

Changing
the world
one
child
at a time

MAKENA Musings

Newsletter of MAKENA Children's Foundation, Inc.

Spring 2020 Vol. 21, No. 1

JAMBO



A Message
from the
President

Anne Batzer

We talk a lot about the poverty in Kenya. And it's important that we do so. Remembering that just 14% of adults over the age of 24 have completed secondary school and 36% of the population lives on less than \$2.00 a day inspires us to continue supporting our students. We know education is the path to a life with possibilities for these precious children. We know education is the opportunity that will allow their amazing gifts of intellect, imagination and heart to be expressed in a world that cries out for these qualities.

The poverty in Kenya can seem overwhelming. But there is no poverty of spirit!



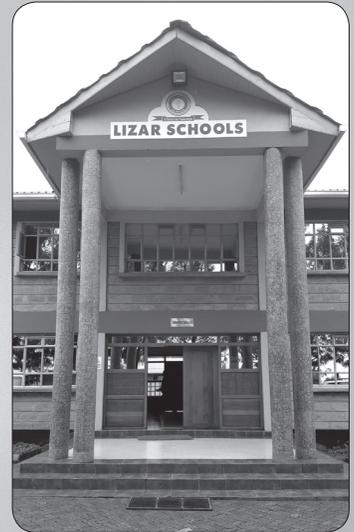
Pictured here is Salome Waithira, the mother of our young student, Caroline Wanjiru. This image captures one of many compelling, spiritual reasons that we look forward to our annual working trip to Kenya every year. The joy, the faith, the hope expressed by Salome is part of every encounter in this fascinating culture. The upbeat rhythm of life, most obviously demonstrated in the singing and dancing, but also in the simple, repetitive rituals of daily living is contagious. How, we wonder, can a culture where so many have so little, overflow with such a feeling of abundance? How, we wonder, can a culture where life is often a stark struggle for survival, overflow with some of the world's most beautiful art and textiles? And how, we wonder, can we incorporate this exquisite love of life into our much more comfortable lives when we get back home to America?

Lizar: A Dream School for Our Students

By Anne Batzer

Walking through the outdoor corridors while class is in session at Lizar School in Naivasha, the atmosphere is quiet as any library. The elementary students are at their desks, their faces serious while they listen and learn. But as soon as the students are released, squeals of delight pierce the quiet. The kids spill out, crowding the space with youthful activity. Teachers join a cluster of laughing kids, adding to the humor, or take a quiet walk with a child they know needs to talk about a problem.

The school strikes just the right balance between nurturing and warmth — structure and discipline.



Lizar School is the brainchild of Founder Eunice Mwangi. Her wise leadership permeates the campus. She started her career as a teacher, then moved into a business career before dedicating herself to education when she started the school in 2002. Lizar is named after the person Eunice calls her mentor and best friend — her mother.

"It's great going to a school that cares about your dreams."

Makena student Harun Maina

Eunice sets extraordinarily high standards when it comes to academics and behavior, always with a clear understanding of child development. Staff members tell us they cherish the respect she gives them by including their input when solving problems at the school.

"We truly appreciate you for trusting Lizar School with the Makena Foundation children," Eunice says. We are so fortunate to have the Makena Kids boarding at this extraordinary place.



To slow the spread of Covid-19, the Kenyan government temporarily closed schools the week of March 15. Our students are home with their families.

Thank you, Mary Jo!

By Anne Batzer

In 1983 when Makena Vice-President Mary Jo Baich landed in Nairobi in the dark of night, she could not believe her good fortune. In those days, the career options for women were limited. Mary Jo had never anticipated anything as thrilling as traveling to Kenya as a part of her job at International Expeditions. "At each stop along the way there were wide-open savannas and animals I had only seen in pictures. There were wildly-shaped and colorful birds," Mary Jo says, "Best of all was meeting the knowledgeable guides, their families and many children along the safari route."

Mary Jo returned to Kenya many times including the trip in 1995 when her best friend, Sherri Mills, founded the Makena Children's Foundation (MCF). Mary Jo picked up the sponsorship of the second child brought into the Makena family and has been pivotal to the success of our organization ever since. "It's a thrill to witness the transformation when a child has the opportunity to learn and flourish," she says. Mary Jo volunteers her time, on a daily basis, to do any task — from the mundane to the profound — to keep MCF functioning at the highest level. Her guidance informs all of our work. Her leadership provides us with the perspective of our strong roots and the inspiration of our healthy wings.



Congratulations, Peter Gatere

By Anne Batzer

We are so proud of our latest graduate!

Peter Gatere completed his Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Management from Maasai Mara University. He completed two internships at Narok National Museum where he worked in the marketing department, took traveling exhibits to schools and worked with the Museum's education department to give tours to local and international visitors.

He's looking for a job that will allow him to share his fascination with and pride in Kenya's culture and history.

Moving On!

By Anne Batzer



Alice Njoki



Joseph Kairuki



Mary Muthoni



Peris Gitundi



Simon Mwangi

After 16 years of living the structured life of a student, these recent university graduates are finding their way into the adult world of work. These Makena alumni are managing this transition with hard work, perseverance and grace.

Alice Njoki graduated in Actuarial Sciences and dreams of owning her own business someday. She is on her way, working as the Office Administrator for Visalife Financial Services, a company that provides microfinance, investment, real estate and insurance services in Nakuru. Her wide-ranging duties include a long list of all office management tasks including follow-up with clients. "I've learned what office administration is all about. I love what I do," Njoki says.

Joseph Kairuki, a true entrepreneur, got the idea for his business when he was riding a matatu (public van) back to the University of Nairobi after a school break. "The matatu was full of young women and I noticed all the products they use for their hair and skin," he says. Kairuki's cosmetics shop, Bowamz Cosmix, is chock full of products. Every piece of inventory and every sale is tracked on Kairuki's computer. "When you come back next year, I will have expanded my business," this Economics graduate says. We don't doubt it!

Mary Muthoni gets high praise for her resourcefulness and the high quality of her work from her employer at the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Mary uses her Bachelor's degree in Statistics and Programming to collect data from tourist businesses in Nakuru. On work days, you will find Mary out on the road visiting hotels to stay up-to-date with daily numbers. The statistics she collects are used to keep Kenya's all important Consumer Price Index current.

Peris Gitundi is looking for a job in her field: Agricultural Economics and Resource Management. Rather than "sit around in my Aunt's apartment in Nairobi while I look for a job," Peris decided to open a shop where she sells clothing to her target market: university women. Called Her Wardrobe, Peris' shop is darling, spotless and full of the blouses, dresses and jewelry favored by her clientele.

Simon Mwangi worked hard to turn his internship with Swissport, an international company that provides ground services to airports, into a permanent position. Simon uses his Bachelor's degree in Hospitality and Tourism to serve Swissport clients at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. Simon spends time managing baggage claim areas, as well as putting in hours at the call center. Simon uses his amazing listening skills, patience and understanding to solve the issues raised by the travelers who contact the call center.

Making Room for Giving

By Mary Jo Baich

Giving is an outward expression of empathy and compassion. The Makena Children's Foundation (MCF) is fortunate to have supporters who make educating Kenyan children possible.

While many of our donors are retired, we also have younger donors who despite having families to raise, homes to purchase, and college loans to pay off, make room in their budgets to give to others. And their employers match their checks to Makena! Two couples who give generously to MCF are Troy and Samantha Hammell (at right) and Rachel Batzer and Mike Roberts (below right).

Samantha wrote saying, "I can't imagine a more worthy cause than helping children who have no choices or opportunities in life. I think about my own children and hope that someone would help them if they were in need. Education changes a life, which changes our world."

Rachel said, "Mike and I donate to Makena because we want to give to a charity with the most impact. Makena is an excellent choice because it is small and focused enough to have minimal overhead. I trust the board of directors. It has significant support from students who were helped by the program and now have successful careers. I hope you will join me in contributing to Makena and encourage your employer to donate as well".

Thank you, Hammells and Batzer/Roberts for believing in us.



Please join these generous donors in supporting the dream of a good education for the children of Makena. Send your tax-deductible gift today.

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.
- I would like to share my story relating to Africa or my sponsored child.
Please contact me by phone or by e-mail .

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ e-mail _____

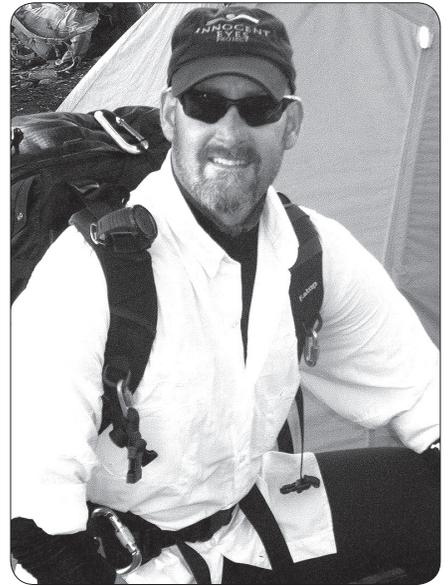
You May Say I'm a Dreamer, But I'm Not the Only One

By Anne Batzer



David Noyes was an adventurer who flew, trekked, floated, dove, hiked, ran, camped and climbed throughout the world. Along the way, he took beautiful photos of children that capture the light as it falls on faces of many hues.

David was a storyteller with vast interests but, increasingly, he found himself most interested in the often desperate stories of the poor children he encountered during his travels. In his award-winning travel book, *The Photographing Tourist*, David says one of Makena's founders, Safari Guide Peter Muigai Muruthi, was the inspiration for the charity he founded, Innocent Eyes Project (IEP).



David shared our mission that the most sustainable path out of poverty is education. For six years, the grants we received from IEP have been crucial to our work. These funds changed the lives of the children who, without this financial help, would still be hungry, struggling daily just to have enough food to eat.

We were heartbroken by the news that David died last November. He was a trusted partner, a dear friend, a kindred spirit. Every day we miss his wisdom and his humor. Rest in Peace, rafiki.

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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.

Support
the Makena
Children's
Foundation at
Amazon Smile!
Thank you!



You Need More Practice!

"Muriega, Ningenete nikumukora.
Onanie, ndimwega. Rathimwoi."

When Makena President Anne Batzer decided to address the annual Makena Parent/Guardian meeting in Maraigushu using the Kikuyu language, she practiced her pronunciation first with some of our students. Here, Caroline Wanjiru listens intently. The students' unanimous advice to Anne: "You need more practice!"

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