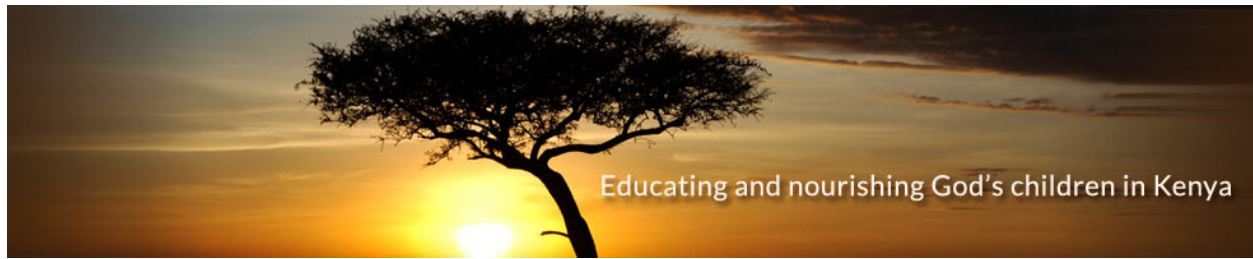


# KIJABE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND



April 2019

Dear KCEF friends and partners,

You are all aware that members of our board go to Kenya every year, usually in late January as the school year is beginning. We spend as much time as possible at each school, meeting with the leaders and teachers—and especially with the students. We try to understand their needs, the issues they are facing, and how we can best help. This is a *partnership*, and we always work to find ways for the schools to become more self-sustaining.

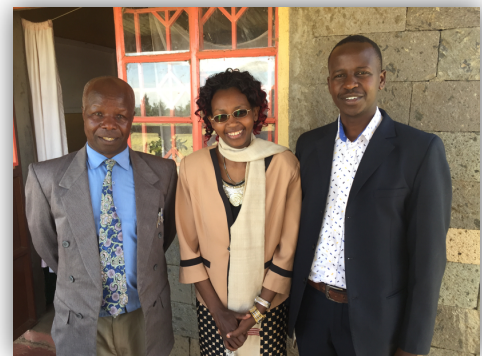
We are dedicated to protecting—and getting the most from—our/your investment. We always learn so much on these visits, as our partnership and trust continues to grow.

Last year's trip in January 2018 was as upbeat and encouraging as ever, with one notable exception. The visit to Gentle Bells School (our first school) was concerning and disturbing. The founder and leader, Esther Waweru, had been seriously ill for some time, as was her husband Moses. Esther had not been able to give much time to the school for many months, and a number of serious problems developed:

- enrollment had dropped from 230 to 120
- new dorms had been built for boarding students, but were unoccupied
- teacher turnover had been higher
- morale was low, and parents were concerned.

We did everything we could to come alongside Esther and the school—including finding a doctor from Kijabe Hospital who could provide her with ongoing quality care. We supported the increased work of Head Teacher Francis, as we encouraged him to step into a more active role. We continued to provide daily feeding for all of the students, and scholarships for the neediest. And we stayed in very close contact with Esther each week over the past year.

Esther's health improved dramatically, and she returned to a full active role. However, we are saddened to report that Moses passed away just a few weeks before our visit this year. In the midst of these challenges, Francis did outstanding work with the teachers and students. Everyone stepped up to help.



(Pictured L to R): Head Teacher Francis, Esther Waweru, and Teacher Joseph  
*Gentle Bells School*



Gentle Bells Students

During our visit in January 2019 we were amazed to see the changes:

- enrollment jumped back up to 226
- dorms were ready to receive 10 boarding students
- scores on the 8th grade national test increased significantly
- of the 70 schools in the Naivasha region, Gentle Bells was recognized as far and away the most improved at all grade levels by the Ministry of Education
- teachers were excited, motivated, and optimistic

This change was miraculous. It reminded us that our partnerships go far beyond just sending funds for scholarships, feeding and facility improvements. It is important for us to walk carefully and prayerfully with each of “our schools” every step of the way.

We can affirm that all of the schools are thriving. There is a spirit of optimism and hope. Students have high aspirations. We heard from Head Girl, Valentine, at Blessed Children’s Centre, as she talked about how she had grown at BCC—and now desires to become a neurosurgeon.

The parents of Jane Ngorge in Thika expressed their amazement at a last minute scholarship for Jane to attend an excellent secondary school. “We had no idea Jane would ever be able to go on to secondary school. She was such a good and devoted student, but we could never afford the fees. You are changing her life, and ours too”.



Valentine, Head Girl  
Blessed Children's Centre

So we continue to pursue our mission of supporting these six schools, 1500 primary students and over 100 scholarships for secondary school. It is such a rewarding experience for all of us.

And we trust it is for you as well. Without your support, this work would be impossible. We hope the support will continue and grow—for Esther, for Valentine, for Jane—and for every student’s life we are able to touch.

With gratitude and hope,

Craig Hammon, on behalf of the KCEF Board,

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