



# Village News from BMISS

*From Our Village to Yours*

[www.buildingmindsinsouthsudan.org](http://www.buildingmindsinsouthsudan.org)

Spring 2013 Vol. 3



One of our classrooms!



Students celebrating their school!

## What a Difference a Roof Makes!

Village officials report:

\*Increased enrollment-from 500 boys and girls in 2011 to 1,000 by year end 2012.

\*Increased enrollment of girls from 87 in 2011 to 259 in 2012.

\*Adult education classes are held in the classrooms after the students leave at 3 p.m. Offerings include English, math, science and peace education.

Villagers now believe us when we say we are going to build Ajong Primary School!



## Ajong Primary School



The "other" classrooms



Adult Education in the afternoon

## Words From The Chair

**Appreciation and great expectations** are the BMISS themes for 2013.

We are thankful for our safe January trip to Ajong Primary School. Sebastian and the travel team saw the first four classrooms for the first time. BMISS looks forward to broader publicity for our grassroots, all-volunteer organization because of Helene's reporting and Matt's upcoming documentary. Fundraising efforts continue via our Ambassador Program as we share Sebastian and Mathon's story with others.

The board is excited to pursue our next block of classrooms this spring through your generous donations. (See our appeal letter.) Thank you for supporting Sebastian and Mathon's dream.

We are getting closer!

Sincerely  
Susan McDaniel, Board Chair



Our travel team: (left to right) board member Bonnie Lloyd, president and co-founder Sebastian Maroundit, WXXI reporter Hélène Biandudi and videographer Matt Adams. They spent 10 days in South Sudan as part of WXXI's special reporting on race and schools in South Sudan. Matt will soon make a documentary for BMISS.



Sebastian was blindfolded before seeing the school. Matt videotaped his first delighted reaction!

## Bonnie's Blog

### Dreaming Ajong Primary School

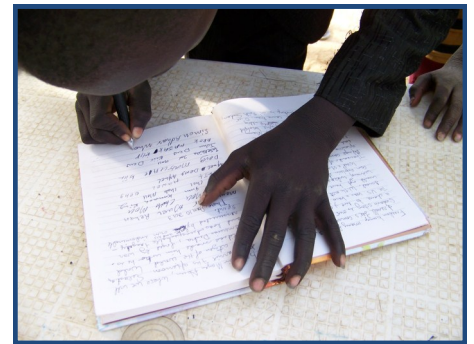
We blind-folded Sebastian. That was so fun! Helene put a sock around his eyes, and I led him toward the school. Matt stood at the ready with his camera as Sebastian stumbled toward the building. We were like children playing – the fun, the excitement, the sweetness of the moment. Sebastian's face was lit ear to ear!

I removed the blindfold and Sebastian morphed into an awestruck guide, his arm-raised index finger pointing out the loved spaces of a place he'd never seen before. Here, there – a dream come true! Bricks and mortar manifested by sheer belief and sweat and love. Walls and roof standing proudly beneath the African sun.

Ajong Primary School, School of Dreams, School of Joy!

Joy is palpable at Ajong. It's most easily seen in the smiling faces – the face of the old woman arriving daily to sing a song of thanks, the face of Dinka children playing schoolyard games. For me it was most palpable in the dancing and the drumming – the clapping-circled girls taking turns in center showing off their steps, the rhythmic-chorused boys beating on and marching 'round a common drum.

And the most joyful? The photo taken of each child writing his or her name in my journal. Thank you each and every one for the building of this dream.



Bonnie Lloyd



# Student to Student Connections



Skypeing in South Sudan with School 36 of the Rochester City School District fascinated students on both sides of the globe. "Do you walk 2 or 3 miles to school each day?" (No, we take the bus in Rochester.) "What do you eat for lunch at school?" (There is no food at the school in Mayen-Abun.)

Alexis is a 13-year-old from Fairport NY who is working on her Girl Scout Bronze Award by teaching others to make necklaces that support BMISS. These cute creations are made out of Scrabble tiles.



*Dear Sebastian,*

*Enclosed is a check for \$550.00... made out to the organization Building Minds In Sudan. Over the past few months I have been collecting money by selling some homemade necklaces I made myself. My total donation also includes money that was given to me for my Bar mitzvah. I am so glad that this organization allows children in Sudan to have a school building. I am so glad I am able to help the world in so many ways.*

*Sincerely,*

*Josh*

A student of Ajong Primary School writes her name in Bonnie's journal.



Third graders at the Discovery Charter School in Irondequoit NY sold their works of art in a silent auction for Building Minds In South Sudan. They made pictures with crayons glued to a canvas and then melted with a hair dryer, which created explosions of drippy bright colors in unique designs.





Students in one of the classrooms

**Building Minds in South Sudan**

The BMISS board wishes to extend special thanks to Ed Daniel for donating his services to legally change our name to the more accurate **BMISS**. The South Sudanese people also appreciate this distinction.

BMISS is happy to go "green". If you would prefer to receive this newsletter via e-mail, please write us at:

**contact@buildingmindsinsouthsudan.org**



Hélène gave out WXXI t-shirts.

Donate to:

**Building Minds In South Sudan**

Go online at: [www.buildingmindsinsouthsudan.org](http://www.buildingmindsinsouthsudan.org)

or send to:

**Building Minds in South Sudan  
5880 Pittsford-Palmyra Rd.  
Pittsford NY 14534-2444**

Make checks payable to: **BMISS**

My gift to help **BMISS**:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**JULY 7, 2013**

2nd Annual BMISS Dinner Celebration

Jack's Place

1200 Kings Hwy N Rochester NY

*Please join us for stories, food, laughter, silent auction and music. Tickets are \$25*



**Advisory Board Members**

BMISS would like to introduce our new **Advisory Board Members** to our donors. Please welcome:

**Daan Braveman**

President, Nazareth College, Pittsford NY

**Kathy Cleary**

Marketing and Sales, City Blue, Inc., Rochester NY

**Deng Mayen Deng**

Executive Chief, Mayen-Abun, South Sudan

**Mark Hare**

Columnist (retired), Democrat & Chronicle, Rochester NY

**Gaven Hurley**

Governor of Rotary District 7120, Pittsford NY

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Sebastian and his mom