B0104 001001046092300135

SWIFT: SOGEBJBJ