

My wife Lisa and I decided to do something a little different this summer and joined Myles and a group of 27 other volunteers with the aim of building houses for 4 families in Iten, Kenya.

We started the trip by visiting the families that we would be helping and hearing from some of the children who have already benefited from their school fees being paid for and taking a look at their current living conditions. This ranged from living in small houses about the size of a horse's stable, that the families can barely afford the rent for, to a tiny mud hut at the side of the road with a footprint about the size of a double bed that 6 people were sleeping in.

After meeting the families and seeing their current conditions we had all the inspiration we needed to spend the next 8 days putting the houses together step by step. It was amazing to see the progress over the days where a few small piles of materials and some bags of nails were transformed into 4 houses ready for the families to move into. Even my basic DIY skills were able to help saw, paint and hammer away and help make a solid contribution to each of the houses. It was also great to put my problem-solving skills into a completely new environment working out the best ways to hang plyboard walls rather than resolving project issues.

The day after the build was completed ribbons, nameplates and balloons were all in place ready for the opening ceremony where singing, dancing, official openings and blessings were performed on all houses. The families including some of the sponsored children all spoke about the positive impact that these new homes would have on their life.

Pictured alongside me and Myles is Viki who has been sponsored for some time via the Gathimba Edwards Foundation and with his new home, he can now concentrate on his studies without worrying about potential eviction of his family from their current house by failing to raise the monthly rent.

This has been a fantastic experience and I have really enjoyed seeing first hand the fantastic work that Myles, Gideon Gathimba and the whole team are doing in Kenya and the real difference they are making to children's lives.



**Alan McConachie**