

Changing  
the world  
one  
child  
at a time

# MAKENA Musings

Newsletter of MAKENA Children's Foundation, Inc.

Spring 2018 Vol. 19, No. 1

## JAMBO



A Message  
from the  
President

Anne Batzer

I'm bursting with good news to share from my recent working trip to Kenya. This newsletter cannot possibly contain it all. I wish each of you could have been with me for the fascinating conversations, meetings and spontaneous experiences that imbue me with hope.

Our Kenyan staff, brothers Charles and Francis Karanja, continue to guide our work with intelligence, skill and compassion. The synergy resulting from working with them on a daily basis during this trip will sustain our work for the year ahead.



Each of our kids is chock full of curiosity, creativity and the youthful energy to make a difference. Their single parents or guardians radiate joy, especially when they sing and dance in the Kenyan tradition. Their humble homes do not reflect the inspiring richness of their community life.



And the boarding school staff are full partners in caring for our kids' academic and emotional needs. Our young ones are in good hands.

*(Continued on back)*

## Changing the World ...

By Susan Reinecke

**"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."**

After spending two incredible weeks in Kenya meeting students and alumni sponsored by the Makena Children's Foundation (MCF), this familiar quote from Nelson Mandela has taken on a new meaning for me.

I have been working in education for over 25 years. My students have been diverse and have come from a wide variety of backgrounds. While I am no longer a full-time classroom teacher, my work continues to be focused on improving education through building the leadership capacity of students and educational professionals. I have always been passionate about what I do and I leapt at the chance to accompany MCF President Anne Batzer to Kenya.



*Susan Reinecke of Greensboro, North Carolina (pictured here in a selfie with Makena secondary students) was a working member of the Makena team during the recent spring trip to Kenya. Susan recently completed a Masters Degree in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard University. She is a Societal Advancement faculty member for the Center for Creative Leadership.*

With the help of MCF staff Charles and Francis Karanja, each day in Kenya was filled with opportunities to meet teachers, students and alumni; visit schools and classrooms; spend time in the students' homes in the subsistence farming village of Maraigushu, and travel to Nairobi, Naivasha, and Nyahururu. What struck me the most was the value that—without exception—every person I met placed on education.

The opportunities that you, the sponsors and supporters of MCF have gifted these amazing people with have literally changed the worlds of not only the individual students, but their families and their communities.

Since returning home, I have been asked about what impacted me the most. Without hesitation, I have replied: "The people." Especially it is the parents and guardians of Makena students who remain deeply in my heart. Their warmth, humor, spirituality, and pride was nothing short of inspirational. And their gratitude for the life-changing opportunities provided to the students reflect their deep appreciation of the lasting impact education has on the individual, their families and their communities.

A deep well of gratitude to Anne for her boundless energy, huge heart and passion for ensuring that each student gets the best education possible. Thank you to Charles for his willingness to answer questions, his great driving skills, and his clear dedication to the work of MCF. Thanks, too, to Francis for his willingness to ensure that the alumni keep learning and giving back.

But even more importantly, a huge thank you goes to you, the sponsors, the Board members, and all the people of the Makena Children's Foundation for changing the world, one student at a time.

# Mentors Matter

Clockwise, from top right: 1) With unemployment at 39% in Kenya, a college degree does not guarantee a job in one's field. To help bridge our young people's journeys from years as students to years in fulfilling careers, our Kenyan Director Francis Karanja (second from left) set up a mentoring program for our most recent graduates. Francis found mentors in each of the graduates' fields including IT, business, nursing and government work. The mentors and their mentees posed for a photo after meeting for a lovely dinner in Nairobi. 2) Mentor Pauline Wambui talks with recent graduate Mary Gatuku and mentor Timothy Waiharo connects with alumni Daniel Kimani. 3) Susan Reinecke worked with Francis to structure the mentoring program. Here she explains the expectations of the program to the group. Mentors committed to a one-year relationship with the new graduates.



## You Go, Girls!

By Anne Batzer

Four Makena alumni women are advancing in interesting careers.

Mary Gatuku graduated in nursing in late 2017. Since then, Mary "beat the pavement" looking for a job at hospitals in Nairobi and its suburbs. In early March Mary joined my travel companion, Susan Reinecke, and myself for a long, leisurely lunch our first day in Kenya. During the lunch, Mary received a phone call from one of the hospitals where she had applied, Premier Medical Center in Kikuyu. They asked her to come in the next day, a Wednesday, so they could meet her. As soon as they met her, they hired her! That Thursday Mary began her job in the Emergency Department.

Rachel Njeri also graduated in nursing and—following the original vision of the Makena Children's Foundation—returned to her home village of Maraigushu to make life better for the residents there. Rachel got a job delivering babies in the newly completed maternity wing of the Maraigushu Dispensary. To mark the occasion of the first baby born at the Dispensary, a photo of Njeri and the new baby were put up on Nakuru County's website. A United Nations employee in Nairobi took note of the photo and promptly invited Njeri to attend a UN sponsored three-day workshop on Primary Care. Early the next morning, Njeri took a matatu to Nairobi to attend the session. It was a vibrant experience. Njeri says, "This workshop changed my life."

Martha Waithira is in her third year of teaching first grade in Nairobi. Seeking a little adventure, Martha has applied to a program that brings Kenyans to China to teach English to children.

Hannah Wanja, the first student brought in to the Makena Children's Foundation—she rightfully refers to herself as "the pioneer"—continues in her job as an accountant at the banking institution K-Unity. She is on track to complete her CPA by the end of this year. Next year, she plans to go for a Masters Degree in Finance Development.

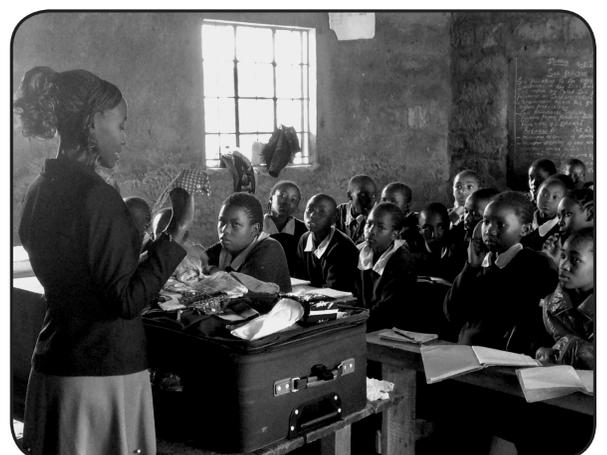
The intelligence and initiative these four young women demonstrate surpasses even our high expectations for them. Congratulations!



## Days for Girls: One More Thing to be Proud Of!

We agree with the members of the Makena Alumni Club (MAC) that the best way they can repay their American sponsors is to pay it forward—to take on community service projects that benefit other Kenyans. In March, the young women of MAC partnered with another international nonprofit, **Days for Girls**, to insure that 50 Kenyan girls can stay in school.

Many adolescent girls in developing countries miss school one week of each month because they cannot afford feminine sanitary supplies. **Days for Girls** addresses this problem by supplying reusable sanitary pads. These pads—in bright, colorful kits—can be used for three years if washed properly. Before distributing the kits, the young women of MAC completed the online **Days for Girls** training, learning not only how to teach others how to sanitize the pads but also gaining thorough knowledge about reproduction and important subjects like human trafficking. They shared their knowledge and donated 50 kits to seventh and eighth grade girls at Mitamaiyu Primary School in their home village of Maraigushu.



# Will You Change the World?

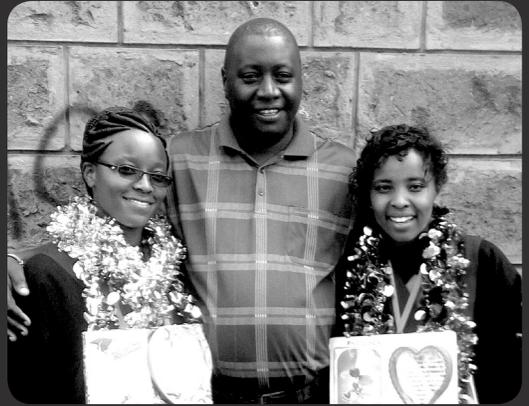
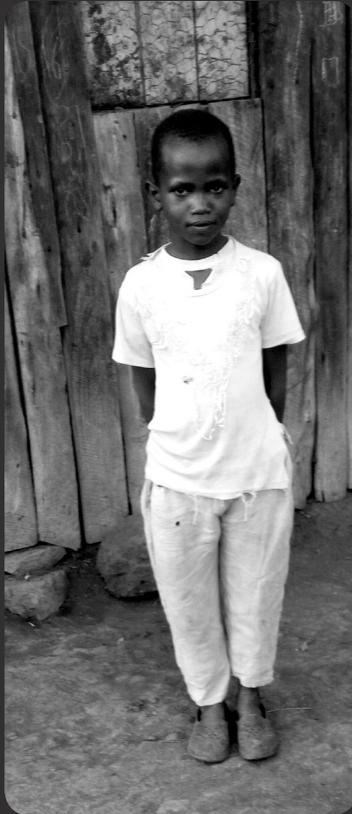
By Mary Jo Baich

Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." These photos poignantly give credence to his words.

Mary Nyokabi, one of our newest Makena students, poses for the camera—tentative, shy, but full of promise.

Confidence radiates from the faces of recent Makena graduates, Mary Gatuku, Rachel Njeri and Samson Machohi. Armed with their diplomas, they are ready to embark on a life free from the limits of poverty.

Then there's the pride of Samson's grandmother—pride in his accomplishments that already have exceeded her dreams.



With the support of the Makena Children's Foundation sponsors and donors, the opportunity of an education is placed within reach of our students, transforming them from impoverished kids into well educated, confident citizens ready to exemplify Mandela's words and change the world.

## Will you please be the one to change the life of a child— and change the world?

Make your tax-deductible donation TODAY, payable to Makena Children's Foundation, Inc.,  
711 Medford Center, #117, Medford, OR 97504.

- I wish to sponsor a Makena student with a gift of \$2,000 annually.
- I wish to lend a hand to the smooth operation of the Makena Children's Foundation with a gift of:  
\$50   \$100   \$200   \$400   \$600   \$1,000
- You have permission to mention my support in your publication(s).
- I prefer to make my gift anonymously.
- I am unable to contribute now, but please keep me informed about the work of Makena Children's Foundation.
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# Moving Forward

Susan Reinecke brokered relationships between the Makena Children's Foundation and some groundbreaking organizations working to move Kenya forward. Pictured in photo below left, from left, are Nairobi native Alia Dato who runs the Young Women's Social Entrepreneurs group in Kenya and Kathy Graham who works with several organizations including the Center for Creative Leadership. Kathy's CV includes work with the United Nations. Susan is seated next to Kathy, with the Makena team on the right.



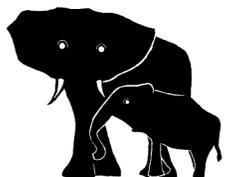
In a second meeting (above, right), pictured with Susan, is Bancy Kubutha who is the co-founder and executive director of the Center for Transformational Leadership. Bancy's NGO trains Kenyans in leadership skills and teaches them how to affect public policy.

We look forward to deepening our relationship with these groups with hopes our young people can learn new skills, broaden their life experience and increase their scope of influence. We express our deep gratitude to Alia, Kathy and Bancy for these meetings and for their important work.

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If you'd like to help bring the priceless gift of education to deserving children, please complete the form inside and send your donation TODAY.



## A message from the President (Continued from front)

Thank you to the perfect traveling companion on this trip, Susan Reinecke of Greensboro, North Carolina. Susan was embraced (literally) by every Kenyan she met! Her 20 years of teaching experience and her recent Masters degree in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard enriched each and every experience. Susan is currently a Societal Advancement faculty member for the Center for Creative Leadership. Her insights and ideas— and her radiant warmth— added deep meaning and lively joy to our busy days. Happy reading!



### MAKENA Musings

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## Something to (AMAZON) SMILE about

When you order items through Amazon or Amazon Prime, you can give a small donation to Makena Children's Foundation each time you shop by setting up an Amazon Smile account.

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We promise to stretch these pennies far in Kenya! Thank you for this support.