



The Giraffe Project Autumn 2017 Newsletter

www.giraffeproject.org



Welcome to our Autumn newsletter!

Another school year in Kenya is almost over with the highs and lows of any normal school. Successes, challenges and learning has gone on and all our students have developed and grown over the last 12 months. Eighteen of our most needy and motivated secondary graduates made it onto our College Programme with seven of them going to top Kenyan universities, the remainder to more vocational courses. This is such an achievement for our 'slum kids.' Parents who have never had the benefit of an education and now their child at university – what a difference to the family's future this will mean! The average working Kenyan has 10 dependents so it is easy to see the ripple effect of helping just one child achieve an education.

The school bus, bought after last year's Christmas Appeal has proved invaluable in many ways; educational trips, delivering students to bus stations at term end and transporting foodstuffs to store when are prices low. Grace, our GEC matron, says *'I am so grateful for the school van which has been of great help to us, especially in taking the sick students to hospital. God bless once again "asanteni sana" Swahili words meaning; thank you all very much.*

Both primary schools are doing well. Class 8 students are preparing to sit their final exams which will determine if they get the chance to go to GEC or whether they will be offered a more vocational course. The end of primary education is also a good time to reassess the need of all students, so some may leave the programme at this time, if their families can afford to support them through secondary education, so we can offer the chance of education to another deprived student. Polly, one of the teachers at Tumaini school, tells us *'my passion is to see children, especially the poor, grow up in a holistic manner in life so as to become independent. This gives me the zeal to continue working at Tumaini, where we teach and train up children with life skills to empower them to face their future and the challenges they encounter as they mature'*

However, there have also been challenges this year, not least the Kenyan elections. Anyone who could afford it left the slums in August to return to their tribal village to avoid any possible violence, despite the hugely inflated price of bus tickets. Our Primary schools are situated in Kibera and Mathare slums which are particularly vulnerable to riots and protests as tribal members from both political parties live side by side. As the 2007 elections ended in riots with over 1000 people killed, including parents of 3 'Giraffe' students, you can understand why families are anxious. As I write this we are still not sure if the re-election will take place on 26th October, but schools will close early so those who can afford it can leave the city. Meanwhile we all just hope and pray that the country will remain calm and people safe. Thank you again for your support of these vulnerable children. We cannot help everyone but at least we can start with one life at a time. As Liz, our Kenyan sponsorship coordinator says *'The Giraffe project: where everyone matters.'*

Jackie Newbold Sponsorship coordinator

Give as you Live

Give as you Live is an organisation that allows us to raise funds when you shop online at 4,200+ leading retailers including Amazon, eBay, John Lewis and Marks & Spencer. Every time you spend we get a percentage of your purchase price at no cost to you – and of benefit to us. Please consider signing up via giveasyoulive.com and help us earn while you do your Christmas shopping. Thank you.



Our secondary graduates at a peer counselling session



Form 4 leavers learn about the College programme and have a counselling session from a Careers advice company, Story Moja



Polly, a teacher at Tumaini and a valuable member of the Giraffe Project team

Thanks to a generous sponsor Joel had his much needed operation and can now have a healthy, active life



Watch out for our Christmas Appeal and 'Sponsor letters for Christmas' email – coming soon!

Growing better at GEC

Some Giraffe supporters will have seen at first-hand the black, gritty, hard soil out at GEC...some have even tried to dig it! Many will have experienced the baking sun on the Nairobi plateau, even if only visiting in 'winter' (the northern summer). With these conditions to deal with, it seems surprising to outsiders that John Mulandi ('Uncle'), GEC caretaker-extraordinaire, manages to grow such great crops of maize, tomatoes, onions, pepper and spinach.

In a project managed by the Giraffe Project Finance Officer, Lilian Walukhu, and implemented by John, the GEC 'shamba' (cultivated plot) now has a new irrigation system and a new shade cloth, to help keep the moisture in and the worst of the sun out. John's crops have always made a significant contribution to the diet of the GEC students – now he'll be able to do even more!

And more than that, the value of the shamba as a teaching resource, especially for our KCSE Agriculture students, will be greatly enhanced.

So a big 'thank you' to the generous donor and to 'Uncle' and Lilian for making this happen!

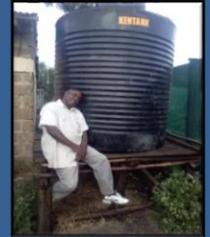
John Newbold, Trustee



Up goes the frame...



On goes the shade cloth...



Then the irrigation system...



And so the tomatoes grow!



Justus graduated as a pharmacist two years ago and now earning a good salary in a private pharmacy in Kiambu



Counting the votes!

First Impressions of a 'ghetto kid' at university!

"SO HOW IS CAMPUS SO FAR?" Ephraim a fifth year student asked me when he introduced me to one of the school's Christian movement. I wanted to seem 'cool' so I just replied with a "it's okay" however, in fact, how excited I was meeting new people, how privileged I felt to be the ghetto boy doing engineering in the best university in the country. How I expected my first lecturer to be long and boring but the professor was actually exciting, how fancy I found lecturer halls, how disappointed I was at first to realise I had three room mates instead of one. After a week I realised how lucky I was to have such friendly room mates, two of who happened to also be pursuing degrees in Mechanical Engineering.

Adapting to campus has been easier than I had anticipated. Most of all that I have to worry about is 'school stuff', making my classes on time, submitting my assignment in time. Thanks to this amazing organization I don't have to worry where I would get money to pay for my fees or living expenses.

Dennis Banda, University of Nairobi

Report from GEC Journalist Club

For the full reports and photographs please see our website

Elections in Kenya

Our country held elections for a new government on 8th August 2017. These were conducted peacefully but later the Supreme Court nullified the results. The electoral body, IEB, set the repeat of elections to 26th October 2017. We hope the elections will be free, fair and credible for the last one caused a lot of inconvenience. The dominant ruling party, Jubilee, want the elections to be held on that day but the opposition, NASA plans to boycott it. The school also held its annual election this year. It is normally conducted in school to promote our ability to build and practise the democratic right of voting when we become citizens. Interested candidates were required to submit a handwritten application to the school administration explaining their suitability, vision and manifesto. Some campaigned seriously and at times gave sweets to potential voters. We had a debate, open forum where every candidate was taken to task to explain his manifestos to other students. The tight contest was evident from the results, school time keeper was contested between Jayson and Cyrus who got 52 and 51 votes respectively. Voting was done by secret ballot, presided over by form 4s and teachers. Counting and tallying was done in the presence of all the students in the school hall and the winners declared immediately. The elected prefects have luckily shown the ability to lead. The election was a success.

Gideon Njunge, Form 3



Fun at Paradise Lost



Congratulations to the fantastic runners in the London Royal Parks half marathon. Especially to Phil who, at 69, beat the lot of them!



A much happier life for Faith with the help of 'Giraffe'



Wilkistor's twins. Thanks to Giraffe paying her school and college fees she can now earn enough to educate her own children!

The Prefects' Retreat

The recently retired prefects were taken on a trip early this term as a way of appreciation accompanied by our Principal, Mr Korir and driver John to a place called Paradise Lost in Kiambu County. Indeed, it was surely paradise because of the many different tree species and birds, the lake and also the hills. They hiked to the waterfalls through the Old Stone Age caves used by MauMau fighters before independence followed by canoeing on the lake. It was a bit of challenge at first because no-one ever been on a boat alone before. Eventually, they co-ordinated and steered well through the water although they did row into a lot of obstacles before getting it right. Adding salt to insult, they were not sure if the water was a habitat to dangerous creatures. This increased the fun and when it was time to get off, they were not so happy but kept laughing at themselves on how scared they were at first. From there, they had fries and chicken for lunch and at 1600Hrs, they had some rice called, "Pilau" and beef. While having lunch, unfortunately, one of the prefects was attacked twice by eagles snatching his food leaving him uninjured. The rest were kind enough to add him some more food even though he wasn't in the mood. His mood was revived when they went horse riding. Most of them were brave enough though it was their first time. The poor beasts were so friendly and beautiful. The interesting day ended in a prayer when they arrived back at school at 1900Hrs. That day, was a real day, not only great but the most memorable. All appreciation was owed to the school administration and Giraffe project. **Natasha Niyotwagira, Form 1.**

Rescued from a forced marriage – Faith tells her story

My name is FAITH AGOLA, a graduate of the Giraffe Project. My parents died when I was very young and the only thing my relatives could think of, and had already planned, was that I get married to a certain man who was almost three times my age. To them I was a burden who they needed to get rid of to reduce expenses in my uncle's house; my siblings were also experiencing the same things.

Since God always has a final say to our future, I was sponsored by Giraffe Project when I took refuge at KAO LA TUMAINI School Korogocho slums. Giraffe Project paid my fees from secondary to college until I graduated. They also used to give me some pocket money which I could share with my siblings.

I'm now working with an insurance company as a claim assessor and also able to contribute towards my sister's school fees. I also got married last year in December and currently I'm expectant.

We had a great wedding, my family received cows as a dowry from my husband and many people came. This, and my graduation, are like dreams fulfilled. Thanks to Lynda and Archie who took me as their god daughter and sponsored me through 'Giraffe.' They will always remain in my heart.

Team Sponsorship?

Why not try getting a group of colleagues or friends together to support a student? Ingrid, who helped set up a 'Team sponsorship' says, 'I think it is a very good idea to spread the idea of "team sponsorships". We are a group of 25, all translators in the European Commission in Brussels. Everybody in the group is very serious about this, collecting the sponsorship money once a year is never a problem. What is fun? Everybody likes getting letters from Anthony and his school certificate. I feel that it is really a personal relationship.' Why not talk to your family or work colleagues and change the life of a child for ever?



Contact us at:
admin@giraffeproject.org www.giraffeproject.org

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