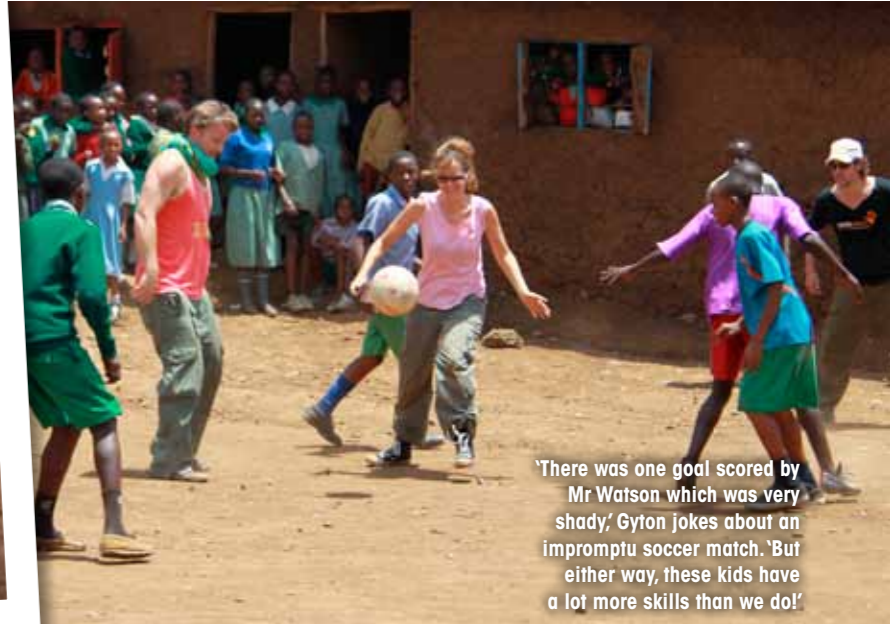


Kibera is Africa's second largest urban slum. The slum is the size of New York's Central Park, but houses more than a million people,' Gyton says



'There was one goal scored by Mr Watson which was very shady,' Gyton jokes about an impromptu soccer match. 'But either way, these kids have a lot more skills than we do!'

**ONLY IN OK!**  
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW & PICS

# OUT OF AFRICA

Four Aussie stars headed to Nairobi to make a big difference in the lives of Kenya's young slum-dwellers

**W**hen Aussie actor Gyton Grantley was offered the opportunity to visit Nairobi on a charity mission with Oasis Africa Australia, he knew it would be an adventure of a lifetime.

'I've been doing lots of charity work for the past 10 years, but never visited a slum on the other side of the world or witnessed kids living like this,' the *Underbelly* star tells *OK!* 'I was aware that it was going to be a full-on experience – it's not the most pleasant place to be. The slums are filthy, people live among rubbish, in complete poverty – and there's no sewage system. But once you get into the school and you see the smiles on the kids' faces, it's nice,' he admits.

Together with acting mates Clayton Watson (*Three Blind Mice*), Clayton's actress girlfriend, Renai Caruso (*Satisfaction*), and Nathaniel Dean (*Rush*), the 30-year-old star was in Kibera, Kenya, for two weeks. Their mission? To raise funds

for Oasis Africa Australia ([oasisafrica.net](http://oasisafrica.net)) and assist children at the slum's St John's School. *OK!* finds out what the stars got up to when they embarked on their humanitarian adventure...

**Tell us about the work you did in Africa...**  
Gyton: The school in the slum houses about 1000 students, and we were taking them for acting lessons and to painting classes... The highlight for me was meeting my sponsor kid, Benson. When I got my first letter from him, he said he liked to play drums. I was pretty intrigued to see what kind of drum it was – was it a water-buffalo skin or something? It was just an empty plastic bucket and a stick, but the kid's got rhythm and skill. We had a rap-off – I threw out my hip-hop styling and then they totally shut me down with their Swahili!

**What were your first impressions?**  
Clayton: The first thing is the overwhelming smell of raw sewerage. Once you're in there for a week or so, you find the triggers to block that out – and then you just realise the squalor.  
Renai: To be honest, I was a little afraid



Nathaniel, Gyton, Renai and Clayton (from left) were escorted by armed guards to protect them from Kibera's gangs



Gyton met his sponsor child, Benson (below), while Nathaniel has since decided to sponsor Yvonne (right)



'The Masai men performed a ceremony and I thought, "What the heck, I may as well show them my jump-kick", which brought on a lot of laughter from the Masai people,' Nathaniel says



The team inspired the kids' imagination through painting. 'They were able to leave their troubles at the door,' Clayton says. 'The wit and personalities of these kids, and the way they picked things up, was just amazing'

— especially because we were escorted into Kibera by guards with AK-47s. What shone through for me, though, was their sense of community, which was just awesome and a beautiful thing to see. **Gyton:** It was overwhelming when we first entered the slum. The desperation that's there... It's pretty confronting — you are walking over raw sewage and it's built on a garbage tip. Houses are built on broken-down plastic bags. We were having to jump over streams of flowing sewage, and then you see children play in it. We had armed guards just to protect us from the gangs.

**Renai, being the only girl, how did you feel?** I felt a bit guarded, and that the kids felt a bit guarded because it was such an intense first meeting. But before I knew it, I had this wonderful girl named Christine put her arms around me and escort me into the slum. When she started letting her guard down, all her friends did, too — and before we knew it, we were all covered in kids wanting to hold us and know us and it was just so gorgeous, it was out of control.

**What was the most rewarding thing you did?** **Nathaniel:** Gyton and I held some acting classes. The children's faces lit up and there were smiles all around as we pretended to be the animals



The group spent a night in a safari camp at the Masai Mara National Reserve, where they danced with the local tribe. Below: 'We all got a kiss from the giraffe!' Gyton reveals



of the Masai Mara. **Gyton:** Being greeted by a thousand beaming, bright, wonderful children, you forget about all the despair and your soul is filled with the beauty of their smiles and the hope — you remember why you're there.

'WE WERE COVERED IN KIDS WANTING TO HOLD US'

**You raised \$20,000 to assist eight students, who then graduated to go to boarding school...** **Nathaniel:** Meeting those eight kids who have worked so hard and now have the opportunity to further their studies outside of the slum was easily one of the best moments of the trip. **Renai:** It was just such an honour and privilege to be there and experience that with them. Eight people get to experience a whole new life — and it was cool to show the other students that, with hard work, this could be them standing up in front of the school, and them looking forward to a bright future.

**What sights did you struggle with the most?** **Gyton:** The question about opportunity and how



'I ended up winning the donkey race by a head,' Nathaniel declares. 'It's not the most comfortable experience... we were walking funny that evening that's for sure. Right: 'I'd love to say I caught [the fish] with my bare hands,' Clayton jokes



the world works. How can one person be born into this and others into a much more privileged society? You can't be ashamed of the life you live, though. We are just lucky we can take the opportunities we have and use them to the best of our abilities to help others. **Nathaniel:** The vastness of the slum, entering it and walking by the families crowded in small huts and children playing among rubbish was overwhelming. **Renai:** Yeah, water and sanitation, it's that simple. The amount of water we waste is incredible. I mean, if your number two doesn't go down, you can flush it again, but here they don't have that option. **Clayton:** I think when you walk into the slums... it's hard to explain. You deal with the sewage, the dust, the kids, and then on the other side of the fence you're looking at multimillionaires on the golf course hitting balls and driving around. It's a ridiculous contrast, really.

**What were the most emotional moments?** **Gyton:** You look into these kids' eyes and you can't believe how beautiful they are — and when you consider the opportunities they have, it's very moving. But you just try to remind yourself that you're here to help them, and there's a little hope. **Clayton:** It's definitely the best thing I've done

in my life, that's for sure. **Nathaniel:** Walking through Kibera was possibly the most horrific thing I've witnessed. However, meeting the kids has also inspired us to want to get back to shoot a film with them. **Renai:** There's just so much going on. This experience has just been amazing and I can't wipe the smile off my face.

**Were you glad to have your mates around?** **Gyton:** I couldn't think of any better mates to do it with. We're a good team and we get on well. **Nathaniel:** This was such a rewarding trip. It was my first time to Africa — to experience it with my best mates is something that'll stay with me forever. **Clayton:** It's been amazing. I think it's something we'll look back on in future years and realise how lucky we were to be able to do this. **OK!**

To sponsor a child or to learn more about Oasis Africa Australia's work in Kenya, visit [oasisafrica.net](http://oasisafrica.net).

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY RENAI CARUSO, NATHANIEL DEAN, AMANDA FRY, GYTON GRANTLEY & KAREN WATSON. THANKS TO VIRGIN ATLANTIC FOR SUPPLYING ALL FLIGHTS TO AND FROM AFRICA. FOR DETAILS, VISIT [VIRGINATLANTIC.COM.AU](http://VIRGINATLANTIC.COM.AU)