

PROVIDING CHILDREN  
IN KENYA WITH HOPE,  
HOMES, AND A FUTURE



Volume 2 Issue 1

Spring 2017 E Newsletter

# *Live for Today, Hope for Tomorrow*

## **Spotlight on Felicity Kanini**

**By Peter Wunsch**

Felicity is a bright, outgoing young lady. She was born in 2001 and entered our home in August 2008.

Felicity currently attends Gikumene Girls school as a boarding student. She is in Form 2, the US equivalent of sophomore. She is one of the friendliest youngsters to ever grace the home.

Felicity always has a smile on her face, hence her nickname of Giggles. While quite shy, once you get to know Felicity she leaves a lasting impression on you.

She is always there to mentor and guide the younger orphans while sharing clothes, music and other teenage things with her peer group.

Felicity is on stage singing and dancing when the children perform and will be the second leader in all groups. She hopes to go to university and continue her studies.



## Welcome to Hope Children's Home

*Please share this newsletter*

**Our Mission is to provide safety, food, clothing, health care, education and the means for the children and young adults in our care to create a productive successful future for themselves.**

### *Passion for Education Gala*

Presented by



**February 18th, 2018  
East Wind, Long Island, NY**  
for more information, visit us on

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# News from Hope Children's Fund's Jerusha Mwiraria Children's Home



**by Doug McDonough**

Our efforts are based on the assumption that a major component of a child's success is an education. We focus on helping our children to achieve that goal. It is therefore with the greatest of pleasure and no little pride that we announce that several of our students have completed their higher education and are now gainfully employed.

We extend our congratulations to Elosy Kinya and Caroline Kathuri on their graduation. We sincerely hope that they will not only be very successful but will also become part of the support structure of the Home.

The Kenyan education system is very different from ours. Education is not fully tax funded and in order to advance beyond middle school, students must not only pay tuition but must also achieve high scores on annual exams that are administered nationwide. These tests, the KCSE and KCPE, can determine a child's future and be life altering. We extend our best wishes to the seven youngsters who are anxiously awaiting news of their scores.

One of the Home's residents, David Thou, has been experiencing health issues. His condition is serious and has required hospitalization, although as of this article he has been transferred back to the Home where he is recuperating. We all extend our hopes for his quick and complete recovery.

Under Joseph's skillful guidance, the Home is continuing to improve and expand its self sustainability. This season twenty acres were planted with maize, a crop that is sold to provide income for the Home. Joseph is also considering an entry into the political arena in the county Assembly. We wish him the best of luck.

As part of the effort to introduce the children to modern technology, the on-site computers now have web access and our kids are encouraged to use the internet.

Two American young men, Avery Friedman and Kyle Spillane, recently spent some time at the Home. Their efforts and activities appear in an article in this publication. These exceptional youths are to be highly commended for their outstanding humanitarian efforts on behalf of the Home.



# From the Hope Children's Fund Board of Directors

**by Doug McDonough**

As ever, the HCF Board constantly strives to improve and expand the quantity and the quality of the services we offer to the children in our charge. In order to effectively address the ever-growing population of the home and the increased need for services, the Board is moving ahead on several issues.

We are in the first stages of solidifying our email address files with an eye towards improving our communication and fundraising abilities. We are also revamping and improving our mentor and sponsorship programs. The purchase of arts and crafts from Kenyan artist will continue, as this serves to provide an income stream for the Home as well as local artists. As part of our commitment to education, we are reaching out to Long Island schools in order to create connections, based on a Service Learning education model, between them and the Home.

The Board has decided that a more effective budgetary process is necessary in order to improve our ability to implement long-term planning. As a major segment of this process relies on information received directly from the Home, there will be an effort to improve communication on financial issues.

The Board also recognizes that the increased demands for services, particularly higher education, require additional income and has taken steps to address this crucial issue. A GALA committee has been established to implement a major upgrade in our Marketing/Fund raising program and is in the process of creating a fundraising and information event to be held at the East Wind Long Island on Sunday, February 18, 2018. Our updated email address file and the e-newsletter will serve to keep the HCF family up to date regarding GALA news.

All-in-all, the past several months have been active and successful and the Board extends an invitation to all concerned to join us in our continued quest to help us help the helpless.

## **HFC Board of Directors**

**Larry Hohler**

President

**Doug McDonough**

Secretary

**Kevin Mann**

Vice President

**Peter Wunsch**

Treasurer

**Vic DeSanctis**

**Maria Hoffman**

**Yvette Hohler**

**Ed Hyshiver**

**Danielle Nelson**

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**Tiffany Mann**



**Tiffany Mann oversees a craft project at the Home.**

# Kelvin Koome: My Story

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***Each life of an individual has its own story to be told. However, it should not sound as sweet as expected at the beginning because sometimes it has sorrows in it. Life is made of happiness and suffering which are made in one's mind. The life unfolds in different phases, and here I will start telling my story.***

My official name is Kelvin Koome. I was born in 1993. I joined nursery school when I was four years old. After three years, I managed to go to grade 1, primary school, under the care of my mum. Life then was sweet--you all know the love of mothers.



**Kelvin and Ed**

Unfortunately, I lost her when I was in the same grade. I was left under the care of my grandparents at the side of my mum. My mum worked so hard to make sure I got a good education and all the basic needs. Now I was left with my grandparents, who, of course, couldn't handle my expenses on top of theirs. They struggled. They pushed me until I was in grade 5; that is, class 5.

Now my life started to unfold. One day I was not able to attend school due to various reasons. This day Joe came to our home to visit. He talked with my grandfather, and I was assured that I would be joining the newly-opened children's home. Gratitude and happiness filled my heart.

I joined Jerusha Mwiraria Children's Home in 2005. When I entered this home I knew my life had been changed completely. I was among the lucky kids who were the pioneers of this home.

Joe's support of my education has been abundantly amazing. I was able to attend school at Gikumene where I finished in 2008. I passed my KCPE, and I joined Kaaga Boys High where I studied for four years. I was able to do well through my secondary education. Later I joined Kenya Methodist University to pursue a diploma in clinical medicine, surgery and community health. Right now I'm through with my diploma. I'm in my final stage, which is an internship in one of the government hospitals in the eastern region. This hospital is Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital.

Talking about my interest and hobbies, I like playing field hockey and soccer, watching movies, swimming, surfing, listening to music--and not forgetting socializing and making new friends. I like travelling a lot. I got interested in playing baseball, but it is a rare sport here. If I can get an opportunity, I can't disappoint.

In 2006-2007, I met Ed Hyshiver. Coincidentally, we share the same birth date. This should be fate, as he wrote earlier. He introduced me to baseball. He taught me how to hold a bat and hit the ball, and I was good at it.

I want to say Ed Hyshiver has been amazingly helpful in my studies since I came to know him eight years ago. He has always mentored, encouraged, motivated and supported me. He is very kind. I love him. He has been like a father to me. I can say that if not for him and Joe, I couldn't have come this far. I really appreciate everything they have worked for to make sure I am where I am today.

Mzee Larry Hohler and his family, Kevin Mann and his family, Craig Lehmann and his family, Hope Children's Fund board members, friends of Hope Children's board, and all stake holders of Jerusha Mwiraria Children's Home, I appreciate all of you for the work, effort, support, concern and contributions. I can proudly say that if it wasn't for your support, I could not be sitting down to write this newsletter talking about my achievements. May God bless you all.



## More News from the Home

# Making a Difference through Service Learning

by Avery Friedman and Kyle Spillane

Kyle and I are both 22 years old. Kyle had been to the orphanage in Meru, Kenya, twice in high school as part of a Service Learning project with the Global Club at Shoreham-Wading River High School. I first learned about the orphanage in my high school English/Social Studies class, School without Walls, in my senior year. My first trip there was after I graduated from high school, just before I joined the Air Force.

As fellow travelers, we've been to eight countries together and love adventure. Kyle is a certified private pilot and studying for a degree, and I am in the Air Force with intentions of becoming a nurse practitioner.

We were seeking to combine our desire for adventure with a meaningful experience, so we decided to backpack the East Coast of Africa and return to the Jerusha Mwiraria Children's Home.

On my last trip to Meru in 2016, I had found the conditions the children were sleeping in definitely needed some improvement. The younger ones slept in groups of three and four in a single bed. Mattresses are frequently burned because of bugs or because a child wet the bed. Due to their heavy use, bed frames were often completely mangled. We wanted to change that, so we came up with the idea of building new bed frames. Unfortunately, we did not







**Kyle Spillane and Avery Friedman, graduates of Shoreham-Wading River High School, were first introduced to HCF as students and have made a commitment to improving the lives of the children at the Home.**

have enough money to buy what we needed.

The fastest and easiest way to raise money is on Google, so I created a GoFundMe page. We raised \$1,855 USD or about 186,000 KSH (Kenyan Shillings) in less than a month. As soon as we had the money, we began construction.

While we were in Kenya we stayed with a local man, Joseph Kirima, the director of the orphanage. He was very helpful when we bargained with local lumber yards, carpenters and truck drivers as we attempted to purchase mattresses and pillows to use with the bed frames.

Our time in Kenya was more than just an adventure because the project we were doing was helping not only the orphans but the local people as well. I remember one night when Kyle and I received news that a baby girl had been dropped in boiling water and 50 percent of her body had third degree burns.

The Kenyan doctors were on strike and the mother didn't have enough funds to pay for the child's medical bill. Kyle and I volunteered to take her to the local hospital where we waited for four hours for the baby to receive medical care. It cost us 3,000 KSH, about \$30 USD.

Kyle posted everything on Instagram and I will quote him: "We are not claiming to save the world, and we're not asking for praise or thanks, just providing the necessities in a place we know that needs it."

I am super happy about what we did and I would love nothing more than to see others of our generation do the same.







# Passion for Education Gala

Presented by



## Save the Date

February 18th, 2018

East Wind, Long Island, NY

*For more information visit us on*



**Hope Children's Fund, Ltd.**

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# About Hope Children's Fund

By Kevin Mann

## What makes Hope Children's Fund unique? Why donate your hard earned dollars to this cause?

H.C.F. was founded by a Kenyan, Joseph Rwito Kirima, to assist Kenyan street children. While co-founder Lawrence Hohler is American, the model is Kenyan, not a Western model imposed on Kenyans.

H.C.F. offers a hand up, not a handout. The primary focus of the charity is "Education is the Key!" The goal is to educate our youth to become productive adults.

H.C.F. has no office, no employees and minimal operating overhead. All donations go directly to serving the needs of the children at the home. All board members are volunteers, and when Board members travel to Kenya, they pay for the journey totally out of pocket.

## Why donate to a charity that assists Kenyans rather than a charity in the states?

It is not mutually exclusive. Many of our board members are active in many charities. Two of our board members have volunteered for Habitat for Humanity for over 20 years. In Kenya there is little or no "safety net" for children. It is either extended family or the streets, unlike America where there are many levels of assistance.

## Your donation not only changes lives but saves them!

Hope Children's Fund is a 501 c (3) charitable non-profit organization.  
All gifts are tax deductible.  
EIN: 75-3065651

Please help us help the helpless with your tax deductible donation. Make your check payable to: **Hope Children's Fund at P. O. Box 387, Setauket, New York, 11733.**

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**Edwin Muguna gets a ride from his fellow graduates to celebrate his post secondary test results.**

# The Jane Makandi Matching Scholarship Program



Jane Makandi was the founding social worker of the Jerusha Mwararia Hope Children's Fund Home in Meru, Kenya. Jane passed away in 2014 leaving a huge void in the lives of the children and in the daily operations of the home.

The Jean Watson Trust has been a longtime supporter of the Hope Children's Fund Home. The Watson Trust will now match every donation of \$250 or more to the Jane Makandi Scholarship Fund. This Fund will provide tuitions to deserving children attending secondary and post-secondary opportunities. The total matching grant will be \$10,000.

The Jane Makandi Scholarship Program will be overseen by Peter Wunsch executor of the trust and treasurer of Hope Children's Fund. Peter can be reached at: [wunschp@aol.com](mailto:wunschp@aol.com).







## How to Help Hope Childrens Fund for Free

You can make a free contribution when shopping online. Here is how it works:

- 1) Go to [www.hopechildrensfund.org](http://www.hopechildrensfund.org) and click on the iGive logo:



- 2) Register Hope Childrens Fund as the organization you want to help when you shop online

### Advantages:

- \* Help our orphaned children with a percentage of every purchase
- \* Get a small **tax deduction** with each purchase (no kiddin'! Uncle Sam rewards you)
- \* Feel good about helping. Feel smart and savvy about helping for free.
- \* Shop with over 1700 stores and services including those you may already use and new ones.
- \* Receive special and exclusive discounts and offers to iGive shoppers
- \* Easier and organized shopping, price comparisons. Shop by product, store or service.
- \* Get a small **tax deduction** with each purchase !! (it was worth repeating)

### Disadvantages:

- \*It takes about 3 minutes