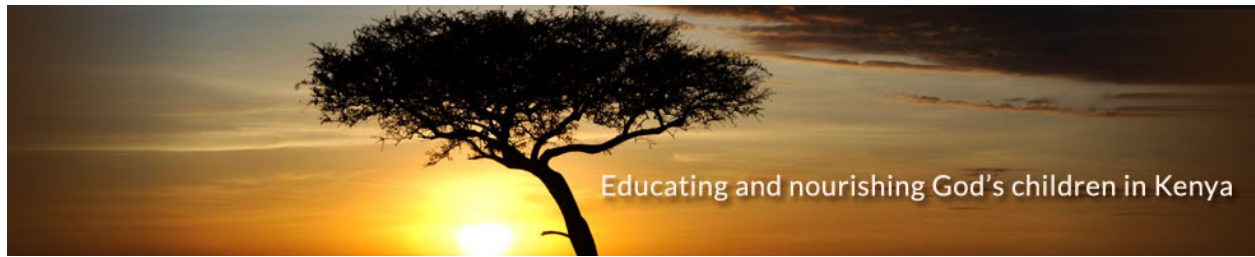


KIJABE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND



March 2020

Dear friends of KCEF,

In January, I traveled to Nairobi with several members of the board of the Kijabe Children's Education Fund (KCEF). My husband, Dick, and I have been supporting the work of KCEF for about 10 years, but this was my first chance to see the schools firsthand and meet the children.

Among the faces that will stay with me is that of seventy-year-old Mary who helps out with a running club supported by KCEF. Having lost two of her children, Mary has inherited the care of two young grandsons, both of whom are participating in the running club and benefitting from KCEF assistance. Mary was as full of the joy of the Lord as anyone I've met in a long time, saying, "I don't look back. I look to the future. I trust God will provide." The future, thanks in part to KCEF, is represented by her grandsons. She is just one of hundreds of parents and guardians with whom KCEF works in partnership. When last seen, the effervescent Mary was doing jumping jacks and stretching exercises alongside the children in the running club.

What drew my husband and me to KCEF in the first place was the chance to help feed children who would otherwise go hungry. Every day around the world thousands of children die of starvation or causes related to poor nutrition. We tend to think of hunger as something affecting individuals. But, as UNICEF puts it, "Good nutrition lays the foundation for healthy, thriving and productive communities and nations. Well-nourished children are healthier, more resistant to disease and crises, and perform better in school. As they grow, they are better able to participate in and contribute to their communities. The benefits of good nutrition thus carry across generations and act as the 'glue' binding together and supporting various facets of a nation's development."



Students at Gentle Bells School

As individuals, we have no means of alleviating hunger on a global scale. But we can help make an enormous difference for the roughly 1,500 kids KCEF feeds each day. They don't have to go hungry on our watch, and that means a great deal.

During our trip, we had the chance to help serve children lunch on two occasions—once at Kicoshep School, where I took a turn dishing up rice another team member covered in a hearty lentil stew. Board member David Mering served up the stew with a running commentary, “Here comes a potato. Whoa, look at the size of that carrot!” The kids looked at him curiously but didn’t really seem to hear his friendly patter, so intensely focused were they on the food.



David Mering serving food at Kicoshep

Our other opportunity to help serve children was during a Saturday program run by a pastors association in cooperation with KCEF. Children in the KCEF schools eat on school days. Saturdays present a challenge. No school. No breakfast porridge. No lunch. So KCEF is funding a program in the Thika slum where hundreds of children gather on Saturdays in a large barn-like structure.



Children at the Saturday Thika Program

There are so many children, the racket is deafening; a cacophony of sound ricocheting off the walls and roof. But that din was hushed the moment it came time to eat. The littlest kids sat on the floor in ragged rows to be served by the older ones. Then the older ones sat and waited for their turn. A few children brought spoons from home, but the majority ate with their fingers. As I helped serve the older children, it felt like a privilege. Almost like serving Communion. But it was also sobering because I could feel the urgency of those kids waiting so patiently for their plate of rice and beans. No child should ever be that hungry.

KCEF relieves the hunger of hundreds of children every day. So the feeding program is where it starts for me, even though I know that’s only the start. The simple, nutritious meals are the foundation for all the learning that goes on in the schools—and the beginning of hope these kids have for the future.

Now that I’ve seen firsthand how this small organization is changing children’s lives in the name of Jesus, the decision to support this work has been more than confirmed. KCEF provides the opportunity to extend our reach to some of the world’s neediest children in a direct and personal way.

I hope you will join Dick and me in giving generously to support this organization, these schools, these precious children. Together we can make an enormous difference. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

On behalf of the KCEF board and so many other supporters,

Martha Stout

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