

# Friends of the Karen Street Children

December 2007

We have now been working for 12 years with some of the most underprivileged children in the communities surrounding Karen, a leafy suburb of Nairobi. Our committee started in 1995 with young boys who came into the shopping centre to beg for money and food, and of the original group, many have completed their schooling, received training and are employed as mechanics, carpenters etc. There are no long-term school-age children begging in the Karen Shopping Centre, so we have been able to change our focus and each year we are selecting a few of the **brightest and most needy primary school leavers for sponsorship** throughout their further education. We are also taking on a few younger children (usually girls) who are in extreme need due to **insupportable problems at home**. We now have an enthusiastic group of mostly secondary-school students, coming top or close to the top of their classes in some of the most prestigious schools in the country. These are children who would otherwise have no hope of education beyond primary, together with the younger ones who were in desperate need of boarding school education and pastoral support.



In November 2006 four of our students completed their secondary schooling. All our sponsored students go through a period of community service and work experience. **Judy**, who wanted to pursue a medically-orientated career, completed three months at **Wamba Hospital**, where she received high praise. She has now started her studies in Clinical Medicine at the **Kenya Methodist University**. **Mary (left)** worked as an administrator and volunteer teacher at the **Lenana Slum Orphan Project**. She proved her administrative and book-keeping skills, and decided to enter a career in banking. She has now started her studies at the **School of Monetary Studies**, and is enjoying her new course. We are convinced that they both have the ability and determination to succeed. We now have 104 children and young people on our books. We hope that they will all have a bright future like Judy and Mary, but this requires a lot of work, and support from ourselves and our well-wishers.

Last year Catherine joined us as our full-time Social Worker. She now runs the administration side of the organization, together with keeping a much closer watch on the pastoral care of all the children, visiting them in schools, organizing full holiday programmes of camps, tuition and computer studies and running the library. Our book-keeping is crisp, transparent and up-to-date, and altogether we are delighted with the way things are going. Catherine took a salary cut to transfer from the commercial sector to us, and her presence has made a tremendous difference to the work we are able to do.

Our "computer room" now boasts five donated computers on which every student is expected to become proficient. With the help of some Teach Yourself programmes they are all rapidly learning touch-typing, Word and Excel.

At the beginning of this year we interviewed some 30 applicants, and had the agonizing job of selecting five new applicants for whom we had sufficient funding. Primary school leavers had to have achieved at least 75% in their end-of-primary examinations, and four bright, ambitious and destitute students were given scholarships to enter boarding Secondary Schools. One younger girl was referred to us through the Nairobi Children's Home. She had run away from a desperately unhappy home situation, and was in need of pastoral support and a boarding school. All of these children have settled well in their new environments, and are achieving high marks.

We are hoping to be able to take on more children in 2008 from the huge list of children whose plight is brought to our attention. The difficulty is always trying to select those in greatest need from the pile of applications. In each case, a history is taken in great detail then the home is visited by at least two of us before the final decisions are made at our monthly meetings.

The costs of educating a child for a year are as follows:

Boarding Primary School	Kshs 40,000.-	GBP 360
Boarding Secondary School	Kshs 60,000.-	GBP 540

This is based on actual costs for the new term in January 2007 and includes school fees, food and accommodation for boarding pupils, textbooks and stationery, all uniform, shoes, transport, tuck, pocket money and holiday activities, and a cover for medical emergencies.

**The Trust is run largely by volunteers with the administrative help of Catherine. Our accounts are drawn up by Michael, a graduate of the KSC programme who is a qualified accountant, and are fully audited. Only minimal amounts are used for overheads.**

KSB has made a dramatic difference to many children's lives. Poverty and illness are taking a terrible toll in Africa, and very many children suffer. We are able to give a future of hope to just a few of these children, thanks to the generosity of our many donors and friends. We are always grateful for any donation, however small. "A little goes a long way".

**Sammy is an orphan aged 18 who is a sponsored Form 3 student in Lenana School, a top National school in Nairobi. His devoted grandmother died recently, and he wrote:**

**"Thank God for the willing and caring KSC personnels and generous sponsors without who my life could now be a total mess. At times I feel so lonely. Life seems un-understandable but one thing ONLY keeps me going and that is the assurance that KSC is there for me."**

Thank you.

Romi Grammaticas Chairman Karen Street Children's Trust  
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Kristina Kenworthy UK Trustee Friends of the Karen Street Children's Trust  
[kk@jonathankenworthy.com](mailto:kk@jonathankenworthy.com)

## Donations

The Trust is registered as a charity in England under number 1088188, and donations from outside Kenya should be addressed as follows:

Friends of Karen Street Children's Trust  
c/o Kristina Kenworthy  
PO Box 359 Leatherhead, KT22 2EF, U.K.

The Trust is also registered as a charity in Kenya, and there donations should be addressed as follows:

Karen Street Children's Trust  
c/o Romi Grammaticas  
P.O. Box 49396, Nairobi 00100