“COME AND SEE”: WELCOME TO MASENO MISSIONS!

Dear Volunteers and Visitors,
All of us at Maseno Missions welcome your visits and your help. Our varied service projects provide food, medicine, health care, education and spiritual support to Kenyans in the greater Maseno area and the ACK Diocese of Maseno North. We hope you will enjoy your experience here, and we hope the following information might help you prepare for your time with us.

LOCATION
Maseno, located in Western Province, is a rural, but growing, town 22 kilometers north of Kisumu, which is Kenya’s second largest city and situated on the shore of Lake Victoria. Maseno’s elevation is about 4,000 ft. above sea level. The mid-day temperature is 75-85 degrees, but it is cooler at night, in the evenings and early mornings. Our rainy seasons occur from late March to June and from August to October. Because we are located at the equator, daylight lasts from about 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. all year-round.

TRAVEL, CURRENCY and LODGINGS, EN ROUTE
Explore the Internet for bargain tickets to Nairobi. Safari tourists abound during summer, so book your flights early. Domestic flights from Nairobi to Kisumu are scheduled twice daily on weekdays and more often on Fridays and Sundays. The local carriers are East African Express, Fly 540, Jetlink and Kenya Airways. Most have up-to-date websites. We ask that you arrange to arrive in Kisumu on a morning flight or in Maseno on an afternoon bus. (The “Easy Coach” leaves Nairobi at 7:00 a.m. and arrives in Maseno about 3:00 p.m.) If you must take a plane or a bus that arrives near or at dark (6:30 p.m.) in Kisumu, you will need to spend the night there. Try the Sunset Hotel, the Imperial Hotel, or the New Victoria Hotel. We will collect you in the morning. Please advise us of your schedule as soon as possible so we can arrange to meet you.

When you deplane at Jomo Kenyatta Airport in Nairobi, if you do not yet have a visa, get in the line marked VJSAS, and be prepared to present $25 in U.S. currency with your passport and international vaccinations card. (You can also get a visa through the Kenyan Embassy in the U.S., but it takes several weeks.) When you have cleared passport control, go down the stairs to the baggage and customs area. There are flush toilets on this level. There is also a “FOREX” currency exchange office inside the baggage and customs area, and an ATM outside customs, immediately to your left as you exit. It would be prudent to test your debit/credit card there. Exchange your U.S. dollars (or withdraw Kenyan Shillings/KSh from the ATM machine) at the airport – sufficient for Nairobi taxis, hotels and buses if you are spending the night. You might also want to exchange/obtain additional cash while you have the opportunity, since there is no ATM machine at the airport in Kisumu. (See the “Money in Maseno” section that follows.)

Retrieve your bags (carts are free) and head for the TAXI area in the lobby. There will be a crowd with signs awaiting passengers, and taxi drivers will vie to assist you promptly. The Anglican Guest House has a shuttle that may be able to meet you if you are staying there. Call ahead to arrange. Taxi owner John Mulusya (or one of his drivers) can also meet you. His email is jmulusya@yahoo.com, cell from Kenya 07-21816574. His charges are on the high side (2000 Ksh, approximately, for the trip to town), but he is trustworthy.
If, however, you have an immediate connection to Kisumu, the domestic airline departure terminals are nearby and well marked. You will need to go through security again there and re-
check your bags. The international limit for checked baggage is now usually 51 pounds per bag, two bags per person. **Check your carrier for specific regulations. On domestic flights within Kenya, the limit is 44 pounds per person, sometimes less.** If your bags are over the limit, you will have to return to the office and pay a surcharge.

If you are spending the night in Nairobi, make sure that you arrive at the airport 1.5 hours in advance the next day. It is possible to arrange with your taxi driver from the airport to return to pick you up at your hotel in the morning to return to the airport. **Flora Hostel Consolata Sisters** on Fifth and Ngong Roads – across from the entrance road to Kenyatta National Hospital – is clean, reasonably priced and not far from the airport (1600-2000 KSh taxi fare). Tel. 2723013/2723087. FAX: 272070. Email: florah@wananchi.com. A single w/private bath is about 1600 KSh; a double (pp) or shared bath is 1300KSh. Please let them know when you book your room if you are arriving on an evening flight so that they can leave a key to your room with the security guard at the gate. Also let them know if you are leaving before 7:00 a.m. for Kisumu so that someone will be available in the office to check you out. The **Anglican (ACK) Guest House** on Bishop Road, off Ngong Road, is also good value, a bit more comfortable and higher in price (about 3200 KSh for a single). The ACK does not always answer email promptly, but try them: anglicanghnbi@swiftkenya.com. Their phone from the U.S. is 011-254-722-453355. In Kenya, call 020-2723200. The taxi driver mentioned above, John Mulusa, is both responsive and reliable. See bottom of Page 1 for his email and cell #. He can book you into any of the other church-related (ACK, Mennonite, Methodist, Presbyterian, RC, Seventh-Day Adventist) guest houses. All are in safe areas, and all have comparable fees.

[“Easy Coach” provides reliable bus service from Nairobi to Maseno, but it is unsafe at night. Tel. 210711. Email: easycoach@wananchi.com. Kisumu trains are unsafe, period. **Caution:** Do not accept any food or drink from travelers on public transport in Kenya.]

**MONEY IN MASENO: CASH and CREDIT/DEBIT CARDS**

You will find little need to spend much money in Maseno. The equivalent of $100 in U.S. $20 bills is suggested for a two-week stay – or perhaps double the amount you think you might need. If you bring U.S. dollars to exchange, **be sure the bills are issued after 2003.** The machines used to check and dispense currency accept only “new” money and fairly crisp bills. Try to obtain smaller KSh denominations and coins in exchange, if possible, because Maseno’s cyberecafés and merchants often do not carry change for large bills. The current exchange rate is about 78 KSh per U.S. dollar.

Before departing from the U.S., contact your bank and credit card companies to inform them that you will be using your cards in Kenya. This is absolutely necessary, due to the increase in identity theft! Contact them again when you return. The ATM’s in Maseno and Luanda, the nearby market town, are convenient, but some cards do not work there. There are ATM’s in Kisumu, but we usually travel to Kisumu only once a week. (Moreover, data lines are occasionally down.) Travelers’ Checks are not accepted in many places and commissions/fees are quite high. Carry your credit cards, cash, ID and tickets in a money belt and/or tucked elsewhere on your person, hidden beneath your clothing, and secure your camera, etc. Skilled pickpockets “work” all over the world.
ACCOMMODATIONS IN MASENO

We have two guest houses, one at Maseno Mission Hospital (“Rotary House”) and one at St. Philip’s Theological College. Both locations have security guards. You need to plan to stay inside after 6:30 p.m. It is, unfortunately, not safe to be outside after dark.

Room and board at both is either **S15 in advance, per day, per person**, payable to All Souls’ Episcopal Church, 1475 Catalina Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92107 or **else 1000 KSh, per day, per person, upon arrival**. (It is difficult to exchange money in Maseno. Please plan to pay in KSh if you pay locally.)

The hospital’s guest house serves two meals a day: breakfast and evening dinner. Guests fix their own lunches. Guests at St. Philip’s fix their own breakfasts and lunches. A cook prepares dinner. Food is basic, and safe drinking water is available at both guest houses. We can provide only limited dietary accommodations. Please check with us in advance.

You may be asked to share a room at either location. Guest rooms have bunk beds, and all are furnished with mosquito nets, sheets, blankets, pillow and a towel. Water and electricity are quite valuable and often in short supply. Visitors are asked to take a maximum (less, if possible) of one shower per day. Please take “water conservation” showers: turn on the shower to get wet all over, turn off the water, soap from head to toe, turn the water back on and rinse quickly. In addition, please use battery operated sources of light whenever possible.

COMMUNICATIONS

Call your **cell phone** company to unblock your phone for international use. The company will also suspend your US service to save you money. Purchase a SIM card for the phone, plus a card to load minutes. For urgent calls, you may purchase SAFARICOM cards everywhere in Kenya to load minutes into one of Maseno Missions’ cell phones.

You can purchase stamps and aerogrammes at the local POSTA (post office) in Maseno. Postcards are available only in Kisumu, not Maseno. **Snail mail** can take anywhere from 2-6 weeks between the U.S. and Kenya. Parcel delivery is expensive and unreliable.

There is no internet service at either guest house. We hope to have a cybercafé at St. Philip’s campus by August 2009. **Email and internet** services are available at Maseno University’s cybercafé near the hospital, at the Posta or at cybercafés in the village. The hours vary, and the cost is usually about 1 KSh per minute. There is no broadband service in Kenya, so email and internet browsing are considerably slower than in the U.S.

Hardisons’ Cell #: From the U.S.: 011-254-722-627-015
From inside Kenya: 0722-627-015

Email Address: hardison@africaonline.co.ke

Mailing Address: St. Philip’s Theological College
P.O. Box 1
Maseno 40105 Kenya
PACKING / GENERAL

Required Documents: Passport, Visa, International Vaccination Card, Student/Other ID, Debit/Credit Cards (consider two, in case one gets gobbled by an ATM), Contact Lists.

Remember to bring email addresses and telephone numbers for all of your contacts -- travel and financial companies, as well as family and friends. Make two copies of all documents – one to carry separately from your originals, the other to leave in the U.S.

Suggested Items:
- TSA luggage locks
- Money belt
- Travel clock
- Wristwatch
- Poncho/umbrella
- Nail clippers
- Emery board
- Sunglasses
- Extra pr. prescription glasses (in hard case)
- Headlamp/Flashlight w/batteries
- Camera (w/extra memory card and batteries)
- Battery Charger
- Adaptor and converter/transformer for (Kenya 220-240 V)
- Insect repellant (73%+ DEET)
- Lanyard for room key
- Duct tape
- Water bottle (safe water available @ both Maseno Missions guest houses)
- Set of single sheets (not required)
- Towel (not required, but REI pack towels are great)
- Nylon string or rope for clothesline
- Garbage bags (2-3)
- Zip-lock bags (varied sizes)
- Kiswahili phrase book
- Kenya guide book
- Paperbacks, other reading material
- Journal/notebook
- Pens, pencils (extras to share)
- Travel pillow
- Earplugs and eye mask (often “giveaways” on your flight)
- Toilet paper (available here)
- Small day pack/bag (for TP, camera, notebook, water bottle, etc.)

Suggested Clinical Items (for hospital volunteers):
- Latex gloves
- Stethoscope
- BP cuff
- Thermometer
- Ophthalmoscope (minus panoptic)
- Small notebook and pen

Maseno Missions appreciates donations of any “leftover” items or clothing. You are welcome to leave them for other visitors or for the Hardisons to allocate appropriately.

CLOTHING

Pack half of what you would imagine you might need. Consider cotton, wrinkle-resistant, hand-washable items. Pack as though you are willing to leave even your clothing behind as a donation. Suggested clothing for one week:

- Below-knee length skirts for women
- Pants (no jeans) for men
- Blouses/shirts with short/long sleeves
- Underwear and socks
- Walking shoes, sandals, shower flip-flops
- Sweatshirt for chilly evenings
- Sun hat and rain gear (poncho, umbrella)
- White lab coats (hospital personnel only)

Please, no sleeveless shirts, tank tops, spaghetti straps, bare midriffs or shorts!

TOILETRIES

Bring small quantities of toiletries: soap, shampoo, conditioner, lotion, sunscreen, laundry detergent, Purell/other hand cleaner, and feminine hygiene products. Clorox disinfectant wipes and baby wipes are handy when we have no water! More of most items can be purchased in Maseno and Kisumu. However, feminine hygiene products and sunscreen can be hard to find. (Be sure to check airline websites for carry-on regulations.)
MEDICATIONS

Malaria Prophylaxis (not optional)  Your Prescriptions!  Benadryl  Bandaids
Over-the-Country Allergy Meds  Ciprofloxacin  Vaseline  Multivitamins
Aspirin/Ibuprofen/Tylenol  Imodium/Lomotil  Peptobismol

Check with your health care provider about prescriptions and requisite immunizations for hepatitis, typhoid, yellow fever, etc. The US government travel website is also a good resource: www.travel.state.gov/travel. We strongly suggest that you consider registering for emergency health coverage, as well. A good place to begin is International SOS membership; students and teachers receive a discount.

A NOTE ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY

Children love having their pictures taken (show them, if possible), and Maseno Missions staff and clients are accustomed to visitors’ photography; but it is always polite to ask. Some tribes (outside of Maseno Missions) will expect payment if you take their pictures. Please do not take photographs in towns and cities. Your camera could be confiscated.

DONATIONS

If you would like to make monetary donations for mission projects, please send them to All Souls’ Episcopal Church, 1475 Catalina Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92107. Checks should be made out to All Souls’ Episcopal Church with “Maseno Project” on the memo line and in any accompanying note. The needs of the Orphan Feeding and Education Project, Orphan Health Initiative, St. Philip’s Theological College and Maseno Hospital vary widely. Please email hardison@africaonline.co.ke for current needs.

We sincerely appreciate everyone’s interest and support. However, since shipping costs and customs duty can exceed the value of donations, and since Kenya’s postal service is unreliable, we suggest that contributions of goods come via visitors’ suitcases only. Please do not bring candy or other “sweets.” Dental care is costly and hard to find here. The following items are always welcome: non-generic medicines; stuffed animals, balloons, toys and games for children ages 3-12; and soccer, volley and rugby nets and balls. If you bring an extra suitcase with donations from the U.S., you can fill it and return to the U.S. with items from Maseno Missions’ various micro-enterprises!

While here, visitors may be politely approached by individuals requesting “assistance.” Please, for the good of everyone concerned and regardless of the source, explain that all requests must be made directly to Dr. Nancy Hardison. Seemingly simple requests and/or outright gifts can become complicated matters, and the best of intentions may be misunderstood.

Please let us know, during or after your visit, if you have additional suggestions that might be helpful for you and/or other visitors. Asante sana. (Thank you very much.)

KARIBU KENYA and MASENO MISSIONS!

(Revised July 2009)