

**Daniel Sedhom, 2012**

## **Marigat, Kenya**



*The calendar turned to May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011, a day that would mark a memorable and blessed start to a great experience in my life. I stepped off the plane into a land very different from anywhere I have seen or even imagined before. Marigat, Kenya became my home for the next six weeks, and my time spent there were filled with endless moments that would forever shape anyone who had the opportunity to visit this wonderful place.*



*I spent my time in Marigat, Kenya at a compound which consisted of a convent, a school, and a small medical clinic. The Franciscan nuns who ran the compound were amongst the most loving and compassionate people I have ever come to know. They had a remarkable appreciation for life and great pride in the work they did for their community. One might expect that people who live in such a tarnished land may have a bitter attitude. However, their joy for life was contagious, spreading to all the lives that they touch. They instilled a new found faith, love, and hope in me during my time working with them.*





*The compound was a great source of help for much of the surrounding towns and villages, providing medical, educational, and social services. The bulk of our service was working at the clinic. The clinic was a small dispensary that provided care primarily for babies, pregnant mothers, and young children. We did small tasks including giving oral vaccinations, vaccinations by injection, weighing babies, and filling out charts. The services we provided went a long way for the families we saw. Many of the patients came from as far a 2 hour journey by foot.*



*For the distant families living in extremely remote villages, a monthly mobile clinic visited their towns to bring the medical services to those who couldn't reach the dispensary. We worked quite a bit in the mobile clinic, meeting people who were truly isolated from the surrounding communities. Our dealings with the patients provided us with medical tools, people skills, and taught us life lessons on value and family that were instilled through our interactions with the Kenyans.*



*The Kenyans often lived in very primitive conditions. Huts, like the one depicted above, were typical homes for families consisting of as many as 14 members. The people learn to cope with what they have through the help from the nuns, the services of the compound, and by maintaining great hope in life. The cheer on the faces of many Kenyans is inspiring considering the conditions they are placed in. Resources are shared throughout a community such as water, food, shelter, and clothing. The compound provided not only the medical services of the clinic, but also provided education for children between the ages of 5 and 14. Social services were also a vital component of the work of the compound. The nuns tried to find a way to attend to the needs of the people. Food was rationed, water sources were provided, and people with personal and family issues were assisted through the grace and help of the nuns. We, the volunteers, would help in whatever way we could. When visiting the people of the surrounding villages we would play games with the children, listen to the stories of the locals, and bring a sense of understanding and a helping hand to the people we met. Yet, when meeting the villagers, we often were uplifted by their positive attitudes on life, which surpassed any of the services we could provide for the people.*





*The time spent playing with the children was always a guaranteed great time. These young girls and boys were always excited and full of energy. We brought toys, soccer balls, bubbles, stickers, and various other small gifts which the kids dearly appreciated. All the things they had, whether small or large, the beautiful boys and girls valued and were so thankful for. Either playing soccer, spending time in the class room, singing songs, or just talking about life, any moment spent with the members of St. Paul's School at the convent was sure to be a good one. It was amazing to see how much happiness can be reflected from the face of a child. They loved spending time with the helpers from "out of town." God blesses them so much in lightening their hearts and giving them these big smiles that would brighten up our days. It was a joy spending time in Marigat, Kenya, and our six weeks concluded but the memories formed are still lasting and will always remain. I now know that every time a speed bump comes by, the memories of my time spent in Kenya will certainly provide me with the feeling of appreciating everything.*

