

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



Volume 3 Issue 1

Spring 2018 E Newsletter

Live for Today, Hope for Tomorrow

Spotlight on Doreen Gatwiri

If Hope Children's Fund was ever asked to select a person to represent the Hope Family, Doreen Gatwiri would be the unanimous selection by her peers. She is in many ways the poster woman for Hope Children's Fund.



Doreen is currently enrolled at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in the School of Clinical Medicine. At this moment she is on practical clinical rotation at Kitale General Hospital for eight months. After, she will return to university to sit for the Clinical Officer's examination followed by a year-long internship. Doreen is determined to complete her doctoral studies regardless of obstacles.

The road to being posted at Kitale Hospital has been a long and winding one. Doreen was born on April 27, 1996. She entered the home in 2005 as one of the first cohort. Her single mother had become mentally ill and her grandparents struggled to support her. When her grandfather died, lack of food caused Doreen to suffer from severe malnutrition. After she entered the home, her health improved. Doreen excelled at Gikumene Primary and enrolled in Yururu Secondary School, which she completed with honors. After scoring very well on the KCSE, she enrolled in Jomo Kenyatta University in the pre-med program.

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.

Please share this newsletter

Save the Dates!

Bi-Continental Run
July 8, 2018 - see pg. 8

Passion for Education Gala
Jan. 20, 2019 - see pg. 4

Doreen is an extremely hard working young woman with steely determination. She was a gifted student and athlete growing up. At age 15, she qualified for the U17 National Soccer team. As a Form 2 student at the time, she concluded that her studies would be impacted and withdrew from the program. A role model to her age set--peers as well as the younger children--her words are few with much weight. She is humble, grounded, and caring. Doreen has the total respect of all of her brothers and sisters.

The future is bright and straight as an arrow for Doreen. She will become a member of the medical profession. We are all certain that her life's mission will be to provide for those like herself who needed a hand up. Every single member of the Hope Children's Fund family is extremely proud of her academic accomplishments and personal growth. Taking Doreen into the home was an investment that has paid ten-fold and will continue for many years to come.

BFFs Worlds Apart

By Christine Flatley

We were paired before we met.

Doreen arrived at the Hope Children's Home in 2005. She was nine years old. It took six years for our paths to cross.

Thanks to Larry Hohler, I learned of the opportunity to sponsor a child at the home. A small monthly contribution helped support her. By American standards, it was an incredibly modest amount.

When we first met, in 2011, I found a quiet-spoken, athletic girl of 15; I was a 62-year-old grandma-aged woman. She was an orphan living on a continent a world away from my very privileged American life. Larry Hohler and Kevin Mann brought the beauty of Kenya and Doreen Gatwiri into my life.

“Photos pass over the globe, helping us to stay connected and gain insight into our very different lives.”

We bridged the silence through technology. I taught her to use my cell phone, and to their delight, she texted my daughters; she quickly learned the ways of my digital camera. We laughed. Soon she was teaching me the finer points of soccer. We didn't need long conversation; we were connecting in an easy and important way. “BFF” became our term for one other.



At Meru's version of a US department store, I asked her what she would like. “Soap to wash my clothes.” I asked about something to eat, suggesting a special treat... She chose a very small container of yogurt.

Soap and a small container of yogurt.

That was her idea of a shopping spree. Worlds apart: Likes versus Needs. It took quite a bit of convincing to get her to select some new clothing, sneakers, etc. I'll never forget her soft, unspoiled request: “Soap to wash my clothes.” It said a lot about life in a developing world. It said more about the specialness of Doreen Gatwiri. Her deep gratitude is still with me.

Since Doreen and I met, we have been able to bypass the interminably long process of using the postal service to deliver our letters. We email; we use social media. Photos



pass over the globe, helping us to stay connected and gain insight into our very different lives. She in her medical lab coat; me in the New York snow. Both of us inspired by the Women's March on our continents.

Douglas J. McDonough

March 24, 1949 - March 1, 2018

by Kevin Mann

It is difficult to describe in simple words the impact Doug had on Hope Children's Fund, his family, his friends, and the world. He was an author of five published books, a husband, a father, a teacher, a confidante, a 49-year paraplegic survivor, a Jets fan, and the secretary and 10-year member of the Hope Children's Fund board. Douglas J. McDonough was all of those titles and so much more.

While he leaves behind his beloved Ginny and his son Zhi Song Fang (Jack), his legacy lives on in many ways. The outdoor bulletin board at the orphanage has been renamed in his honor. The bulletin board serves as a community information center not only for the children but the surrounding community as well.

Relatives and friends who attended Douglas' wake donated funds to establish the Douglas J. McDonough Memorial Scholarship Fund, which will be used to send highly-qualified children to higher education.

The Passion for Education Gala has been renamed the Douglas J. McDonough Passion for Education Gala for January 20, 2019. Every successive gala will carry his name forward.

Doug was never limited or defined by his disability.



Ginny and Doug McDonough

He lived his life without barriers and limits. Doug taught us all to maximize what you have to work with, not dwell on what you lack. All of those who knew Doug were far better for the experience. God speed my friend.

by Stan Friedland, Ed.D.

Every once in awhile a person comes along, who makes you look at him twice, and maybe even more. Such a person was Doug McDonough.

Doug was a top-notch educator, articulate in what he had to say; polite, attentive, respectful of everyone, and easily the best liked and respected person in the room amongst our members.

I met him when I joined the Long Island Regional Service Learning Network, ably directed by Kevin Mann, some 15 years ago. Like me, Doug was a retired educator who strongly believed in Service Learning as a powerful method that enables high school students to apply what they learn in the classroom to the problems of their community.

Doug had done some of that during his teaching career and now wanted to widen its use in the

schools of Long Island, which was the mandate of our Network. Doug attended every meeting of our Network, volunteered for things that needed to be done and came back the next time with those tasks done in an exceedingly competent manner. In other words, Doug was a top-notch educator, articulate in what he had to say; polite, attentive, respectful of everyone, and easily the best liked and respected person in the room amongst our members.

Did I forget to mention that Doug was a paraplegic, having lost the use of his legs in an auto accident, when he was still a young man. He barely had the use of his hands, but yet took notes and took as much care of himself as he could, even driving his own van that had an electric lift and full hand controls. I helped him out to his van whenever he came alone. Later, when my wife asked me how the meeting had gone, I always was so impressed with Doug, in all respects, that I was sure to mention him among the highlights of the meeting, along with Kevin Mann, of course.

Then came the Nassau Community College "affair." We had an excellent opportunity to bring Service Learning right into the curricula of this major junior college on Long Island. But, this

would require some strong training sessions for their somewhat difficult and resistant faculty. Who would do that? Any volunteers?

I looked around and there was Doug's hand in the air. Amazing! I put my hand up and we smiled at each other. A quick planning meeting followed and soon we had the plan and the dates for two in-service, training sessions at NCC. Doug, living further away from NCC than I, would pick me up in his van and we'd go in together for both sessions.

And we did. We did two full training sessions, one on each successive day to two departments at a time. Since Doug and I never had worked together, we were pleased that my opening segment and his second segment meshed so well together. Then we took questions together to end each session. Furthermore, we made ourselves available by e-mail to each faculty member, which they did use, as they went about infusing Service Learning into their classes. The NCC Dean, who was a member of our Network and had requested the

workshops, was quite delighted by the feedback she subsequently received from her faculty. "I never had such positive feedback before," she wrote to us.

The purpose in detailing this venture to you is to illustrate what a treasure of a person and educator that Doug McDonough was! He maximized his considerable talents, while minimizing his physical handicaps, so much so as to render them almost invisible. And that was the way he approached and did his life, day in and day out!

And the lesson to be learned? "When life deals you lemons, make lemonade! If you have a real hardship, you have two choices; moan and groan and become disabled, or gather your strengths, push-back with all your might and overcome it as best you can. That is the true meaning of "courage." Doug McDonough was a courageous and splendid man! I count my blessings that I was fortunate enough to know him and to call him my friend!

Save the Date!

***DOUGLAS J.
MCDONOUGH
Passion for
Education Gala
January 20, 2019 6 - 11 pm***

***Northampton Ballroom
at East Wind***

Wading River, Long Island

**Raffle, silent auction, cocktail hour, dinner,
live music and dancing \$199 pp
formal attire preferred**

**East Wind rooms available at block rate,
first come, first served until the block is filled.
Corporate sponsorship available for full table
booking, the advertising journal, and for
children sponsorship.**

**100% of all proceeds will go to educate the
children of the Jerusha Mwiraria Hope
Children's Fund Home in Meru, Kenya
H.C.F. is a NYS 501-3c charity.**

**We are a 100% volunteer organization. More
than 98 % of our income goes directly to
provide support to our current 100 orphans.**

Douglas J. McDonough Memorial Fund

In honor of Doug we are establishing the Douglas J. McDonough Memorial Fund. The fund will be used to assist the children at the Jerusha Mwiraria Hope Children's Fund Home in Meru, Kenya. Doug was the secretary of Hope Children's Fund and a member of the board of directors since 2008. His passion for service learning and children's rights was an example to all who were honored to know him.

Doug was the editor of the Hope Children's Fund e-newsletter which debuted in 2016. He was the cornerstone and architect of the First Annual Passion for Education Gala held February 18, 2018. Due to illness, Doug could not attend; however, his attention to detail was seen in every aspect of the event. The Passion for Education Gala Committee 2018 is proud to announce that next year's gala and every successive one shall be named

**The Douglas McDonough
Passion for Education Gala**

Until we meet again!

Condolences from the Children of Hope Children's Fund's Jerusha Mwiraria Children's Home

No words can heal the pain you and your family are going through this very tragic moment. Everything will change, but trust me when I say that everything is gonna be alright. Take heart and be strong in this time of sorrow. Time will surely help you heal and may the almighty God watch over you and give you comfort.
MAY HIS SOUL REST IN ETERNAL PEACE
From: Kelvin Mutuma Naari

Although it's difficult today to see beyond the sorrow, May looking back in memory help comfort you tomorrow. we love him but God loved him most.
MAY HIS SOUL REST IN ETERNAL PEACE
From: Ken Murith

You've lost someone who was a special part of our family. May you all find comfort in each other and in all deep concern that comes to you today.
MAY HIS SOUL REST IN ETERNAL PEACE
From: Kennedy Munene

I am very sorry to hear this sad news but think it's better place for him to be right now. No worries and no fears. R.I.P.
From: Phineas Murerwa

Although no word can really help to ease the loss you bear, just know that you are very close in every thought and prayer.
REST IN PEACE
From: Robinson Kithinji



The bulletin board at Hope Children's Home serves as a resource not only for the children but also for the community. It has been named in Doug McDonough's honor-- a fitting tribute to Hope Children's Fund's board secretary and editor of the e-newsletter.

When we lose such a special person in our life, time seems to stop. However, it's important that we start to live again with a smile on our faces so that we can make his soul happy, as he is still looking at us even if we can't.
MAY HIS SOUL REST IN ETERNAL PEACE
From: Edith Kanana

I understand that it is a rough time that you are going through. I just want to say that I am right here for you and will pray to God so that you can handle it well.
From: Mitchell Nkatha

I am in shock by the news. My sincere condolences and deepest sympathy. My prayers are with you. May God give you strength in grief. Be brave and take heart at this sorrowful moment.
REST IN PEACE MR. McDONOUGH
From: Kelvin Mutuma

News from the Home

Our children returned to their classes for the second term on April 30. The second term runs from April 30 to August 3. The final term is August 27 to October 26. We have 49 youth studying at 18 different secondary and post-secondary institutions. Orchestrating the return is a very complex task handled by Director and Co-Founder Joseph Kirima and his able assistant Betty Kathurima. The remainder of our charges attend primary school.



The slogan of our home is EDUCATION IS THE KEY! A large key mural depicting the course of academic study reminds our children every time they enter the dining hall that their education is their job!

The Kenyan system of education is dominated by two national exams. The first, the KCPE (Kenyan Comprehensive Primary Examination), is given at the conclusion of Standard 8 or 8th grade. As a national exam, it determines whether one can continue on to secondary (high) school. The higher the scores, the more options for attending higher-rated secondary schools. In January of 2018, the Kenyan government subsidized secondary education for the first time. However, the stipend only covers the cost of the lowest level day secondary schools. The bottom line is if you wish to attend a college preparatory secondary school, it is tuition based. The better schools are, of course, more costly.

This year the KCPE will be administered starting on October 29. It is a multi-day examination. Our Standard 8 students will attempt to become high scorers. The tradition has become that the highest scorer is carried up the hill to the home by his/her classmates. Best of luck to those children taking the KCPE.

The second national exam is the KCSE (Kenyan Comprehensive Secondary Examination). After completing Form 4 (12th grade), all Kenyan youth must take this test to qualify for post-secondary schools, colleges, training schools and universities. The pressure to perform is incredible. Last year's score posting led to a number of suicides from students who felt they had "failed." Thankfully, our youth have a supportive "family" to handle the pressure. The KCSE scores determine where one can apply. Nationally, it leads to a scramble for positions at the most prestigious institutions. Sadly, it is first come, first serve, with shillings (money), served. We will have a number of students sitting for the exams in November. The hill-carrying tradition extends to this exam as well and is even more of a celebration.

We hope each and every one of our youth strive to be number one in their respective class. Education is the focus of all of our efforts.

Celebrating our 15th Year

From the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of Hope Children's Fund has been an ever-evolving group since its inception in April of 2003. As in all boards of 501-3c New York State charities, members join and leave depending on their goals, life choices, and careers. The only two constants are that members serve without any compensation or benefit and that change is inevitable.

The board will miss the service of Douglas J. McDonough, who served for 10 years, many as secretary. An interim secretary will be appointed, hopefully transitioning to a permanent post.

Sadly, we must also announce the passing of Marie T. Hohler, the matriarch of the Hohler clan, just four days shy of her 100th birthday. While never a board member, she was instrumental in the building of the home. Marie provided the funding to relocate the church that allowed the Jerusha Mwiraria Home to be constructed. Her contributions--both financial and guidance--will be sorely missed.

Moving forward, the board is thrilled to announce two new board members.

Cari Faith Bessermann has a long and varied history attending and supporting HCF events and missions. Cari has visited the home and has a clear vision of the mission of HCF. She has a rich background in substance abuse counseling in both the private and public sector.

Kyle Spillane is the newest and youngest current member of the board. Despite his years, Kyle has proven to be a fierce advocate for the home's children. He visited the home as a high school student as well as returning on his own as a private citizen. Kyle and his friend Avery Friedman executed a GO FUND ME project to replace beds and bedding at the home. It is our sincere hope that Kyle is the "future" of HCF.

The board continues to plan and strategize to meet the ever-changing needs of the children under their charge. The ever-rising costs of tuition remain a major hurdle. Our youth continue to excel and move forward despite the increasing costs of their education. Our board is constantly seeking new fresh ideas and "blood." Have you thought of becoming a board member? Please consider joining us.

HCF Board of Directors

Larry Hohler

President

Kevin Mann

Vice President

Peter Wunsch

Treasurer

Cari Faith Bessermann

Vic DeSanctis

Maria Hoffman

Yvette Hohler

Ed Hyshiver

Danielle Nelson

Aida Mann

Tiffany Mann

Kyle Spillane



14th Annual Kenya/USA Bi-Continental 5 K Walk/Run

Sunday, July 8, 2018

Setauket/PJ Station Greenway at Port Jefferson Station
(between Enterprise car rental and 7-11)

Compete against Kenyans who will be running simultaneously on the other side of the world.

\$25 Entry Fee* (or whatever you can afford)

Registration 9:00 - 9:50 AM

Run begins at 10:00 AM

For information, call Larry Hohler at [631-473-1662](tel:631-473-1662),
or Ed Hyshiver at [631-664-0257](tel:631-664-0257)

All proceeds go to support the
Hope Children's Home in Meru, Kenya
(Runners who can secure more than \$100 in pledges can run for free)

HCF: Reaching into the Community

Growing and Empowering Women

Mama Africa Women's group was registered in 2006 and has since grown under the visionary leadership of Nancy A. Nkrote (Mama Africa founder and trustee). The group believes in the philosophy of the power of many and therefore works to help empower women through skills training in jewelry, detergent, peanut butter and jam making, tailoring, Tie and dye and also through providing a platform for table banking through which each member contributes Ksh.200 (\$2) per month which is given as business and personal development loan to applicants. The women's group has 28 active members.

The mission of the group is to alleviate poverty among women in Meru County by granting them opportunities for economic empowerment and socio-development. The group also facilitates seminars for women through which women get to learn how to handle domestic issues such as gender-based violence, gender discrimination (in

terms of inheritance rights), sexual reproductive rights, and girl/child rights that they face on a day-to-day basis. The group also visits children's home in the county with the little they have as a giving back to the community initiative.



A Ripple Effect

A beaded giraffe sits on a table at Longwood Day, May 12. One devoted daughter buys it for her mother on the eve of Mother's Day. A seemingly simple gesture with worldwide implications. The giraffe's journey to the U.S. has been a complex one.



The beaded giraffe started as recycled wire painstakingly crafted into shape and beaded by the women of the Meru Women's Cooperative. Hope Children's Fund purchases crafts from the women's group. The women make some of the crafts and buy some from other Meru craftsfolk. The purchase of the crafts provides income to the families of the 23 craftwomen. This direct trade model, whether brought back by travelers or shipped, provides the craftswomen with up to five times more income

than if they sold it locally in Meru town. This is a huge trickle down economic win.

Once the craft is sold another major win has occurred. The profit from the crafts pay to send the children of Hope to secondary and post-secondary schools. A child's future is assisted merely by a simple craft purchase.

The craft domino effect is not concluded with the purchase. The craft buyer passes along the story of Hope Children's Fund to friends and relatives. Press materials are given out at every craft sale explaining the mission and the organization. The positive ripple effect of that one beaded giraffe goes on and on and on in a permanent win-win situation.

The calendar of craft sales is always available on the Hope Children's Fund facebook page. Bookings of craft fairs and purchasing of crafts can be done by calling Kevin Mann 631-470-6351 or emailing kevinmannmail@gmail.com.

Your craft purchase can change a child's life forever, assist a craftwoman feed her family, provide decorative charm and make you feel good about the world!

Lastly, all craft purchases are 100% tax deductible under the law. So . . . buy a craft and make a small but important change in the economy and lives of others.

Mentor a Child at Hope Children's Home

Shortly after The Jerusha Mwiraria Hope Children's Home opened in 2005, we set up a system of mentorships. Supporters are asked to donate \$365 per year that goes into a general fund to support all of our children. In return, the mentor receives a photo of the child, along with a brief bio, and is encouraged to establish a relationship through an exchange of letters.

For more information, contact Aida Mann at aidamann@optonline.com or call 631-470-6351.



Purity Kanyiri age 5
nursery



Prisca Makena age 7
Standard 2 (second grade)



Ian Mureti age 6
nursery

Congratulations to The Fuji Declaration 3rd Anniversary PEACE POLE AWARD WINNERS

Signatories and supporters representing every continent of the world submitted their peace pole entries by sharing what the Fuji Declaration means to them and how they will celebrate the third anniversary should they win a Peace Pole. Each and every entry was worthy of an award and it was truly a challenging selection process. **Kevin Mann's winning entry was as follows:** The Fuji Declaration is an affirmation of the power of the human spirit and positive energy in the face of an



ever darkening world. It is a declaration of multi-national hope. Through the message, May Peace Prevail On Earth, I am not alone but joined by hundreds of thousands of kindred spirits. Thank you for keeping peace and sustainability in the forefront. I will plant the Fuji Declaration Peace Pole at my local high school as a symbol of hope for the future in the languages that represent the cultural diversity of our community

In the Spirit of Giving for More than 50 Years

If you were to look up social justice on Google you might very well see... "see also Barbara and Tom Lyon." Since they married during the Summer of Love on August 26, 1967, their passions have been family, fighting poverty, and promoting civil rights.



Barbara and Tom have contributed to many organizations on their 50-year journey promoting social justice. From CROP walks (Community Response Opposing Hunger), The Valentine's Orphanage, Heifer Project International, Cornell Cooperative Extension and Farm, co-founding Building Better Bridges in Brookhaven, and even Hope Children's Fund.

The Lyons traveled to Meru in 2016 with the Wunschs and the Manns to visit the children at our orphanage. They developed a special relationship with Mercy Kirimi, who they continue to mentor. When it came time to celebrate their 50th and renew their vows, they asked the following:

We have been blessed with family, friends and fortune enough.

Please gift us only with your presence!

However, if you would like to join us in sharing our joy, we will be making a donation to the children of Meru, Kenya through HOPE CHILDREN'S FUND www.hopechildrensfund.org.

Family and friends gathered at Mt. Sinai Congregational Church to celebrate and share the joy and love. Their blessing speaks to who they are and what they stand for.

The money collected in their names sent orphans to secondary schools. The slogan EDUCATION IS THE KEY! is pivotal to our hopes for productive adulthoods for our charges. The Lyons serve as examples and role models. To the next 50 years of marital bliss!

***There will come a day when
people of all races, colors
and creeds will put aside
their differences. They will
come together in love, joining
hands in unification, to heal
the Earth and all Her children.
They will move over the
Earth like a great Whirling
Rainbow, bringing peace,
understanding, and healing
everywhere they go . .***

from a Navajo/Hopi prophecy



Hope Children's Fund didn't happen without help from sources on two continents

by Larry Kohler

My wife Yvette and I met teenaged Joe Kirima while we were teaching in Meru, Kenya in 1976, and we saw his potential. We helped him become a teacher, and he rose to be a community leader and advocate for homeless children. When the AIDS pandemic was ravaging his community, he asked us for help in creating a haven for some of the most vulnerable street children. I said I would do what I could.

Luckily, when I retired from public education in 1999, I joined the Board of Habitat for Humanity of Suffolk, an organization that has played an important role in our success. We knew nothing about how to become incorporated and form a 501c3 non-profit foundation, but got it done in two years with the pro bono help of Ed Kavanaugh, a lawyer who served with me on the Habitat Board. Once we started to generate income, Ken Cerini, HFH's accountant, agreed to do our books for free until we reached an income level that mandated that we pay for the service.

In my role as Campus Chapter Coordinator, I met teachers Kevin Mann, Tom Carey, and Tom Lyon, who brought their kids to student builds and who later gave their support to HCF. Kevin's involvement became the most significant, with the yearly Kenya/USA Bi-Continental Run and the fundraisers he helped to organize at Martha Clara Vineyards, the Port Jeff Village Center, and the Shoreham Beach Club. Most importantly, he brought Global Club students from Shoreham Wading River High School to Kenya over the course of several years, which had a life-changing influence on the lives of the kids he brought and the orphans they visited. When the Global Club launched an initiative to send books to Kenya, Tom, Vic DeSanctis, Oliver Mashaka, and I collected books from five schools, a book warehouse in Hauppauge, and the AME Church in Setauket to help fill the Global Club container. Jen Bradshaw, the



Assistant Superintendent for Instruction at the Smithtown Schools, had several pallets of books delivered from Smithtown to Shoreham Wading River. We had stored so many books in the basement of County Legislator Vivian Fisher's office in Port Jefferson that we had to take the overflow to Brooklyn where a friend had a similar operation that sent books to Zimbabwe.

Early on, we decided that HCF needed a website. My cousin Penny's son, Todd Dumas, who was then an underemployed recent Stanford graduate, agreed to build our website for a nominal fee, which my brother Dale agreed to pay. This arrangement worked well for several years until Todd asked to double his compensation. Dale was not in a position to cover the increase. Board member Rich Reinhardt resolved our problem by enlisting the services of Danielle Nelson, who was then his employee. Danielle has been our webmaster ever since.

Part of my responsibility as Campus Chapter Coordinator was to pick up checks from school

groups that fundraised for us. After Hurricane Katrina, Caroline Rose, a sophomore at Center Moriches High School, raised more than \$5,000 by organizing student musicals to aid in Hurricane relief. When I thanked her and her group for their effort, I mentioned the work we were doing with orphans in Kenya. She agreed to perform at one of our early benefits, and her artist parents, Nancy and Phil, began to do graphics for our events and later served for a time on our board.

In 2009, I met Dr. Craig Lehmann, who joined the HFH Board as a representative of Stony Brook University. He heard that I was planning a trip to Kenya and asked if he could come along to explore the idea of long distance diagnostics with Meru's health officials. He brought along his wife and his son Aaron, a young film maker who documented the plight of the street children. On later trips to Meru, Craig brought medical students from Stony Brook with him to give check-ups to ours and neighboring children. Both he and his wife served on the Board for a time, and they remain mentors of one of our children. I no longer serve on the Habitat Board, but we still get support and advice from Les Scheinfeld, a leading employee at HFH, and Ed Miller, their architect, who mentors one of our children.

In our role as Democratic Committee persons, we have gotten to know State Assemblyman Steve Englebright and his Chief of Staff, Maria Hoffman. Maria became interested in our work and for a time served on the HCF Board. She mentors one of our children and also does the "mail merge" that creates the address labels used to contact our donors on the holidays.

I can't forget the support we receive from the Merian Community. Chief among our local supporters is Patrick Muthuri, who was a struggling young photographer when Tom Carey and I visited for the opening of the home in 2005. Patrick served as our volunteer "minder" on our visits to Nairobi. He also conceived the idea of printing post cards with pictures of our kids that we sent from Kenya to potential donors back home. (Patrick has continued to create postcards that have been sent on every visit since.) Later, during one of our student visits, he got out of the bus to extract us from an after-dark traffic jam that

enabled us to catch our flight home in the morning. His own business expanded, and 13 years after we met, he now heads a successful photography enterprise and has been elected to the town council in Meru. He still has time for us. Two years ago, he helped track down one of our girls who had dropped out of sight, and at the end of our last visit, he showed up to help us pack the crafts we had bought to sell upon our return to New York. Joe began to bring crafts when he came for his first visit to the US in 2000. During our visits in 2005 and 2006, we expanded our purchases--Joe would do the negotiating with the artisans, and the three of us would do the packing. When Kevin began bringing students in 2007, he and Aida began to assume the responsibility of craft purchases and sales, and Yvette and I continue to import Kenyan goods on each of our visits.

In 2010, retired BOCES educator Douglas McDonough joined our Board as Secretary, and through his connections, we were able to secure reconditioned laptop computers, which are now being used by our kids at the Home.

For years Joe and visiting Board members had complained to the local bureaucracy about the need for traffic calming where our kids cross the road to get to their primary school each morning. Even after one of our children was hit and killed, the locals made no move to make the crossing safer. Finally, on a visit two years ago, Joe, Yvette and I drove to the Kenya Department of Highways Headquarters in Nyeri and secured a meeting with the person in charge. Amazingly, we were able to sit down with the man who supervises the Embu-Meru Highway, and he agreed to see what he could do. Several months later, rumble strips were installed to slow traffic on that roadway.


Hope Children's Fund has grown from serving 18 street children in 2005 to the nearly 100 young people. This would not have happened without the support we received from individuals like Patrick Muthuri and groups as varied as Habitat for Humanity of Suffolk, Eastern Suffolk BOCES, and the Global Club at Shoreham Wading River High School. The amazing growth of our outreach is a tribute to the caring support of many, and it enables us to continue our life-saving work.



Help Hope Childrens Fund for FREE by Shopping Online

Register Hope Childrens Fund as the organization you want to help when you shop online!

Make a no-hassle, tax-deductible contribution with iGive:

- ✓ Go to www.hopechildrensfund.org and click on 
- ✓ Register Hope Childrens Fund as the organization you want to help when you shop online. It only takes 2 minutes.
- Help our orphaned children with a percentage of every purchase in more than 1850 vendors.*
- Special, exclusive discounts and offers given to iGive shoppers.
- Shop by product or vendor with easy price comparisons.
- Get a small tax deduction with every purchase. iGive tallies year-end tax deduction!

While shopping at Amazon:

- ✓ Go to smile.amazon.com and register Hope Childrens Fund as the organization you wish to support.
- ✓ Each time you shop, you begin at smile.amazon.com but your registration and all Amazon prices and benefits (ie, Prime) remain.

*iGive vendors include big name box stores, large online companies, smaller specialty vendors. Services include travel, hotel, taxes, educational and more. Each vendor donates different percentages.