

Kijabe Children's Education Fund



March 2021

Dear Friends of KCEF in Kenya,

We are pleased to continue serving over 1800 primary students in Kenya, most in the dangerous slums of Nairobi. We are also supporting and mentoring over 120 graduates of KCEF schools, offering them opportunities to go on to secondary school—40% of Kenyan students do not—and even university.

The KCEF schools are thriving post-lockdown, and virtually all students (along with some new ones) have returned to classes. In the midst of these numbers, we are always concerned that some students' needs will be "lost in the crowd." To know when an individual needs extra help, we rely on our school leaders and teachers to tell us.

One such situation—a serious one—came to our attention just a few weeks ago. It concerns a 16-year-old girl we'll call Sarah. She is a graduate of Gentle Bells primary school and one of the students we are sponsoring in partnership with Education for all Children (EFAC) through secondary school and on to university. Sarah is in Form 3 (grade 11), where she led her class in mid-term test scores, illustrating how a secondary boarding school, a world away from the poverty and chaos of the slums, can make a difference.

When students were out of school for months last year, many of us feared their being exposed to the dangers and social pressures in their crowded communities. For one thing, media reports indicate that 152,000 Kenyan teenage girls became pregnant during a three-month period of the lockdown—a 40% increase over prior years.

Sarah was one of those girls. Full of fear and uncertainty, she returned to her boarding school in January. But when the school learned of her pregnancy, she was asked to leave. Her dreams and plans for the future seeming permanently dashed, she returned home despondent, defeated and embarrassed, with no idea of what might happen to her.



Sponsored secondary students at Vanessa Grant Girls School

Even though her parents had lost their subsistence jobs in the pandemic, they took Sarah back in and enrolled her in a local day school, despite having no money to pay her fees. When we learned about her situation, we began working with EFAC and Esther, Sarah's former primary school leader. Together, we decided that KCEF will continue to support Sarah's involvement in the EFAC program and cover her school fees, steps helping her see a few rays of hope.

It will be a long road for her. Her baby is due in May, just as a new school term is beginning. But her parents are supportive and will help care for the child as soon as Sarah can resume classes.

Board member Jennie Paglierani, who has been her KCEF "pen pal," has been reaching out to Sarah to encourage her. This week, Sarah wrote to Jennie: "It has been tough and not simple, but your prayers keep me moving forward. I promise to work extra hard in my studies. I will not let go of my dreams and will reach my goal of a university education with your support."



Each of the children we support is precious and important—to us, to their families, to their teachers, to God. We can't know the huge problems faced by many of them at home. But we, along with our friends in Kenya, are reaching out to them, trying to offer the same grace we ourselves have received.

Your support of KCEF makes this possible for Sarah and so many others who have nowhere else to turn. Together, we're working to help make a brighter future for these children, to give them hope, to let them know that someone cares for them.

Thank you on behalf of Sarah and 1920 other children. To reach out to them, please go to KCEFund.org and make a donation, or send a check to address below.

...and more at St. Mary's Boys School

With deep gratitude for your partnership in this ministry,

Craig Hammon

Craig Hammon, KCEF Board Chair

KCEF BOARD

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OUR VISION

Kijabe Children's Education Fund is dedicated to providing educational opportunities to children in rural Kenya and the slums of the city of Nairobi. Through feeding programs, school sponsorship, and project support, KCEF is helping to keep its students fed in body, mind and spirit.

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