

Letter from Jane Agola



July 5, 2006

Dear Amy [Symons]:

Thank you for introducing me yet again to those who have put Nyalgunga onto the world map. I'm very very much grateful to those who have brought true empowerment to the women of Nyalgunga [western Kenya].

The only empowerment that women can get is economic empowerment, which allows them to make some of the decisions without having to wait for someone else to make those decisions. It used to be that widows had to listen to their husband's male relatives and wait for them to make decisions about their fates and those of their children.

When the father of the family died, many orphaned girls were told to leave school and get married, and the boys were also told to drop out of school so they could join the farm labor force to carry on where their late fathers left off. For the widow, her fate was also sealed. She was supposed to re-marry some low-life relative in order to have an identity.

In Nyalgunga all this has changed. Amy has arranged for some orphans of both sexes to go to high school; Pam Clifford is forever concerned about the welfare of the Nyalgunga widows. If one visits Nyalgunga today, all you hear is about cooperative land-buying plans, duplexes where homeless widows can reside until they get a permanent place to live in, and, thanks to Karen [Kotoske], women even now know about banking and budgeting!

The high school students have their school fees paid for a whole year, a thing which sounds more like fiction than reality, because in Nyalgunga when I was growing up, even with both my parents living, I was not always able to afford even just one semester's school fees! I continue to pray for Alice [a 2005 AAW Woman of the Year] and James to find wisdom and knowledge and the blessing from God so they can continue to guide the Nyalwodep women into a future that will be worth reaching.

To Amy, Pam, Karen, Verla, and all those who have made this possible, I not only salute you but continue to pray that God gives you back abundantly what you are giving to Nyalgunga.

For my part, any time, any day, I'm available should any of you need my assistance in any way.

Regards and God bless you all.

Jane Agola
Madison, AL

Editor's Note: Jane Agola, who grew up in Nyalgunga, Kenya, will be entering a post-graduate program in Public Affairs at the University of Alabama/Huntsville this fall. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University/Huntsville in Food and Nutrition. She was awarded a post-graduate certificate in Gender and Development Studies from Nairobi University, Kenya. She has worked with Oakwood College instructors on issues involving HIV/AIDS instruction courses.

Comments from Readers

The Adventist Woman arrived this afternoon, and I've read it from one end to the other. It was great! Well done, and keep up the good work!

Nancy Marter
Silver Spring, MD

Send your comments concerning *The Adventist Woman* to PO Box 25025, Seattle, WA 98165-1925. Or email our editor, Carolyn Lacy, at carolynlacy137@verizon.net.