

Changing
the world
one
child
at a time

MAKENA Musings

Newsletter of MAKENA Children's Foundation, Inc. Spring 2016 Vol. 17, No. 1

JAMBO



A Message
from the
President

Anne Batzer

It's not by chance that a mama elephant and her baby are pictured on the logo for the Makena Children's Foundation. The founders of our organization thoughtfully chose this symbol because elephants love, protect, nurture and teach their children well. In some cases, Makena founders felt, the elephants serve as role models for us humans.

I'm inspired by this lovely symbol and wouldn't change it for the world. But if I wanted to add a graphic depiction of our work, it would be this:



The Makena Children's Foundation thrives on a partnership that recognizes the common humanity of all our planet's people and that welcomes the strength our differences hold for us.

One of my favorite songs contains the line, "deep down inside we all need the same thing." I've found this to be true when I sit with our Makena families in their homes constructed of mud and animal dung. Although my home is much different from theirs, these mothers and fathers have the exact same dreams for their children as I have for mine. The gulf of our differences in color and culture evaporates as we talk about who we are, who our children are and what we want for them.

But when challenges arrive in our work together, I always seek the Kenyan perspective. I've had many helpful "aha" moments when one of the Elders in our students' home village of Maraigushu offers an opinion. It's a different way of looking at things. I'm so grateful for this. It strengthens our organization and enriches my life beyond measure.

Making a Real Difference

By Mary Jo Baich

The congregation of Acmar United Methodist Church is a long-term Makena sponsor. Led by their Pastor Belinda Wilson, Acmar is located in Moody, Alabama, fifteen miles east of Birmingham. The first student they sponsored, Martha Waithira, graduated with a teaching certificate in December 2015. Martha is now teaching first grade in Nairobi.

This congregation of 47 members is dedicated to making a difference in the world so they have decided to continue this mission by sponsoring a second student. We are overwhelmed with gratitude for this generosity.

Rev. Belinda, whose vocational call came to her in her late 40's, inspires others to reach out and connect to a child in a transformative way. The small Acmar congregation puts this ideal into action, and they have provided a long arc of unfailing support and love to Martha in far off Kenya.



Rev. Wilson said, "We want Martha, and now our second student, to see that people they don't even know, love them, pray for them and are willing to support them." She continued saying, "The Makena Children's Foundation makes this possible for they connect our church with others who have direct contact with the child, something we could not do on our own. Receiving the letters and pictures of our youngster allows us to see the progress our child is making."



Their second student—the newest member of the Makena family—is Teresita Kabura (at left). Teresita, and her younger brother, went to live with her grandparents in the rural village of Maraigushu after their father died. Their mom, Ruth Wairmu, works as a maid in Nairobi and sends the family what little money she can. Teresita loves learning and is a diligent student earning first place in her third grade class at her local school.

Teresita will transfer to Lizar Elementary School, an educational institution which provides a higher degree of learning opportunity. The school's founder, Eunice Mwangi, incorporates the desire to meet the emotional needs of its students as well. Located about 10 miles from her grand parents' rural home, it provides an attractive environment for its students, a rare characteristic in Kenya. The students do chores in order to keep their school grounds clean and cheerful.

We at MCF give thanks to the generosity and the long, loving arms of Acmar United Methodist Church that have now expanded to encircle Teresita Kabura. Their support ensures a bright and hope-filled future for this little girl.

Meet Our New Treasurer

For two years Ed Baich (at right) has served as Treasurer of the Makena Children's Foundation. Attention to detail is a definite requirement of anyone who successfully transfers funds to Kenya and Ed has kept our precious funds secure. But he has done so much more than that. We are grateful for his vision, for the important relationships he forges for us and the lighthearted spirit he shares with all who work with him. He makes any job a joy. Thankfully, although Ed has resigned as Treasurer, he will remain on the Makena Board of Directors.



Our new Treasurer is Shari Parent, an accountant with her own business, SLP Solutions LLC. Shari is known for the long term relationships she forms with her clients, becoming a valued member of their management teams. A graduate of the Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Program, Shari has volunteered her time to develop and teach Computerized Accounting to high school students, certifying them as Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and Payroll Clerks for entry level jobs. Already, her great questions have added important dimension to our work. Welcome, Shari!

Welcome, Priscilla!

By Mary Jo Baich

It is a happy circumstance when chance encounters collide with mutual interests. Former Makena student, James Rouro Muruthi, who lives in Gerogia and holds a doctorate in Human Development and Family Science, met Priscilla Anono Okwaro at a party.

Priscilla, who grew up in Kenya, told James she wished to expand her portfolio in successful grant writing. James introduced Priscilla to us.

What a boon to Makena this introduction has turned out to be! Priscilla is the beneficiary of a nonprofit organization that brings talented African women to the US for college. After completing high school in Nairobi, she arrived in the US at the age of 19. Priscilla graduated from Benedict College in Columbia, SC, with a degree in economics and finance. She worked for two years with a financial institution, and now has her own consulting business, marketing and advising small businesses. Married to an Army officer, they are parents to a one-year-old son.



Once out of school, Priscilla’s work as a financial strategist and freelance writer inspired her to publish a book on how a young woman might marshal her income and make her way in this world. Her book (available on Amazon.com) is *Overcome and Thrive, Lose the Fear Around Money and Create the Life You Really Want*. Her desire and ability to share her financial knowledge extends not only to the U.S.

She is working on getting this book into the hands of those in Kenya who could benefit from her experience.

We welcome Priscilla Okwaro to our Makena family and we greatly appreciate her willingness to volunteer her grant writing skills to us!

A Fabulous New Book: *The Photographing Tourist*

Executive Director of the Innocent Eyes Project (IEP) David Noyes, has long been a friend and supporter of the Makena Children’s Foundation. Now he has published a book full of his exquisite photos from around the globe, delightful travel stories and practical tips to help even the most amateur photographer come home with memorable images. We especially appreciate his beautiful tribute in the book’s Acknowledgements to our Co-founder, Peter Muigai Muruthi. David says it was Muigai who inspired him to start his IEP foundation. This is just one amazing example of an enduring legacy. *The Photographing Tourist, A Storyteller’s Guide to Travel and Photography* is available at www.noyestravels.com/tourist. Use the code MAKENA for a \$5.00 discount. One dollar from each book purchase goes directly to support the work of Innocent Eyes Project—which supports the Makena Children’s Foundation. The book is also available on amazon.com and at barnesandnoble.com.



Let’s Celebrate!

Kudos to our most recent secondary school graduate, Joseph Njoroge! Joseph scored a stunning B+ on the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exam, putting him in the top 15% of students. Wow! Joseph is awaiting news of his university placement. As his test score shows, Joseph has never taken the opportunity to pursue an education for granted. With his quiet humility, serious commitment to his studies and questioning mind, Joseph promises to continue this success as he pursues higher education.

From the Desk of Our Founder and President Emeritus Sherri Mills: Recipe for Irio

Our annual meetings with the parents and guardians of our Makena students are wonderful days of catching up with our families, celebrating achievements, solving our problems together and planning the next year’s activities. Then we share lunch. The exquisite hospitality, abundant bounty, enticing tastes and smells and the palpable brotherhood of these moments feel like a family reunion.

At these meals we share chicken, beef stew, greens, potatoes, corn, peas, beans, tomato salad, fruit salad and Chapati and cornmeal bread. Although I have tried to cook the foods in my home, the recipes never taste quite as rich as they do in Kenya. I dream of returning to a Kenyan table someday to taste all these delicious foods again. In this newsletter, I’d like to share with you one of my favorite Kenyan vegetable concoctions. The recipe that follows is for a corn and peas mash called Irio. One variation on this recipe includes plantains. Maybe a bit of banana would be tasty in this recipe.

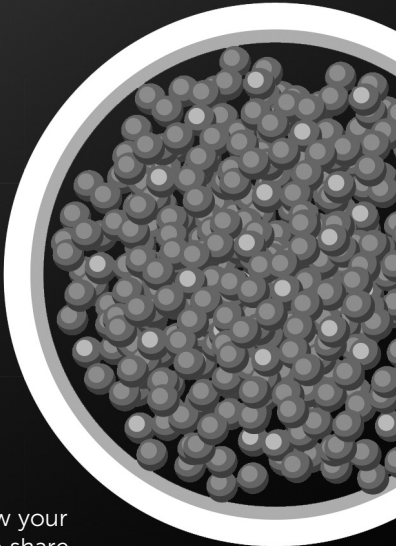
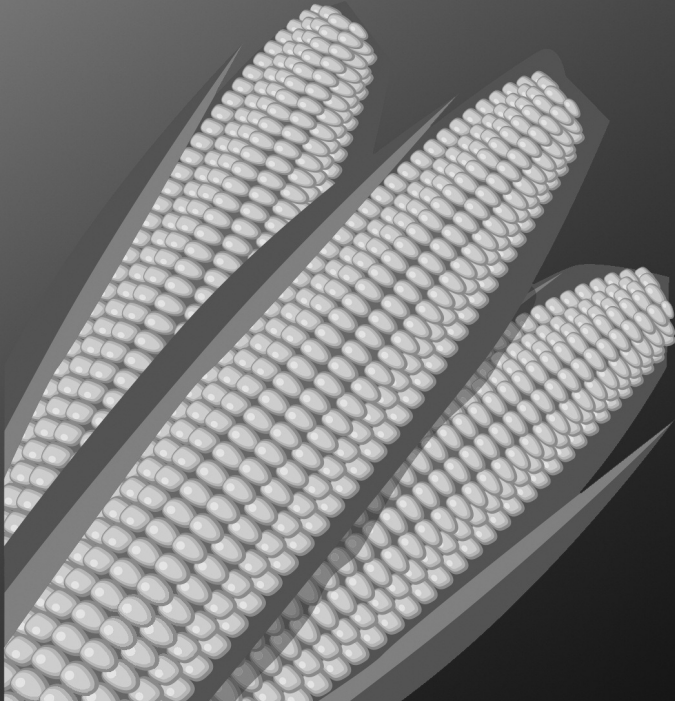
INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 4 Ears of Corn | Salt to taste |
| 2 Cups of Green Peas | 1 Medium Onion, chopped |
| 4 Medium Potatoes, peeled | 1 Tbsp Butter |
| 2 Bunches Pumpkin or Spinach Leaves | 1 Tsp Curry Powder |

METHOD

1. Remove the corn kernels from the corn and boil with peas in a pot until soft.
2. Add potatoes and pumpkin or spinach leaves. Boil together until the potatoes are cooked. Drain, add salt and mash.
3. Sauté the onion in butter.
4. Add curry powder and mix into the mash. Stir well until it is a smooth, soft mixture.

If any readers try this recipe, let me know your results. (sm595@bellsouth.net). I’d like to share comments in the next newsletter. We’d also like to hear from our Kenyan readers who may have comments about how they prepare Irio. *Kwaheri Yakuonana.*



GLOBAL

African wisdom says, "It is the heart that does the giving, the fingers only let it go."

WISDOM

The Makena Children's Foundation knows that wherever we happen to live on this lovely planet, wisdom is within our reach. Wisdom provides the insights that educate and form our hearts. Above the noise of life, wisdom keeps us focused on what truly matters.

Our Makena Kids truly matter.

Please find it in your heart's wisdom to help.

Sponsorship transforms a child's life. Please consider sponsorship for a child that is waiting for your help. If sponsorship is beyond reach, please consider a donation. Because we are all volunteers, overhead is extremely low, but sponsorship funds do not cover all of our costs.

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 _____

Makena Children's Foundation ... educating children in Kenya since 1997

Makena College Students are Paying it Forward



We are bursting with pride at the news that the Makena Alumni Club has identified its first community service project. After a long and lively discussion at its December meeting, the group decided to help the students at one of the elementary schools in its home village of Maraigushu: Shindano Primary School (shown inside on Global Wisdom page).

Our Alumni group—with most members still college students themselves—plans to raise funds to provide textbooks, anti-worm medication and sanitary products for girls to the students at this small village school. (Many adolescent girls in Kenya miss one week of school per month because they lack sanitary supplies.)

Chairman for this endeavor, dubbed PROJECT 2016, is Simon Mwangi; Secretary is Simon Gatonye (in photo at right); and Treasurer is Mary Gatuku (in photo at left). Other task force members leading this effort include Rachael Njeri, Daniel Kimani and Martha Waithira.

All say they are inspired by the generosity of their American sponsors and want to “pay it forward.”

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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.



Yahoo!

Our four students who graduated from college in December celebrate at the Makena Alumni Club meeting. Pictured are (from left): Martha Waithira, Simon Gatonye, Daniel Kimani and Daniel Githinji. Martha already has a job teaching first grade at Precious Academy in Nairobi.

Our budding entrepreneur, Githinji—and a classmate—have formed their own company, Canopian Interiors. They are bidding and completing construction finish work, also in Nairobi.

Gatonye and Kimani have formed a committee-of-two to help and support

each other in finding secondary teaching jobs. In the meantime, both are completing internships. Gatonye is at Ramdiak Mixed Day Secondary School in Njoro teaching English and Literature. Kimani is in Nairobi teaching Kiswahili and History at Muhiri Muchiri High School.

Please join us in lending our hearts and hopes to these four accomplished young people as they traverse the bumpy trail from years of schooling with its predictable challenges to the less certain adult world of work!

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