



FRIENDS OF THE KAREN STREET CHILDREN
www.karenstreetchildren.org

Spring Newsletter 2018



2017 was a happy and successful year for KSC and ended in a busy mode, with the Christmas party and prize-giving.

Our annual Christmas party and awards ceremony was a chance to celebrate our children's successes and reflect on the opportunities and challenges the year ahead will bring. In this we were helped by an inspirational guest speaker in the form of Mr Anthony Muriithi. Anthony, an alumnus of the prestigious Alliance High School and Nairobi University,

now works as a Team Leader with Safaricom and is married with a baby boy; achievements any of us would be proud of, but Anthony has done all this despite becoming disabled at the age of just two after suffering from polio. His unbounded enthusiasm was a tonic to us all as he set out the five power points he starts each day with:

- 1 I am the best
- 2 I am a winner
- 3 God is always with me
- 4 I can do it
- 5 Today is my day.

His humour and humility are an inspiration to us all.

**"When you have more than you need, build a longer table, not a higher fence."
"Life without liberty is like a body without spirit." – Khalil Gibran."**



In the beginning...

Over twenty years ago a local Karen boys' home closed unexpectedly, leaving its residents to fend for themselves. They gravitated towards the local shops, an area almost unchanged today despite the enormous development that continues around it. It wasn't long before they made their presence felt and the three founders of KSC started the Herculean task of raising funds for their formal schooling; it continues to this day. Now the children are no longer found loitering in the shop-

ping centre, but are selected from local families in dire circumstances.

The charity's aims, though, remain unchanged: educating bright children through secondary and tertiary schooling who would otherwise not have the opportunity. It is life-changing in every sense of the word.

It costs about £750 a year to put a child through secondary school. This includes fees, uniform, text books and an amount for travel, food and

sundries.

The charity only accepts a child if they are able to cover this amount for the full four years. We then endeavour to raise funding for tertiary education, whether that is university or vocational training and have not yet failed to do so.

We'd like to thank all our donors for their continuing support and the difference this makes to children.

Great News



Joseph Kimani

Joseph Kimani is a bright boy from a deeply impoverished family who did well in school and has now completed a BSc in architecture. Unfortunately he can only work as an architectural technician until he completes a second degree, a Bachelor of Architecture. He has managed to save money for his first term's fees but now we have received some happy news from some generous architects in the UK who are willing to help him with his additional expenses.

We would like to say a special "thank you" to Malcolm Foulkes-Arnold and his architectural friends for raising the money for Joseph to return to college this week.

His smile gets wider and wider.

[Click here to see our film of The Karen Street Children Trust](#)



Building a New Life

We would like to say a big “thank you” to Governors’ Camp who employ eight of our graduates in their accounts department. Seven are photographed above. Stephen works at one of the camps in the Masai Mara

so was not available for the photograph. Michael (second from the left) was our first university graduate and is now Operations Manager for the company. Accountancy is a popular option for studies, but there may be

a limit on how many Governors’ can employ! All have built a sound foundation for a great future, and several of them now have families of their own. We will end with a comment from the MD of Governors’ Camp:

“Without exception these young Kenyans are guided by KSCT and emerge from the desperate situations they start life in as mature and rounded people with a very strong set of core values, an enviable moral compass, and a great start in life. KSCT, as an organization, really does transform the lives of very bright young Kenyans who would not otherwise get opportunities. Governors’ Camp is proud to be a supporter of KSCT.” *Dominic Grammaticas, Managing Director, Musiara Ltd / Governors’ Camp*

Let’s Get Busy

Christmas provided the opportunity for a lesson in business and making money for the children during their school holiday. Harriette had spotted an opportunity to sell craft items at The Vineyard Church’s carol service and set about rallying the children and enthusing them with the idea of a little business venture. She wanted to show the kids what business is really about and get them to understand that they have what it takes to take action and do something. The children were asked to form cooperatives and each group were provided with 500 shillings worth of seed capital, equivalent to about £3.50, then asked to come up with a business plan. The result was three schemes: baking, beading and gardening. Each nominated an MD and a finance director to keep track of funds and off they went.

The baking group taught themselves to make madazis, a local doughnut-like snack, and lemonade. Once the committee had acted as guinea-pigs



and declared the product delicious, they moved on to cup-cakes. The beading group had the benefit of Dennis’ mum, who taught them to bead beautiful bowls and bracelets, as good as you’d find in any local craft market, and the gardening group planted up tins they had painted in bright colours, ingeniously using nail varnish for a flash of colour, with a range of herbs.

On the day the kids set up their stall with all their wares. Once they realized that

standing passively wasn’t going to shift their produce, they took their product to market, mingling with trays of lemonade and mandazis. Over three hundred were sold! Business was slower for the other teams, but everyone agreed that the crowd weren’t in a souvenir-buying frame of mind – a lesson learnt for next time, and just one of many. Ultimately it was a rewarding experience for all who took part and a great demonstration of helping people to help themselves.

“If you’re feeling helpless, help someone.” Aung San Suu Kyil

Our 2017 School-leavers



In November four of our students, Brenda, Jacinter, Wendy and Juliet completed their schooling gaining good grades. All are now doing their community service and making important career decisions. Jacinter would like to study nursing and Juliet law, but Brenda and Wendy are undecided. All are happy and excited to be embarking on the next stage of their careers.

Eleven older students are at various stages of their college careers in Architecture, Economics, Actuarial Science, Education,

Microbiology, Quantity surveying, Law, Catering and Electrical Engineering.

None of this would be possible without a lot of generous support from our sponsors and donors. We would like to thank the Robin Hood Foundation and Just 1 Life for their generous help with expensive university courses, Alan and Caroline Pickering for their sponsorship of Juliet, Scott and Susan MacKinlay for supporting Wendy and Heather Miller for sponsoring Jacinter. Brenda's expenses have been paid for by the "Anonymous Trust" which has also supported so many of our younger students. Elizabeth Spiropoulos, one of our Trustees, has persuaded various members of her family to support five students including two sponsored by Provenance Partners, and also introduced us to her friends Glen Edwards and Dr Peter Mason. Lara Zibarras sponsors Caleb in Form 3 who has made tremendous progress, and we welcome Marcus and Jenny as new sponsors of Form 1 student Maryann.

We are also delighted to welcome the PCEA Church, Karen and Gaciku and Pastor Wandeto as sponsors of James Gachingu. The church hosted a fun Christmas party and wish to be involved with our activities. This is the first time we have had support from the local community and we look forward to their guidance and help.

The Karen Country Club continues to give us generous funding from the proceeds of their Golf Tournament.

All of us in the Karen Street Children's Trust would like to say a huge "thank you" to you all. Without your help none of these children would have moved out of the slums and into exciting new lives.

Any donations are very well received and can be made through:

MyDonate.bt.com

Then search for: **Karen Street Children** (in the Donate to Charity Box).

Please tell us if you are a UK tax-payer so we can claim Gift Aid.

DONATE WHILST YOU SHOP!

For our UK based supporters - you now have the option to donate to KSC whilst you shop online at all of your favourite stores. And what's more, the donation does not come out of your own pocket. It can provide us with valued donations without any cash input on your part - a Win/Win for us all

Easyfundraising.org.uk provides a FREE fundraising service where you can raise funds for KSC when you shop online with shops like M&S, John Lewis, Boots, Amazon, Tesco's Direct, Sainsburys, Boden, Crew Clothing amongst many!

Meet Some of Our Team



Romi Grammaticas
Founder and Chairman



Rodney Sutton
UK Trustee



Dee Huth
Trustee



Elizabeth Spiropoulos
Trustee

You can make a living by what you get, but you can make a life by what you give.

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